



ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, 23 March 2022

Time: 6.00 pm

Location: Shimkent Room - Shimkent Room - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Contact: Ramin Shams - 01438 242308

Members: Councillors: M Downing (Chair), A Mitchell CC (Vice-Chair), Ashley-Wren, D Bainbridge, S Booth, A Brown, W Kerby, M McKay, S Mead, C Parris and S Speller

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 10 JANUARY 2022 & NOTES OF INFORMAL MEETINGS OF THE E&E SELECT COMMITTEE ON 17 JANUARY & 3 MARCH 2022

To approve as a correct record (i) the Minutes of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on Monday 10 January 2022; (ii) the Notes of the informal meeting of the Environment and Economy Select Committee held on 17 January 2022 and (iii) Notes of the informal meeting of the Committee held on 3 March 2022.

Pages 3 – 16

3. ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23

To consider and agree a draft work programme for the Environment & Economy Select Committee for 2022-23

Pages 17 – 22

4. EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSE TO THE E&E SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW OF ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19

To consider the Executive Portfolio Holder's response to the Environment & Economy Select Committee's review into the economic impact of Covid-19 on the local economy and the Council's response.

Pages 23 – 46

5. INTERIM REPORT - CLIMATE EMERGENCY SCRUTINY REVIEW

To consider the interim report and emerging recommendations of the Environment & Economy Select Committee's review into the Council's response to the Climate Emergency.

REPORT TO FOLLOW

6. URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS

To consider any Part 1 business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

7. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider the following motions –

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

8. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

NOTE: Links to Part 1 Background Documents are shown on the last page of the individual report, where this is not the case they may be viewed by using the following link to agendas for Executive meetings and then opening the agenda for Wednesday, 23 March 2022 – <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/have-your-say/council-meetings/161153/>

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Monday, 10 January 2022

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber - Daneshill House, Danestrete

Present: Councillors: Michael Downing (Chair), Adam Mitchell CC (Vice Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Doug Bainbridge, Wendy Kerby, Maureen McKay, Sarah Mead, Claire Parris and Simon Speller

Start / End Start Time: 06:00 pm
Time: End Time: 08:02 pm

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies were received from Councillors Stephen Booth and Adrian Brown.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES - THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the committee meeting held on Thursday 18 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 **INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSOR LUBO JANKOVIC DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE ZERO CARBON LAB**

The Committee received a presentation from Professor Lubo Jankovic, Director of Advanced Building Design and the Zero Carbon Lab at the University of Hertfordshire, on assisting the Borough Council as an expert witness in its review process of the Climate Emergency Response.

Professor Jankovic provided the following key update to Committee:

- The Committee was informed that his application for grant funding worth £10k for Developing Climate Emergency Response Policy for Stevenage was successful. The funding was awarded by Research England via the University's Strategic Priorities Fund;
- He advised Members that he had worked on a similar project for Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council funded by the same scheme. The project assessed on how to achieve net zero housing for Welwyn Hatfield;
- He explained that they found out a net zero operational performance that could be achieved with increased insulation, increased air tightness, air source heat pumps, and solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems;
- He also found out that the houses constructed from conventional materials would achieve net zero by 2065, and houses constructed from a bio sourced

material would reach net zero by 2045.

- The collaboration between the University and the Borough Council would help in using the existing research data and could act as a model for other Council's as a methodology to help determine if the net zero baselines are accurate and if the targets are measurable for each area
- The project would also create science led recommendations to inform the Council's Climate Emergency Policy Response.
- Members were advised that Professor Jankovic would critically review the Council's current Climate Change Emergency Response, and would help develop recommendations.
- The collaboration with the Borough Council would continue until at least 31st March 2022, and there was scope for further collaboration beyond March 2022.

In response to a question from a Member, Professor Jankovic advised Members that there was independent research done during the first lockdown on the level of carbon emission. The research found that the level of carbon emission reduced during the lockdown period, due in a large part from reduced traffic and people working from home. He advised Members that the target date of 2030 for net zero emission would likely to be difficult but not impossible to achieve. However, a 2050 target date would be easier to achieve, with some specific areas and targets being achieved well ahead of the 2030 target but others being harder to achieve such as the retro fitting of the domestic housing stock away from gas boilers.

The Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator for Housing and Health, David Thorogood, presented CO2 emission data for Stevenage. He advised Members that transport (34%) produced the biggest CO2 emission followed by the domestic (28%), commercial (18%), industry (13%) and public sector (7%). In fact, transport and domestic emissions combined were almost 2 thirds of the overall emissions for the area (64%).

He advised Members that as an authority, the Borough Council may have a small percentage of the overall CO2 emission for the Stevenage area, but as the local authority it had a large role to play in influencing people to make the right choices. The biggest effect the Council could have is to enable people living in Council properties to have less emissions.

He advised Members that he could look in more detail at the carbon emissions for each sector in Stevenage for a future meeting, providing Members with in-depth analytical data.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update from Professor LuboJankovic on the Council's Climate Change Emergency Response be noted.

4 **MEMBER MIND MAPPING AND QUICK WIN IDEAS FOLLOWING THE SESSION WITH HEART COMMUNITY GROUP**

The Chair welcomed two Members of HEART who were in attendance at the meeting and invited them to contribute throughout the meeting.

The Committee received feedback from three Members of the Committee following the Committee's previous meeting in November. The quick win ideas as contained in the agenda pack were put together by Members on achievable small goals to tackle climate change.

Members welcomed the recently published leaflet that was distributed to residents on climate change, but agreed that improvement needed to be made with the Borough Council's communication to residents to keep them informed on the improvements the Council was making in tackling CO2 emissions in Stevenage.

The Committee agreed to work with young people through the Youth Mayor to gather awareness in schools on tackling the carbon emission. Members suggested that an informal meeting session needed to be arranged to discuss working closely with young people and to work through their mind mapping ideas.

Members recognised the need to work closely with HEART as a 'critical friend of the Borough Council', and kick start some of the achievable goals targeting CO2 emission. Members also supported the notion to help to educate residents on Climate Change in order achieve goals set by the Council on Climate Change Emergency. In some instances some residents may be further along the Climate Change journey than others, with areas of deprivation possibly having an influence on this, with a greater emphasis on peoples day to day needs, so the challenge would be to bring all residents along to achieve the significant change that will be needed to address the scope of the climate change challenge.

