

# Addendum

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Dear Councillor,

### Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday, 21 January 2021, 7.30 pm

I enclose, for consideration at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Thursday, 21 January 2021 at 7.30 pm, the following reports which were unavailable when the agenda was published.

**Mari Roberts-Wood**  
Interim Head of Paid Service

7. **Recovery Scrutiny Panel Update** (Pages 3 - 20)

To consider the Panel's feedback and a further update from officers and make any recommendations.

For enquiries regarding this addendum;

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Published 18 January 2021



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## **BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD**

### **RECOVERY SCRUTINY PANEL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Recovery Scrutiny Panel held Remote - Virtual Meeting on 14 January 2021 at 6.30 pm.

Present: Councillors N. D. Harrison, R. Michalowski, S. Parnall, J. E. Philpott, T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), S. Sinden and S. T. Walsh

#### **13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor K. Foreman.

#### **14. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

#### **15. PROGRESS UPDATE SINCE LAST MEETING - PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION (SLIDE PACK)**

Panel Members received a presentation on the COVID-19 Recovery work and progress to date. Councillor T. Schofield, Executive Member for Finance, highlighted different areas which included the recovery workstreams and timescales as well as a review of second lockdown recovery activity and summary of the Council's third lockdown response.

Members said they needed to reflect what the Council was going to have to do now we were back in lockdown and which plans might need to be revisited. It was noted that there had been a good learning process as part of the recovery programme and the latest lockdown was being handled well.

- **Welfare calls** – some staff had been redeployed to make telephone calls to the most vulnerable but most of the activity was now business as usual and part of the 'new normal' way of working.
- **New Ways of Working Group** – it was noted that recovery implied the Council would get back to where it was in early 2020 but this was unlikely to be the case as hybrid working would be a normal way of working going forwards after the COVID-19 response finished. It was agreed that holding remote meetings was an efficient and economical way of working. It was agreed that the Council will probably always continue with a mixture of physical and remote meetings. The New Ways of Working group (which covers this) was due to be refocused as a strategic change/transformation programme. All of this did not have an impact on the Council's Emergency Planning structures and responsibilities.
- **Covid marshals** – Members asked about volunteers and the use of Covid marshals. It was confirmed that two Covid marshals had been recruited by the Council and were working closely with other Council officers and the police during the latest lockdown.

# Agenda Item 7

Recovery Scrutiny Panel  
14 January 2021

Minutes

- **Greenspaces** – the police were working to identify drivers from as far away as Brighton and Croydon who had come to the Borough for walks. Priory Park, Reigate Hill and Earlswood Common had been particularly busy with people using the cafes in large numbers. Greenspaces were going to take action and the cafes would be asked to make sure that their social media asked their visitors to come from local areas only. Members reported that Memorial Park in Redhill had not been as busy.
- **Social distancing** – Members noted that when people had received their vaccinations they may be less careful about social distancing. All would receive a pamphlet when they were vaccinated, and it was hoped that older groups would continue to be cautious. Supermarkets were getting tougher with shoppers, asking shoppers to wear masks.
- **Grants to local businesses** – it was noted that the Council was currently managing the distribution of about seven different grants from Government. The Executive Member for Finance was getting regular reports on how many businesses had applied for grants and the Executive Member for Economic Prosperity was reaching out to other businesses if they had not applied for grants. Businesses needed to keep applying for grants to cover overheads for the months ahead. It was complex to administer, and the Finance team had set up separate accounting systems to be fully transparent. Other businesses had engaged with the Council to apply for other grants that the Council had historically awarded. Panel Members had been sent a financial summary that would be going to Executive at the end of January that set out forecast losses as well as additional costs and expenditure due to the pandemic. Councillor T. Schofield said he would come back to Members about the amount of grants flowing out to businesses.
- **Leader's briefings** – Members appreciated the fortnightly briefings on the COVID-19 response for Members. This would be the mechanism going forwards for updating Members.
- **Services during the third lockdown** – Members asked about the impact of the third lockdown on planning and services. It was confirmed that no services to residents had been suspended (except for those unable to open due to Government restrictions – such as the Harlequin) and protocols and processes were in place if more staff had to self-isolate, for example, bringing in agency workers to support refuse collectors. Third parties such as voluntary organisations and churches were linking in with each other and locality meetings were ongoing and productive, aiding effective collaboration. The recovery plan was felt to be robust enough to manage foreseeable scenarios now.
- **Communications with residents** – Members asked about communications to residents on COVID-19 matters. They asked how many residents were signed up to receive emails from the Council. Officers would find out and send this information to Members after the meeting. An example was given about rumours to do with the poor postal service in Tadworth. Residents had been told wrongly through some Members' well-meaning social media or through online neighbourhood forums or Facebook groups to go direct to a website if they had not received letters in the post. Members said good quality regular communications between the Council as a trusted source and residents was vital. Members also questioned why the emailed Leader's briefing newsletter to Members and MPs was marked confidential and could not be distributed as it contained useful information which was in the public domain. Members asked if the Borough Council's messages could be

disseminated more widely through online neighbourhood forums. It was noted that RBBC was not responsible for some services which were provided by Surrey County Council or the NHS. Members suggested having an automated telephone message on the Council's phone lines for residents who do not have an internet connection.

