

Wiltshire Council

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

3 June 2020

Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group update

Purpose

1. To provide an update on the activity of the Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group.

Background

2. To support Overview and Scrutiny (OS) Management Committee, a dedicated Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group has been proposed under a separate agenda item to provide OS engagement on the COVID-19 response.

Terms of reference

3. The following terms of reference have been proposed for endorsement under a separate item:
 - a) To support the response to, recovery from, and legacy of, COVID-19 by providing constructive scrutiny, commentary and recommendations.
 - b) To consider COVID-19's impact on issues and services that would normally fall under Wiltshire's four select committees and the Financial Planning Task Group.
 - c) To be efficient and proportionate in its approach to support the ongoing focus on the operational response to covid-19.
 - d) Where appropriate, to provide pre-decision OS engagement on other matters to be determined by Cabinet.
 - e) By monitoring the COVID-19 situation and response, to consider when a transition to business-as-usual or alternative OS arrangements is appropriate.

Membership

4. The following task group membership has been proposed for endorsement under a separate item:
 - Cllr Graham Wright, Chairman of OS Management Committee (Task Group Chairman)
 - Cllr Alan Hill, Vice-chairman of OS Management Committee
 - Cllr Chuck Berry, Chairman of Health Select Committee
 - Cllr Jon Hubbard, Chairman of Children's Select Committee

- Cllr Bob Jones OBE, Vice-chairman of Environment Select Committee
- Cllr Ian Thorn, Chairman of Financial Planning Task Group.
- Cllr Richard Britton, Chairman of Audit Committee.

Recent activity

5. On **5 May 2020**, the task group held its scoping meeting to agree its chairman, terms of reference and methodology. It was agreed it would meet prior to Cabinet meetings to review items that fall under its terms of reference. Members' intention is to focus on covid-19, but the task group's terms of reference do allow it to consider any other matters when significant.
6. On **12 May 2020**, the task group met to consider the first [report](#) to Cabinet on the COVID-19 situation and response. Members were joined by the guests below, who answered members' questions:

Cllr Philip Whitehead	Leader of the Council
Cllr Richard Clewer	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Heritage, Arts & Tourism, Housing and MCI
Alistair Cunningham MBE	Chief Executive Officer (Place)
Terence Herbert	Chief Executive Officer (People)
Andy Brown	Director for Finance and Section 151 Officer
Ian Gibbons	Director for Legal, Electoral and Registration Services and Monitoring Officer
Jo Pitt	Director for HR and Organisational Design

7. The task group's questioning focused on the areas listed below. A full record of the questions asked and responses provided was circulated to all councillors on 24 May 2020.
 - Supporting residential care homes during periods of low occupancy
 - Identifying and tracking vulnerable residents who need support
 - The sharing of residents' personal data for the purposes of protecting welfare
 - Ensuring some consistency of support across the county
 - Ensuring that children entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) are provided for

- The reduction in referrals to children’s social care and mitigating associated risks
 - Supporting charities who may be losing some of their usual funding
 - Filling parish council vacancies without the ability to hold elections
 - The modelling being undertaken in light of the council’s current and forecast financial position
 - Funding the costs of government-mandated local actions
 - The role of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF)
 - The council’s governance arrangements during the incident
 - Moving from incident response to recovery.
8. The task group will next meet on **2 June 2020** to consider a further update report on the COVID-19 situation, which will be considered by [Cabinet on 9 June 2020](#). A report of the task group’s discussions will follow as an Agenda Supplement on **2 June 2020**.

Proposal

9. To note the update on the activities of the Wiltshire COVID-19 Response Task Group.
10. To note that, as set out under a separate agenda item, most other task group activity is currently suspended to support the focus on the COVID-19 response.

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