It was **RESOLVED** that the ideas put forward by Members on achievable goals to tackle the CO2 emission be noted.

5 **NOTES FROM A COP26 GREEN ZONE SEMINAR ON CITIES, REGIONS AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT HOSTED BY THE CARBON TRUST**

The Scrutiny Officer attended a COP26 Green Zone seminar on cities, regions and the built environment. The seminar was hosted by the Carbon Trust. The report by the Scrutiny Officer as contained in the agenda pack summarised the issues discussed in the seminar.

The Scrutiny Officer suggested that the key lessons for Stevenage from the webinar were:

- Be science led and work with local universities and community groups - so a big tick for us in already in this regard.
- We need to broaden the community group activity and work more with local people (this could become a possible recommendation).
- Have a unified approach - could there be more work with all staff required so all grasp the scale of the problem and see the changes made to policy matter?
- Establish the metrics - the review will go a long way to do this.
- It was suggested that a small group of Members could consider doing a tour of Stevenage on bikes, perhaps led by Cllr Speller to assess the reality of cycling as an active travel option.

It was **RESOLVED** that the summary of the seminar on COP26 Green Zone be noted.

6 **NOTES FROM A POST COP26 LGIU WEBINAR 19 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Scrutiny Officer attended a post COP26 webinar on 19 November 2021. The seminar was hosted by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU). The report by the Scrutiny Officer as contained in the agenda pack summarised the issues discussed in the seminar.

The Scrutiny Officer suggested that the key lessons for Stevenage from the webinar were:

- Collaboration drives innovation not competition
- More devolution is needed, local government needs to have the combined size to work together on solutions
- Bidding for the same pot of money from Central Government is a bad way to fund climate change interventions
- You can't sell a hair shirt to the public – you have to make change easily accessible to the public
- Public trust is crucial as is the relationship with citizens. If the public are made aware things like retrofitting employs twice as many people than new build this will resonate
- Engagement with Universities is important
- Don't lecture and preach to businesses – help create collaborative frameworks between large employers and SMEs
- Help people to be able to do the right things

It was **RESOLVED** that the summary of webinar on post COP26 be noted.

7 **MAPPING EXERCISE DOCUMENT FOR THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY REVIEW**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Mapping Exercise Document for the Climate Emergency Review be noted.

8 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

The Chair accepted an urgent item of Part I Business regarding the ongoing impact of Covid19 on local micro businesses. Members discussed that some local micro businesses were struggling as a result of the pandemic, and asked what the Council could do to support these businesses during these hard times. The Chair and Members agreed to consider a report in relation to Council's support to micro businesses.

The Scrutiny Officer advised Members that the Business Relationship Manager was already in the process of preparing a report, and she was working closely with local

micro-businesses.

Members agreed that it would be helpful to arrange an urgent informal meeting where the Business Relationship Manager's report could be discussed.

9 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

10 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR

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Notes of the informal E&E Select Committee, 17 01 22 on Zoom

Attendance:

E&E Members – Michael Downing (Chair), Adam Mitchel (Vice-Chair), Judy Ashley-Wren, Doug Bainbridge, Stephen Booth, Wendy Kerby, Maureen McKay, Sarah Mead and Simon Speller

Officers – Zayd Al-Jawed, Steve Dupoy, David Thorogood, Jonathan Sayers, Stephen Weaver

1. Apologies – Cllr Adrian Brown, Cllr Claire Parris
2. Cllr Wendy Kerby's Excel ideas for grouping Members mind mapping suggestions – Members thanked Wendy for her excel document that regrouped the suggestions from Cllrs Kerby, Speller and Mead into one document which highlighted 7 suggested areas to focus on:
 - (i) Strategy re tree management & P&D (Strategic)
 - (ii) Lead by example, even if the benefits are small by acting appropriately in Council offices, plastic bottles, drinks cups etc. (Quick wins)
 - (iii) Consider how to represent the progress of the strategy? Gantt chart, target lines, KPIs etc.(Strategic)
 - (iv) Communications plan needed with channels, calendar, key messages, campaigns etc. Suggest starting with a campaign on the reduce your heating by 2 degrees (Strategic)
 - (v) Review Council activities to ensure carbon friendly practices are truly embedded. (Strategic)
 - (vi) Engage with young people via schools, Youth Mayor and Mayor's activities. (Distinct Project)
 - (vii) Promoting the 20 Minute Neighbourhood theory and willingness to encourage local businesses and tap into big business. These items feel like a workshop that needs to be facilitated externally to tease out some tangible actions. Possible HEART (focus on adaptations only, in their view we are past the point where behaviour can affect significant climate change) or Mutual Gain (a neutral facilitation company who facilitated the Climate Emergency Panel – circa £5K) or another external organisation to facilitate? (Distinct Project)

It was agreed that this document should be used as a lead for possible local recommendations for the review, in addition to other recommendations that have emerged so far and will throughout the review.

Re area of focus (vi) - Contact with local Schools/Young People/Mayor - Cllr Doug Bainbridge reported that he had made contact with the Head teacher at St Nicholas School who was very enthusiastic about working together with the Council regarding the Climate Emergency. The St Nicholas head teacher recommended linking with the Head Teachers Forum in Stevenage.

Re area of focus (i) – Strategy with tree management & P&D Committee –
Cllr Speller suggested that this be picked up by Planning Officers and David Thorogood to agree a way forward and break down into actionable steps.

Re area of focus (iv) – Corporate Communications plan - Members agreed that the more recent bespoke communications plan (since September 2021) on the Climate Emergency have been really helpful. However, with regards to more general corporate communications it was felt that this was lacking and Members would like to know what the strategy for this is? A broader more holistic approach was required. It was suggested that some examples of what the Council is doing would be helpful such as saving 400,000 sheets of paper, and showcasing examples of good practise of local residents, similar to the public health Stop Smoking campaign, such as ‘we are walking to school’, ‘using less single use plastic’ etc. as a peer learning example not the Council ‘preaching’ to residents.

Re area of focus (iii) - Consider how to represent the progress of the strategy? As well as a possible way to show progress a high level Gantt chart was suggested and another Member suggested a Fishbone chart. This should be a recommendation in an interim report of the Committee as something to respond to as a matter of urgency.