## 16. NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Panel Members were given an overview of the next steps in the recovery work and proposed recommendations from the Panel to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The two proposed recommendations were to:

- i. Note progress of the Recovery workstreams and proposals for future recovery and transformation activity, and give the Panel's observations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- ii. Agree that future oversight on this activity takes place via the usual mechanisms and recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the Panel be wound up.

Officers confirmed that the New Ways of Working programme would report into the Organisation Board and be reported to Members through programme dashboards in the normal way as business as usual.

The Panel agreed the two recommendations above with the proviso that there would be regular updates to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. They also set out a third recommendation that the Committee:

- iii. Considers the Recovery Scrutiny Panel recommendation that:
  - (a) Assurance is sought that work will continue to ensure that the Council's communications strategy to residents is effective, especially in relation to COVID-19 messaging; and
  - (b) Recognising that new ways of working established during the pandemic will become business as usual, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Policy & Resources is requested to review relevant ICT arrangements and provide an update to the Committee in due course.

## 17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of any other business.

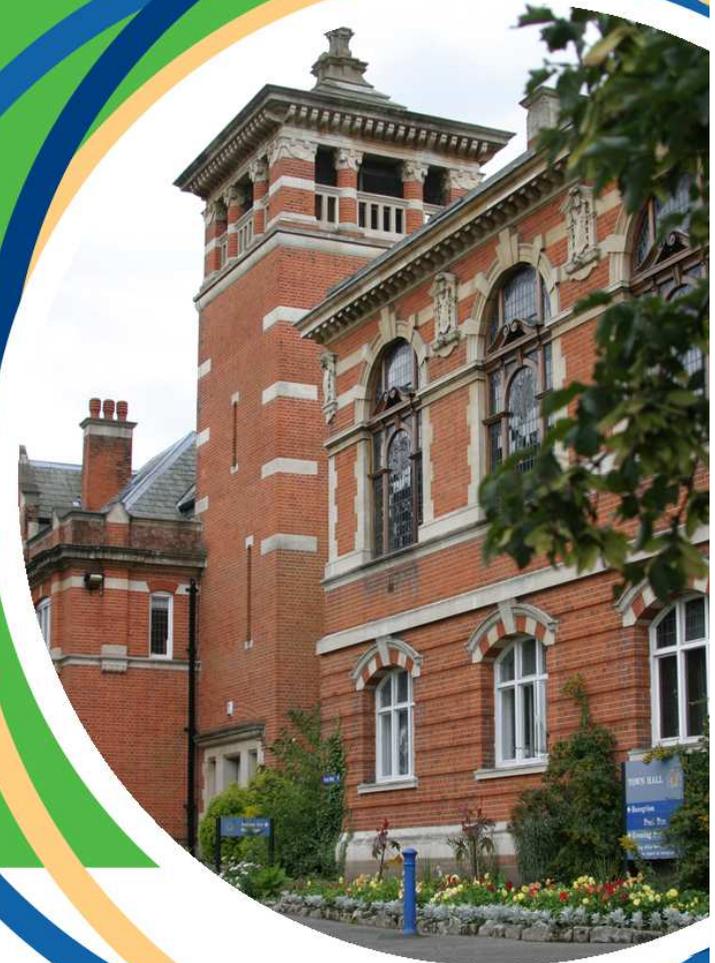
The Meeting closed at 7.34 pm

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# Covid-19 Recovery

Recovery Scrutiny Panel,  
January 2021

Reigate & Banstead  
BOROUGH COUNCIL  
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate



# Background

## Workstreams

- Community connections, including supporting vulnerable residents
- Supporting local businesses and the local economy to recover
- Council services and project recovery
- Finances and income to fund future services; and
- New Ways of Working and models of service delivery

## Timescales

- Transition: Supporting gradual transition out of lockdown for residents and ensuring vital services are provided safely (to July 2020)
- Strategic Recovery: Returning the wider range of Council services to a more normal footing (to December 2020); and
- Transformation: changing how we deliver services in the light of the pandemic experience (2021 onwards)