Re area of focus (viii) – Promoting the 20 Minute Neighbourhood theory

The Chair of the Planning and Development Committee, also a Member of the E&E Select Committee agreed to work with Zayd Al-Jawed to include this as a theme review of the next version of the Local Plan. Members were generally in agreement with promoting the concept of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods, where residents could walk to all of the necessary amenities such as local shops, GP and dental surgeries, primary and secondary schools etc. A Member suggested that the theory works if the services on offer are all of a similar or high standard, but breaks down if people go further afield for schools and other local services.

The use of Allotments - Engage with gardening clubs to see if they can support education for people growing vegetables at home. Cllr Doug Bainbridge asked if the Stevenage Allotment Association could be promoted town wide via the SBC website or other communication channels such as a dedicated Facebook page?

Cllr Sarah Mead suggested that interviewees be asked why the Council’s actions/plans were taking so long to materialise as in her view there didn’t appear to be a great deal of urgency about the response. In her view the small changes mattered and there were still things that could be addressed that fall into this category such as paper and plastic use at the Council. Zayd said there had been a number of quick wins in 2019, 2020 and 2021. The speed and scope of response is a matter of resources, if the Council wishes to move faster than it would need to prioritise more resources towards it and this would mean doing less of something else.

Cllr Stephen Booth suggested that the Council should consider engaging a third party company to undertake a drone infrared heat loss survey of the entire housing of Stevenage (private and social housing) and this could be addressed when the Committee interviews the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Cllr Jeannette Thomas. (In terms of the Council's Housing Stock, accurate estimates for the cost of retrofitting the stock would be picked up during the HRA business plan refresh in the summer, which would provide a detailed look at stock condition surveys).

It was agreed that there should be an item on this at the E&E Select Committee on 16 02 22.

3. 16 Feb E&E Select Committee meeting

- (i) Questions for the Leader – Members agreed that the questions set were at the right level and they were keen to set the questions in advance which would lead to some written responses being given ahead of the meeting on 16 Feb which would lead to a discussion/supplementary questions at the meeting.
- (ii) Questions for the Youth Council – (it was commented that they looked like the generic questions for Portfolio Holders – following the meeting the Scrutiny Officer circulated a separate set of questions for the Youth Council as the wrong set had been circulated previously, the questions re-circulated are far more orientated to young people).

4. Next steps – The updated mapping exercise for the review was noted.

5. Briefing notes re recent impact on micro businesses in the neighbourhood centres from CV19 Omicron (previously circulated via email) from Mena Caldbeck SBC Business Relationship Manager and Dave Armitage, Co-operative Neighbourhood Management.

It was agreed that this matter should be looked into as a potential work programme item for 2022/23 as there was a suggestion that there may need to be a reappraisal of what can be offered to these micro-businesses based in the neighbourhoods.

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Notes for 3 March 2022 Informal E&E Select Committee:

Attendance:

E&E Members – Cllr Michael Downing (Chair), Cllr Adam Mitchell (Vice-Chair), Stephen Booth, Maureen McKay, Sarah Mead and Claire Parris

In attendance as a witness – Cllr Jeannette Thomas, Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People.

Officers – Zayd Al-Jawed, Tom Pike, Rob Gregory, David Thorogood, Jonathan Sayers, Andrew Garside, Stephen Weaver

1. Apologies – Cllr Wendy Kerby
2. Interview with Cllr Jeannette Thomas, Executive Member for Housing, Health and Older People

The Chair reminded Members that they had received a written response to the questions they had set. These included officer's responses and the Portfolio holders own response. Members asked Cllr Jeannette Thomas some supplementary questions based on the written responses as follows:

Question 1 – 'How are you reaching out to influence partners, residents and businesses in Stevenage and Hertfordshire towards our shared climate change ambitions...?'

In response to the written response Members asked:

- Do new tenants receive any information on climate change in their "welcome packs" when they enter a new property? Jeannette said to her knowledge this was not happening but could easily be included, perhaps by including the Council's ten climate change pledges and the most up to date information on recycling at their property
- In addressing the gap between the Council's current engagement processes and where it needs to be can more be done with residents groups to, over time, move residents away from the day to day housing tenant issues to considering wider, more strategic, Climate change matters that in time will affect all residents?

Jeannette stated that she is very supportive of resident meetings and resident engagement and there were gaps in the cover for these meetings which Members and Officers were trying to address. Jeannette agreed that small scale local projects and face to face conversations would help get the message out to residents.

A possible recommendation for the review could be encouraging a very local, small scale, grass roots events that can focus resident's involvement in things such as environmental projects (gardens/trees) or community kitchen/growing or bulk buying schemes as an example, which needs to be joined up with other neighbourhood activities and needs to be a thread through all activities to address climate change, not as an add on or special one off focus. The Assistant Director, Communities and Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory stated that he was working with his teams to mainstream this as a default thinking and activity for all things they do.

The Communications Officer responsible for Climate Change messaging for the Council, Jonathan Sayers, stated that he was very encouraged by what he had heard in this meeting regarding resident engagement on this issue and suggested that there are a number of events throughout the year where it was the Council's "shop window" to the public to get out some positive messages about climate change to help nudge the public to think about the issues. The way the Council can do that is to say how the event was addressing its carbon footprint. The Chair agreed that events like Stevenage Day are important for two reasons (i) as a vital community day for the town and as such a great opportunity to reach people who otherwise have limited dealings with the Council, and (ii) also in terms of how serious the Council was treating the Climate Emergency as a real emergency, similar to how the Council responded to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Question 2 – '(i) What actions so far has your Executive Portfolio area been taking towards achieving the Council's ambition for Stevenage to be Net Zero by 2030? (ii) Plans for retro fitting the Council's housing stock?'

In response to the written answer Members asked: Is the Council considering a whole town aerial drone survey of properties to establish using infrared cameras to establish the heat loss of properties?