# Progress

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# Review of 2<sup>nd</sup> lockdown recovery activity

Lockdown impact	Recovery activity as of 2 <sup>nd</sup> December
Harlequin Theatre closed	Harlequin opened for Tier 2 compliant activities
Leisure Centres closed	Centres opened for Tier 2 compliant activities
Community Centre non essential elements closed	Centres opened for Tier 2 compliant activities
Food / pharmacy support for vulnerable people reinstated	Ongoing support available for the most vulnerable residents including over the Christmas and New Year period
Welfare calls extended; visit where needed	
Welfare referrals and funding for those in food poverty	
Tennis courts, multi-use games areas, skate parks and outdoor gyms closed	Reopened
Trade waste customers allowed to put accounts on hold	Charging to recommence as businesses reopen
Gentle approach to residential parking enforcement except for inconsiderate parking	Revert back to normal enforcement
Business grant, test and trace payments and council tax support payments	Payments ongoing as required.

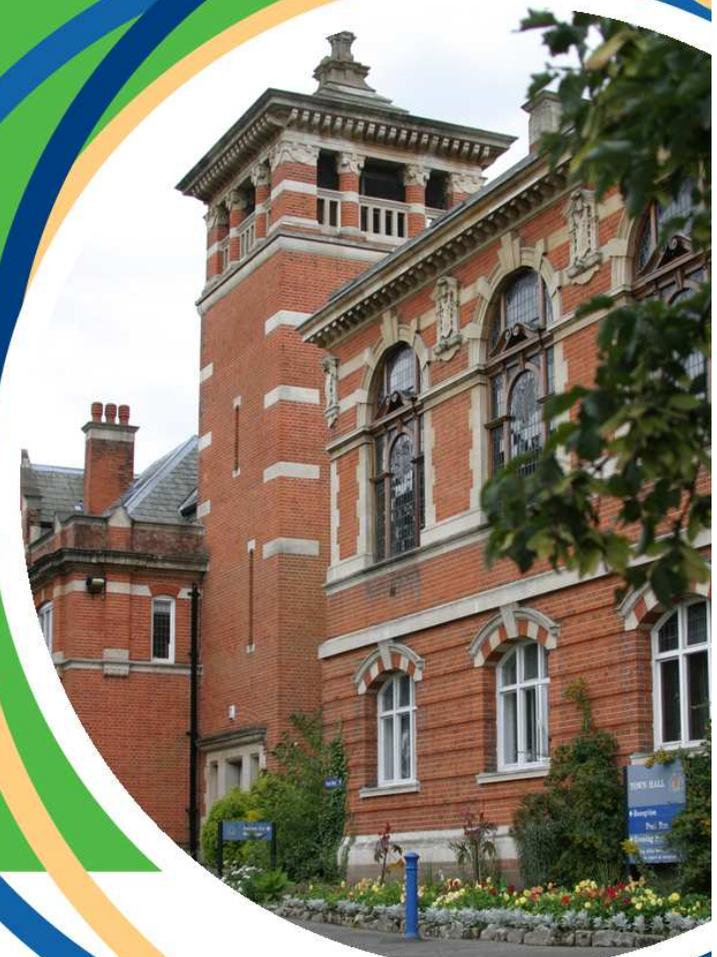
*Note that activities not listed below continued to be delivered during lockdown*

# Summary of 3<sup>rd</sup> lockdown response

- Not substantially different to Tier 4 controls or second lockdown response
- Closure of facilities in line with government requirements
- Need for all Council activities to be carried out in a Covid safe way, with appropriate health & safety measures
- Welfare referrals and support as required
- Administration of additional funding / grant regimes
- Business continuity arrangements (staff shielding / staff sickness)
- Staff welfare considerations

# Next steps and recommendations

See written report



# Next Steps and recommendations

## Next steps

- 'Working with Covid' has become business as usual for Council services
- Recovery workstreams and Recovery Steering Group have been wound up. Any remaining decisions developed, discussed and agreed through the usual briefing and decision mechanisms
- New Ways of Working group to be refocused as a strategic change / transformation programme
- ***Note that the above does not impact on the Council's Emergency Planning structures and responsibilities***

## Recommendations

- Note progress of Recovery workstreams and proposals for future recovery and transformation activity, and make any observations
- Agree that future oversight on this activity takes place via the usual mechanisms and recommend to O&S that the Panel be wound up

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<b>TO</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>DATE</b>	21 January 2021
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>	Council T. Schofield, Executive Member for Finance

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>COVID-19 RECOVERY</b>
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## RECOMMENDATIONS

**That the Committee:**

- (i) Notes the observations of the Recovery Scrutiny Panel in relation to the progress of the Recovery workstreams and the proposals for future recovery**
- (ii) Agrees that the Recovery Scrutiny Panel be wound up and that future oversight of this activity takes place via the usual mechanisms with regular updates to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**
- (iii) Considers the Recovery Scrutiny Panel's recommendations that:**
  - (a) Assurance is sought that work will continue to ensure that the Council's communications strategy to residents is effective, especially in relation to Covid messaging; and**
  - (b) Recognising that new ways of working established during the pandemic will become business as usual, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Policy & Resources is requested to review relevant ICT arrangements and provide an update to the Committee in due course.**

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

In order that comments and recommendations from the Panel are considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and to confirm arrangements for future member oversight.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the Recovery structures and governance arrangements were established, they have played a central role, firstly in supporting transition out of the first lockdown while ensuring

vital services were provided safely; and secondly returning the wider range of Council services to a more normal footing as the pandemic has continued.

At the time of finalising this report, the country within a third lockdown period.

Despite the ongoing rollout of the vaccination programme, it is clear that we will all need to continue to respect enhanced hygiene and social distancing measures; and living and working with coronavirus will become 'business as usual' for us all. It therefore follows that ongoing recovery and transformation activity should become business as usual for the Council.

The Recovery workstreams (which have seen Executive Members and Heads of Service working in a collaborative way) have proved valuable in ensuring that, in recovering from previous lockdowns, robust decisions were able to be made in a timely manner. Importantly, their work has also meant that we now have well-established processes in place to manage our response to, and recovery from, this third (and any future) lockdowns.

On that basis, the Recovery Steering Group has agreed that future recovery and transformation activity will be taken forward as 'business as usual' (and reported via established governance structures) and as such, the Recovery workstreams and Recovery Steering Group should be wound up.

## BACKGROUND

1. The Recovery Scrutiny Panel was established in June 2020 with the main objective of examining and discussing the work being undertaken by the five Recovery workstreams that were set up following the initial emergency response to the pandemic.
2. In July 2020, the Panel met and considered the Recovery governance arrangements. This included the focus of each of the five workstreams<sup>1</sup>, as well as the anticipated timescales for the Recovery work, that is:
  - a. **Transition:** Supporting gradual transition out of lockdown for residents and ensuring vital services are provided safely (to July 2020)
  - b. **Strategic Recovery:** Returning the wider range of Council services to a more normal footing (to December 2020); and
  - c. **Transformation:** changing how we deliver services in the light of the pandemic experience (2021 onwards)
3. At that meeting, the Panel also considered the outcomes of the 'Transition' phase work undertaken by the workstreams.
4. At its October 2020 meeting, the Panel reviewed the progress being made in the 'Strategic Recovery' phase and considered an update on the Council's ongoing second wave response planning work.
5. This paper provides a summary of Recovery progress and sets out the approach that will be taken for the 'Transformation' phase. The content of this paper was

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<sup>1</sup> Community connections, including supporting vulnerable residents; Supporting local businesses and the local economy to recover; Council services and project recovery; Finances and income to fund future services; and New Ways of Working and models of service delivery.

considered by the Recovery Scrutiny Panel on 14 January, and their discussions are recorded in the minutes of the meeting also attached to the agenda.

6. It is worth reiterating that the scope of the Panel is confined to Recovery activities and does not include the Council's statutory emergency response activity (for example to the third lockdown period), which is led by the Council's Incident Management Team.

## **SUMMARY OF RECOVERY PROGRESS**

### **Transition phase (to July 2020)**

7. As noted above, progress during the Transition phase was reported in detail to the Panel in July 2020. This phase focused on the recovery of services from the initial lockdown, which had seen a number of Council activities impacted in different ways, including:
  - a. Core services and activities unable to operate due to lockdown restrictions
  - b. New services and activities implemented as part of the emergency response
  - c. Non-core 'business as usual' services and activities placed on hold to enable the emergency response.
8. The Recovery workstreams, and the Recovery Steering Group, oversaw the restarting of paused services, as well as the winding down of welfare support activities over the summer months. These Recovery elements were recorded on the Recovery Overview document which has been shared regularly with the Recovery Scrutiny Panel.
9. At the same time, the Recovery process and structures also allowed (through the New Ways of Working group) consideration of how the Council should respond to the wider range of challenges and opportunities arising from 'the new normal'.
10. Finally, this phase ensured oversight of the financial and commercial impacts of Covid at a time when business as usual structures and processes were disrupted.