This was not currently under consideration because of its prohibitive cost and the focus has been on applying for various funding bids which takes up officer time and resources with no guarantee of a successful bid. The Council has just received £1.3m Local Authority Delivery Fund (LADs) and £1.8m Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) government funding which is being match funded by 33% contribution from the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

In terms of meeting the Council's Zero Carbon target by 2030 the focus so far from government has been on fabric first, so this would include Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and on getting properties that are under Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below rectified via improved energy efficiency such as improved insulation. Clean heat sources have not been the government's priority, therefore the Council has been unable to consider this yet, or bid for any funding sources as none exist at present. It is expected that the focus from government may turn to this at the end of the decade.

Members asked:

- Is the data for the Housing stock derived from desk top studies or from sampling?

In terms of surveys the Council is doing a lot to capture data of its housing stock and has access to a piece of software that models the data to show the energy performance of the stock. The Council now has 50% SAT data which gives a good indication across the spread of stock types so Officers can bid for funds when they are available. The data comes from EPC's, energy surveys and completed works on properties including when new boilers, window and doors are installed.

Question 3 – 'What issues do you perceive to be the main difficulties/challenges for your Portfolio area to address in the Council's Climate Change Strategy to meet Net Zero?'

In response to the written answer Members asked:

- If the biggest stumbling block is finance and the way the Government is encouraging all authorities to bid for relatively small pots of funding for specific schemes, what is the estimated global figure that the Council needs to decarbonise its whole stock?

The Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People, Cllr Jeannette Thomas stated that the way authorities are competing against each other and using up valuable officer time was not good and would further delay real progress in the local government housing sector, but we were bidding for all available funds. Andrew Garside suggested that the rough global figures that they are projecting is around £160m for the whole stock, which is around £20k per property in addition to usual replacement end of life windows and roofs etc. The Strategic Director informed Members that this was all being considered as part of the HRA business plan refresh over the summer and he agreed that the current funding mechanism to tackle this was way short of what is required and the LGA and ARCH would be making a compelling case to government to address this.

Question 4 – ‘What mitigations and adaptations do you see might be necessary....?’

In response to the written answer Members asked:

- How is EV charging points going to be retrofitted into the existing housing stock and specifically into flats and are all of the new build schemes being developed now making provision for this charging infrastructure?

David Thorogood shared that within the Social Housing Fund there is a relatively generous scheme which is due to start in May 2022 providing funding for £3.5k per charging point which the Council will be bidding for. The exact funding available for the scheme is not yet fully known, but Officers will share the details when they have it. It was fair to say that the level of EV charging infrastructure around the town, like many other areas was at this point still relatively small but more publicly available EV charging was being installed around the town and charging for flat blocks would be addressed but it will take a number of years to deliver this and be dependent on funding from central government.

Question 5 – ‘Are you more or less encouraged following COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021?’

It was agreed by all that the focus had quickly moved onto other global news stories so not much momentum was harnessed by the Conference being hosted in the UK.

Question 6 – ‘As an Executive Member of the Council do you think the issue yet has the priority it needs?’

In addition to the written response that the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People, Cllr Jeannette Thomas provided, she stated that in terms of Housing she believed the Council was doing all it could to address the issue of the Climate Emergency but felt that there was more work needed with older people to get the message across regarding what the long term impact of climate change could mean to them, that was why she was working with the Older Peoples Network to step this up. Jeanette stated that across the Executive and Council services she believed it was getting the priority it needs. However, whether it's enough is not yet clear.

Question 7 – ‘With regards to Older People and Climate Change...?’

In addition to the written response that the Executive Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People, Cllr Jeannette Thomas provided, she stated that in her opinion the Older People are interested in Climate Change and care about the environment but don't yet really see how this is going to impact them, so they need help to see what's coming. Older People who are owner occupiers of private property need help with grants to be able to afford air or ground source heat pumps and other mitigations like effective blinds and air cooling in their property, especially those who are relying on just the state pension, as they will not have the means to make these costly alternations to their homes. With regards to the Council run sheltered schemes the Council is looking at low carbon solutions to cool buildings for excessive heat episodes during the summer months and effective insulation for heat retention in the winter and cooling in the summer.

A Member suggested that consideration should be given to triple glazing when older glazing systems were being replaced as these offered much better insulation and really help keeping the heat out during the summer.

Members agreed that it was wrong to characterise the public response to the Climate Emergency as an age demographic stereotypical response, as there were people engaged and also indifferent in both the young and the old.

Resident Survey – request by Members to see the data now

With regard to the data in the resident survey for the local neighbourhoods that the Council had commissioned through a third party survey provide, Members present at the informal Select Committee meeting made a request for it to be recorded at this meeting that the data be provided to all Members now so that they could interpret the data prior to any analysis or summary being provided to Members.

Meeting ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

Portfolio Area

Date 23 March 2022

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE - POSSIBLE WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS BASED ON MEMBERS' SUGGESTIONS 2022-23

23 MARCH 2022

Authors Stephen Weaver | 2332

Contributors

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To agree the Scrutiny Work Programme for the Select Committee for the new Municipal Year from a list of suggested possible work programme items by Members.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Members' feedback on ideas for improving Scrutiny (see section 4) be noted.
- 2.2 That having considered ideas put forward by individual Members, (see section 5), the Committee determines the subject matters to be added to a work programme of potential Scrutiny reviews items for 2022/23.
- 2.3 That the Portfolio Holder Advisory Group meetings to carry out policy development work identified so far for the Committee (see section 7.1) be noted.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committees are asked to draft their work programme ahead of the new Municipal year in order that work may begin as soon as the Committees are appointed at Annual Council. Any outstanding and unfinished studies, where applicable, might also need to be included.
- 3.2 During February 2022 Members provided feedback on the current Scrutiny activity and on ideas for the Work Programme for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.
- 3.3 When considering what work to undertake in the coming year, Members may wish to consider if the matter in question is of a cross-cutting nature and might lend itself to being considered jointly with another Select Committee.
- 3.4 Officers have also been requested to bring to the Committee's attention, likely Portfolio Holder Advisory Group (PHAG) policy development items that the Select Committee might be requested to consider and comment on before reports there are submitted to the Executive.
- 3.5 The Committee may also consider whether specific time should be allocated for monitoring or review of recommendations of previous studies. During the summer the Committee will receive a copy of the Action Tracker for the Community Select Committee at which time the Committee can note progress on past reviews and determine whether they wish to bring back any further detailed updates on specific former review items at that time.
- 3.6 It is recognised that there is a limited dedicated officer resource for the scrutiny work of three Scrutiny Committees and therefore it is important to ensure that work plans are in place in order that the call on those resources and on each Committee's time on all its activities are prioritised and evenly spread across the year. To make best use of the resource it is suggested that each Committee chooses 1 substantive review item for the year which will be the Committee's main review, undertaken over a number of meetings. In addition the Committee could receive between 2 or 3 one-off single issue performance items and 3 to 4 Portfolio Holder Advisory Group (PHAG) meetings during the year.

4 MEMBERS' IDEAS FOR IMPROVING SCRUTINY

- 4.1 In February 2022, all Members of the Council's Scrutiny Committees were emailed a survey to gauge views of the Scrutiny work undertaken and ideas for future studies. The following summary is based on the 8 replies received from the 23 Members who are on one or more of the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
- 4.2 Members were asked to (i) comment on current scrutiny activity and (ii) identify any issues that could be addressed to improve the current arrangements and (iii) state what training needs they may have. Members provided comment and challenge around the following areas that relate to the Environment & Economy Select Committee:

Survey Question 1 - Please rate the following aspects of this year's scrutiny activity:

What reviews did you take part in? SS scoring: 3 = good, 2 = okay, but and 1 = not okay really

- E&E completed its Economic Impact of Covid-19 pandemic 3 - excellent
- E&E Council's Climate Change as well as some one-off items 3 so far

- Economic impact of pandemic ok but didn't really establish any actions to be taken?

Survey Question 2 - What aspect of scrutiny could be improved to provide a better scrutiny service?

1. More **officer support for the Scrutiny Officer**;

2. A clear **portfolio of methods / processes for different types of reviews**, to codify them (must be my officer background peeping through);

3. A coherent and standard **Gap Analysis approach to major reviews** as per the Best Value reviews we did 1998 – 2010ish (happy to expand with SW and the three Chairs).

Summary: Step 1 = Where are we? Step 2 = Where should we be? Step 3 = What are the gaps? Step 4 = So, what are we going to do about them?!

As previously discussed but never taken forward, a structural change is needed whereby the chair and vice chair of scrutiny are chosen not by the leader or Executive but by secret ballot of scrutiny members.

Also, much more involvement of non-councillors is needed, as 'expert' or ordinary witnesses and consultants, and more use of the 'public's views

More public involvement in scrutiny - publicise meetings and make it clear that the public are welcome to attend. A more timely response to recommendations

When we receive presentations, etc. I would like to be better signposted to the raw underlying data, for example in the resident survey, so I can better draw my own conclusions.

The most desirable changes would see Scrutiny resources matching its supposed importance in the Council. Unfortunately the chances of this happening are small, but we do need some respect for the integrity of our work plans. I accept the need for improvisation in recent times, but it has been very difficult to do a good job in the circumstances.

Priorities for the future. Where are we with the review of Scrutiny itself? We do need to be sure that we have the best system to make use of limited resources. I think the Council's ways of engaging the public are still based on outmoded ideas about consultation and we could look at this and learn from better practice elsewhere, including outside local govt.

...I think it would be good to have a roadmap of all of the projects the council is working on to help us be clear on what we are going to be consulted on and when. A one page gannt chart or something similar would be really helpful showing key milestones of each, including consultation periods and when they will come to which scrutiny group

Survey Question 3 - Regarding supporting you in your Scrutiny role is there any specific training you would like for next year, and would you (occasionally) like to receive information about possible Member Scrutiny training?

I would like the Scrutiny Officer and Members to run our own Training and Development, but then I would like to transform MMPs too. Too much generic stuff from the LGIU, some of which we will always need! New members need full and proper support. The last few batches of new members seem very unaware of crucial aspects of their roles and of their conduct. (I partly

blame social media for encouraging a verbal recklessness, with potential legal, safety and safeguarding implications.)
No, but happy to receive information about training.
A general refresher training session on the role of scrutiny, which could be useful for newer Members. Yes, I would like to receive information about possible Member training.
The recent email of You tube video of Executive meeting with video timings of specific topic was very helpful.
Watch other scrutiny work - other council practice?
Yes, information on relevant training would be useful. Particularly in obtaining and processing data. What data is available to us as Councillors? What investigative tools can we use?, call-in, freedom of information requests, access to information as Cllrs, etc., etc.

5 MEMBERS' IDEAS FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY REVIEWS

5.1 Scrutiny Members' Suggestions for Future Scrutiny Review Items

- 5.1.1 In response to Survey question 4 "What issues would you like to be considered for inclusion in scrutiny work programme for next year" The following issues have been raised by Members as potential Scrutiny review items:

Survey Question 4 - What issues would you like to be considered for inclusion in the (E&E Select Committee) scrutiny work programme for next year? (Max 3 items)	What type of review (main, PHAG, one off performance)?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residential parking and the vehicle mass limits allowed. 2. Overgrown hedges and responsibility for them, reporting methods for them and publicising this to residents. 3. Delays with tenant requested repairs and in particular fences. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One off performance review 2. ditto 3. ditto
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning - how is the planning department reconciling council policy on Environment and Climate Emergency? 	(linked to E&E current main review)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to scrutinise how the Council will fund its carbon reduction ambitions. If this is one of the most difficult problems the Council faces in the next 5-10 years, what are its options? What funds can be bid into? Are we bidding into those funds? etc., etc. This would be a large piece of work in its own right. 	(linked to E&E current main review)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of the review on the Climate Emergency 	(Continuation of E&E current main review)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking 	One off performance review

5.2 Statutory and Standing Items

- 5.2.1 Unlike the Community Select Committee the Environment and Economy has no statutory or standing items.
- 5.3 Members should note that whatever issues they agree to be scrutinised as a main review item would be subject to a full scoping process and subsequently a scoping document would need to be agreed by the

Committee at a future meeting. Other items, which can be addressed by a briefing and discussion item, may not require a full scoping document.

5.5 Work Programme Schedule for 2022/23

5.5.1 When the Scrutiny Work Programme is agreed by the Environment & Economy Select Committee, the Scrutiny Officer will, using the agreed dates for generic Select Committee meetings in the Calendar of Meetings, draw together a work programme schedule for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, including scrutiny review meetings, monitoring of previous reviews selected by Members and policy development meetings, which will be circulated to Members, and electronic diary invites will be sent to all Environment & Economy Select Committee Members.