### **Strategic Recovery phase (to December 2020)**

11. The Strategic Recovery phase ran through the summer months and into the Autumn, prior to the country moving into its second lockdown.
12. In the early stages of this phase, evidence gathering was undertaken through the staff and member surveys to identify continuing areas of challenge and concern.
13. This phase then focused on ensuring that appropriate measures were in place for all Council services and activities to be delivered in a safe way (for both staff and customers), consistent with national coronavirus regulations. This included health and safety considerations and identifying different ways of providing services and activities that could not be made Covid safe.
14. The phase also allowed consideration to be given to the outcomes of the survey work and of measures that could be put in place to address the issues raised.
15. Within this phase, the Recovery process allowed for the consideration of learning points to inform future response/recovery planning and decision making. This work complemented that of the Incident Management Team, such that the Council was well prepared to respond when the second lockdown was announced.

## **Second lockdown**

16. Since the Panel met in October, we have seen the introduction of the Tiers system a second national lockdown; and at the time of writing, the country is in a third lockdown period (covered below at para 29 onwards).
17. The second lockdown meant that some of the initial response activities that had been recovered needed to be re-implemented as the second wave response plan was instigated. For example, welfare calls were re-commenced, and certain Council facilities were closed again to comply with national regulations.
18. In line with agreed procedures, all emergency response activity that would require recovery was documented and tracked to ensure a smooth transition back at the appropriate time.

## **Governance and working arrangements**

19. As part of the 2020/21 Internal Audit plan, SIAP were invited to review the Council's Recovery governance. The audit concluded that the Recovery governance structure was working well and that the controls in place were effective.
20. Through both the Transition phase and the Strategic Recovery phase, the structure of the Recovery workstreams (bringing together Executive Members and Heads of Service to work in a more collaborative way) proved valuable in ensuring robust decisions were able to be made in a timely manner.

## **NEXT STEPS AND TRANSFORMATION PHASE**

### **Looking to the longer-term future**

21. When the Recovery process and structures were established, it was not known how long the pandemic would continue, or with what severity the impacts would continue to be felt at a local level.
22. The current system of tiered restrictions is expected to continue until at least March; with a growing hope that the nationwide rollout of a vaccination programme will mean that the severest restrictions will not need to be re-introduced beyond this point.
23. What is also clear, however, is that we will all need to continue to respect enhanced hygiene and social distancing measures, and that the wider economic fallout of 2020 restrictions will continue to be felt for the foreseeable future.
24. In this regard, living with the coronavirus will become business as usual for us all. It therefore follows that recovering our services from the pandemic should also become business as usual for the Council.
25. In late 2020, we were already seeing this happen, with service planning and decision making structures back up and running; and with individual services incorporating Covid-safe working practices, and consideration of current and proposed coronavirus regulations incorporated within business as usual service planning and delivery processes.
26. On that basis, in mid-December, the Recovery Steering Group agreed that, instead of progressing with the Transformation phase via the Recovery workstreams, this work would be taken forward as follows:
  - a. Firstly, the day-to-day process of 'working with coronavirus' to become business as usual for all Council services; with any remaining Recovery

elements being developed and discussed with Executive Portfolio Holders through the usual briefing and decision mechanisms

- b. Secondly, as a result of the above, the Recovery workstreams and Recovery Steering Group be wound up.
27. Recognising the longer term strategic focus of the New Ways of Working workstream, the Recovery Steering Group have agreed that this be refocused as a strategic change / transformation programme to be overseen by the Organisation Board and a steering group of relevant Executive Members.
  28. It should be noted that the above changes relate to the Recovery programme and do not impact on the Council's Emergency Planning responsibilities or structures, which will continue to be deployed as required by the Surrey Local Resilience Forum to respond to (for example) any future lockdowns.

### **Third lockdown period**

29. At the time of writing this report, the country is in a third lockdown period. The Council's Incident Management Team has been meeting to agree and monitor our response to this lockdown. As lockdown measures are broadly similar to Tier 4 requirements, there are not expected to be major additional actions required.
30. Certain facilities remain closed in line with government requirements. The Council will also continue to have a role in administering additional grants/funding streams, and the provision of welfare referrals and support. Consideration is also being given to business continuity arrangements to ensure we can continue to deliver essential service in the event that some staff are unable to work due to shielding or illness.
31. As was the case for the second lockdown period, activity that will require recovery will be documented and tracked to ensure a smooth transition back at the appropriate time.
32. The experience and procedures developed throughout 2020 by the recovery workstreams (and as reported to this Panel) means that we now have well established processes in place to manage our response to, and recovery from, this third (and any future) lockdowns as 'business as usual'.

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