5.6. Role of the Assistant Directors and Scrutiny

5.6.1 The Assistant Directors will take a leadership role in assisting and supporting the relevant Scrutiny Committees and specific reviews that align to their area of expertise. The Assistant Directors (ADs) will support each review through its various stages, from scoping of reviews, attending Chair and Vice-Chair briefings and offering support to the Scrutiny Officer in providing written and oral evidence for reviews as well as identifying 'Critical Friends' and other review witnesses. The Assistant Directors will liaise with the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder(s) and the Senior Leadership Team (CE and Assistant CE's).

5.6.2 The Assistant Director, Stevenage Direct Services, Steve Dupoy has responsibility for supporting the Environment & Economy Select Committee.

5.6.2 Strategic Director, Tom Pike from the Strategic Leadership Team has overall responsibility for the Scrutiny function, deputised by Strategic Director Richard Protheroe.

6 MONITORING REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS VIA THE ACTION TRACKER

6.1 The Committee may consider there is a need to undertake some follow-up work on recommendations arising from previous studies. It may be considered sufficient to simply request update briefings from the relevant Heads of Service to be circulated to Members at appropriate intervals. However, if the Committee requires more detailed consideration or examination of the progress of previous recommendations, this should be factored into its work programme. To help assist Members to consider this, an updated Action Tracker document will be brought to the Committee in the summer and any additional work programme items will need to be added following that meeting.

7 PORTFOLIO HOLDER ADVISORY GROUP - POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORK FOR 2022/23

7.1 In line with the Council and Executive work plan, the following items have been identified for potential Policy Development to be undertaken with the relevant Portfolio Holders during the 2022/23 Municipal Year:

- Sustainable Travel Towns PHAG with Executive Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, Cllr Briscoe to be scheduled towards the end of 2022

7.1.1 The above schedule is subject to change and may be added to. Members will be contacted with a meeting invitation closer to the PHAG meeting.

7.2 These meetings are private informal meetings Chaired by the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder and supported by the relevant Assistant Director.

8 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

8.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

8.1.2 A small budget of £1000 is held to support the work of the Select Committees in their research and study.

Legal Implications

8.2. The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees is set out in the Local Government Act 2000. The recommendations made in this report are to facilitate the Committees to fully undertake this role.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

8.3. There are no direct Equalities and Diversity implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Specific equalities and diversity implications are considered during each scrutiny review.

Executive Member Response To Environment & Economy Select Committee Review of the Economic Impact of Covid-19

Date Recommendations agreed by Environment & Economy Select Committee (the recommendations were Updated by the Chair, Scrutiny Officer, AD Stevenage Direct Services & SD Tom Pike on 29 11 21):

Monday 21 October 2021
(circulated Tuesday 30 November 2021)

Date responses should be made by:

Executive response on behalf of the relevant Executive Portfolio Holders should be received by Tuesday 25 January 2022

Recommendations:

Executive Response:

Support for Young People

RECOMMENDATION 1 - Medium term recommendation regarding Young People (Spring/Summer 2022) – Supporting third sector response to provide training opportunities for young people.

That the Executive support, with whatever means are at its

Response to be developed by AD Communities & Neighbourhoods & Executive Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture.

The success of North Herts College and partners in securing

disposal the efforts of STEMPOINT East to provide some hands on events in 2022. This would support STEMPOINT to promote and build science capital in young people, particularly those who may not naturally choose STEM learning routes. Possible venues to support this could be the STEM Centre, NH College, Canyon's Scout building and the environmental charity Waste Not Want Not.

Action: AD Communities & Neighbourhoods

Community Renewal Funding for STEM City ambitions will provide some resource to drive such activity in early 2022.

This is welcome news, given the severe financial constraints faced by the Council following a decade of spending reduction and steep pressures brought by Covid-19.

There is an opportunity to embed this approach through co-operative neighbourhood teams and their reach with young people and youth activity in local neighbourhood settings. The teams will work with relevant children and young people providers to reach those young people who may not naturally engage with STEM opportunities.

Support for Young People

RECOMMENDATION 2 – Long term recommendation regarding Young People (Starting Spring 2022 and for remainder of the year) – Supporting partners outreach to local young people and their families.

That the Executive be asked to consider the work of the sub group focussing on the impact of Covid-19 on Young People. This work identified a successful project led by HCC, YCH (Services for Young People, Children's Services) at the Oval with a small group of young people who would be in danger of becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). It is recommended that Officers engage with the interested partners (HCC YCH, STEMPOINT and NH College) to explore what role SBC could play to roll out to other outreach opportunities as identify young people/families to help those families with encouragement towards careers and employment in general.

Response to be developed by AD Communities & Neighbourhoods & Executive Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council.

Such projects led by YC Herts (HCC) are welcomed and we will work to embrace within local co-operative neighbourhood working arrangements. It is proposed that a review meeting is held between the community development service and YC Herts to plan future youth outreach and engagement and to ascertain such opportunities such as "jobs Clubs" to support skills, training and employment opportunities for young people.

<p>Potential locations to focus as sub-ward levels include Bedwell, Shephall and Martins Wood. HCC and SBC Local Community Budget funding could be targeted at a short term project to extend this initiative.</p> <p>Action: AD Communities & Neighbourhoods</p>	
<p>Support for Young People</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 3</u> – <u>Long term recommendation regarding Young People & Vulnerable Families (Starting Spring 2022) – Using social outreach models / events to identify and help vulnerable local young people and their families.</u></p> <p>That the Executive Portfolio Holders for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council, Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture and Communities, Community Safety and Equalities be asked to consider the case study of Brandles School, using foodbank outreach to vulnerable families. To ask these Executive Portfolio Holders to provide examples how this type of outreach is used or consider how this could be used through the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management or other programmes or other ways where the Council could reach out to vulnerable families to help their young people access services and opportunities.</p> <p>Action: AD Communities & Neighbourhoods</p>	<p><i>Response to be developed by AD Communities & Neighbourhoods & Executive Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods & Co-operative Council, Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture and Community Safety and Equalities</i></p> <p>Over the past two years the council’s play service has evolved to have a greater focus on child and family wellbeing. This has included administering support for vulnerable households during the Covid-19 pandemic and working more closely with the Young Peoples Healthy Hub (targeting High School age children. The service is currently exploring partnership bids to extend this service offer and the opportunities to outreach to other vulnerable groups. This also includes closer working with Children’s Centres and family support agencies, and making the most of the anticipated return of family intervention responsibilities to the Community Safety team. In addition the Council is re-procuring a leisure operator and has built in an “active communities” element into the specification, which will encourage greater outreach and new forms of engagement in community and neighbourhood settings.</p>
<p>Support for Young People</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 4</u> - <u>Medium to long term recommendation</u></p>	<p><i>Response to be developed by AD Planning & Regulatory and AD Communities & Neighbourhoods & Executive Portfolio Holder for</i></p>

regarding Young People (Starting Spring/Summer 2022 and for remainder of the year) – Working with partners together to identify a project lead and sources of funding for a local work experience project.

That the Executive Portfolio Holders for Economy, Enterprise and Transport and Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture should work with partners, including schools, the third/voluntary sector and employers, both large and small, who identify their social responsibility, to seek funding sources and a project lead/project manager to establish a local work experience project for Stevenage school leavers in 2022 to enable them to find local employers who can offer work experience. This is proposed as a recommendation for the Executive to consider for 2022, and may require initial Council pump priming and resource to support project management.

Action: AD Planning and Regulatory and AD Communities & Neighbourhoods

Support for Young People

RECOMMENDATION 5 - Long term recommendation regarding support for Young People (Starting in 2022) – Supporting HCC Education and partners re long-term funding to support the STEM Centre.

That the Executive Portfolio Holders for Economy, Enterprise and Transport and Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture be asked to consider the case study of the Herts Careers School Hub, that all partners work together to establish how funding can

Economy, Enterprise and Transport and Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture.

There is currently no Council resource to support this initiative but this will be picked up as part of the meeting with YC Herts (HCC) who are responsible for youth provision to explore the opportunities to create work experience opportunities for young people locally.

Response to be developed by AD Planning & Regulatory and AD Communities & Neighbourhoods and Executive Portfolio Holders for Economy, Enterprise and Transport and Children, Young People, Leisure and Culture.

Through the successful CRF bid resources have been secured to accelerate STEM Centre ambitions. The council will be working with North Herts College and partners to support this.

<p>be found to assist the STEM Centre to secure its future funding.</p> <p>Action: AD Planning and Regulatory and AD Communities & Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>The programme for the community renewal fund project on Community Wealth Building, led by Stevenage Borough Council on behalf of all partners, was agreed by Herts Growth Board in late January. It includes the following deliverables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joining up work around employment and skills opportunities locally and connecting with the Hertfordshire wide employment gateway www.hopinto.co.uk • A delegated grants scheme in each district for VCSE sector and micro-businesses to develop opportunities for people to improve life skills and access employment opportunities • Work across 10 districts and with HCC to unlock local opportunities through procurement activities • Work across 10 districts and with HCC to unlock local opportunities through strategic planning • Measuring the impact and feasibility for further work to build community wealth in Hertfordshire
<p>Impact on vulnerable groups</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 6 - Short to Medium term recommendation regarding various vulnerable groups impacted by the pandemic (Starting Spring 2022 and for remainder of the year) – monitoring the progress of the CV-19 Community Reassurance Cell’s impact assessments.</u></p> <p>That the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities, Community Safety and Equalities be asked to engage HCC and partners via the Covid-19 Community Reassurance Cell to check that they carry out a revised impact assessment on the impact on BAME, Disabled and Young People, looking at all ten local areas. This notes that Stevenage had particular challenges with</p>	<p><i>Response to be developed by AD Communities & Neighbourhoods and the Leader and Executive Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Equalities.</i></p> <p>The Community Reassurance Cell has now completed its work and reported to the Herts Leaders Group.</p> <p>The Cell has done a great deal of work in identifying the disproportionate impact on BAME and other minority groups during the pandemic. The Leader has asked the question in the county council budget scrutiny process about how this work will be carried forward and resourced as it moves into the mainstream work of</p>

<p>disabled, BAME and young people, who in many cases started the pandemic in a deficit position and were in danger of this being further compounded, and that the impact assessment leads to direct initiatives to seek to address any gaps in provision for these groups.</p> <p>Action: AD Communities & Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>HCC, particularly in relation to looking whether a disproportionate impact of, for example, long covid will be mitigated. There has been an extensive county council topic group on health inequalities of BAME groups, where this was considered. It may help members of E&E to see the outcome of that scrutiny which is attached along with the Executive member response to that scrutiny review.</p> <p>At a local level the Social Inclusion Partnership is working to champion local action to tackle emerging inequalities. Alongside this the Stevenage Equalities Commission is leading a particular focus on impacts on BAME communities locally and will be proposing a number of recommendations in summer 2022. We look forward to receiving these recommendations in due course and working together with our communities as we respond to the deep challenges presented by the pandemic, and the case to be made to government for adequate local funding.</p>
<p>Impact on the Council's financial position and wider economy impact</p> <p><u>RECOMMENDATION 7 - Medium to long term recommendation regarding the monitoring of progress of the Council's financial position and the local economy and the position of various vulnerable groups impacted by the pandemic</u></p> <p>That the Environment and Economy Select Committee will bring back two snapshot update reports one six months from receiving the formal Executive Member response to the review (the two months statutory response is on February 2022, so a six month</p>	<p><i>Response to be developed by SD Tom Pike and the Leader on behalf of the Executive.</i></p> <p>The Covid-19 pandemic continues to present very significant challenges to the local community and businesses in Stevenage. Regular reviews into the financial impact on the Council are underway.</p> <p>The Executive welcomes the recommendation for the E&E Committee to receive further snapshot reports into the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and impacts on vulnerable groups within our community.</p>

update will be in June 2022) from the date of the final report being circulated to the Executive (December 2021) and one year on from this date (January 2023). These reports will check on the economic position of the Council and of the local economy and see how the vulnerable groups identified in the review are, post pandemic

Action: SD Tom Pike

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Scrutiny Report

BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME) HEALTH INEQUALITIES

23 November 2021

ISSUED TO:

Jim McManus, Director of Public Health, Hertfordshire

Morris Bright MBE, Executive Member for Public Health and Community Safety

PORTFOLIO / ORGANISATION:

Public Health and Community Safety, Hertfordshire County Council

RESPONSE DUE

10 February 2022

DUE AT IMPACT OF SCRUTINY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

21 June 2022

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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Executive Summary

- I. BAME scrutiny was identified as a priority when Overview and Scrutiny (OSC) and Health Scrutiny Committees (HSC) met July and August 2020 to consider the impact of Covid-19 on Hertfordshire residents, and their health outcomes. There was particular concern from members regarding the health impacts and inequalities in outcomes ranging from deaths to service access and health status for individuals from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities in Hertfordshire. Following that meeting regular updates were provided to HSC. A community led BAME network was established in Hertfordshire to work alongside key public sector agencies.
- II. The Topic Group considered evidence from witnesses, including representatives of community groups, public health, mental health and maternity services, which highlighted the range of services already acknowledging and working towards eliminating inequalities of health access, experience and outcomes for people from BAME communities. The topic group recognised that it was essential that a system wide approach, designed to meet the needs of specific communities and rooted in co-production was essential in order to meaningfully address this issue.
- III. After considering and robustly questioning the evidence, members identified wide reaching and systemic issues that were impacting the health outcomes and access to services and information for people from BAME communities. A key theme that arose was the need to reframe the question of, 'How do we support people to engage with services?' to 'How do we adapt and design services to enable people to access them more easily?' Members highlighted the need for a shift in perspective across the system from seeing BAME communities as 'hard to reach groups' that need support to access the services as they are currently delivered to considering whether it is 'hard to reach services' that need to adapt the way in which they deliver in order to meet the needs of all BAME communities to ensure genuine accessibility.
- IV. The Topic Group pinpointed a few specific areas of health as priorities for further work to towards improving experience and outcomes for BAME communities, including diabetes, mental health and maternity. The Topic Group identified maternity services for BAME patients as a key area to scrutinise in greater detail in future.
- V. The Topic Group thanked all witnesses for their contributions to the work of this Topic Group and looked forward to looking in more detail at Maternity Services for BAME patients in 2022.

Councillor Judi Billing MBE, Chairman of the BAME Health Inequalities Topic Group

“The existence of inequalities in health outcomes for some of our BAME communities is clearly totally unacceptable, and yet they persist.

This scrutiny topic group, with the total commitment of councillors, officers and witnesses, has given us the opportunity to dig deep into some of the reasons for this and come up with some recommendations which will hopefully make a difference.

We will ensure that these receive the attention they deserve, rather than gathering dust on a shelf full of reports. We look forward to the improvements which will result.”

Monir Ali, Chairperson, The Adda Club

“Being asked to present at the scrutiny panel, I was a little nervous as the name suggests a deep delve into things. However, nerves aside, the presentation to the panel was positive, and I think we got across our core messages to the panel. The panel were engaged and were keen to find out more about the work of The Adda Club, in relation to the inequalities for health support for the Ethnic Minority community in St Albans. Hopefully the recommendations they make can see a positive and beneficial change to health in St Albans and Hertfordshire.”

- i. Meeting papers can be viewed at [this link](#).

Recommendations

All recommendations should be read against the relevant section of the report.

The Topic group recommends:

1. Health Scrutiny Committee to consider impact, risk and mitigations relating to medical equipment and/or treatment not suitable or not as effective for BAME communities.
[To be an item for a future Health Scrutiny Committee meeting]
2. All partners to focus on ensuring all women have agency and a voice in their health and wellbeing matters, as a fundamental part of their patient experience. We recommend a workstream focusing on women, led by the Integrated Care Board. We also recommend the creation of women's health champions.
[To include:
 - consideration of feedback from existing community champions that are women to ascertain the impact of their work and identify if/where support is required to reinforce their messages;
 - consideration of the issue of gate keepers in communities and also the value of working with community leaders.]
3. Further development across the system of how to provide effective support, guidance and signposting to patients with diabetes or those that are pre-diabetic.
[To include:
 - utilising diabetes nurses at GP surgeries in addition to GPs to signpost more effectively to community and peer support programmes;
 - ensuring support is consistently available across the county, and accessible throughout patient's lifetime and not just at the time of diagnosis;
 - ensuring monitoring and support is concentrated where it can have most impact, eg. measuring people's levels of HBA1C;
 - Positive and pro-active and culturally appropriate messaging about what you can eat when diabetic;
 - Community and peer support tailored to specific BAME communities;
 - Focus on using language that is clear, realistic, tailored to specific communities and designed to promote understanding.]
4. The Topic Group recommends that all partners involved in Health in Hertfordshire make a clear statement, with commitments which can be measured, to ensure the focus and starting point is the patient or service user when designing, delivering and communicating health interventions. This should include co-production where possible. To ensure genuine inclusion and accessibility, a system-wide culture of adapting the system to meet the needs of the people rather than expecting or supporting people to adapt themselves and their lives to engage with the system, needs to be developed.
[To include focus on:
 - individual and specific BAME communities;

- building on and learning from experience of the value of community groups, whatsapp groups and social media for support and guidance;
- Socio-economic aspects of individual's lives that may impact their access to services;
- Mental Health, with specific focus on those communities currently underrepresented in accessing mental health services and utilise the detailed data to measure impact and outcomes from this work;
- avoidance of language that may add to stigma or fear.]

5. That HSC establishes a Topic Group on the experience of, and outcomes of, maternity services for BAME patients.

[To include:

- impact of the ethnicity of the midwife;
- maternal deaths;
- push within system and society towards natural birth and avoidance of medical intervention;
- named midwives;
- how it is communicated to patients if they are classed as high risk due to their ethnicity with explanation to avoid feelings of blame, fear or prejudice.]

Evidence

Recommendation 1: Health Scrutiny Committee to consider impact, risk and mitigations relating to medical equipment and/or treatment not suitable or not as effective for BAME communities.

[To be an item for a future Health Scrutiny Committee meeting]

1.1 The topic group learned that certain medical equipment and treatments are either not suitable or not as effective for patients from BAME communities. The example of the oxygen monitor which was not as effective on some patients as it had not been designed and tested on darker skin. Other examples including medications were discussed and members agreed this issue should be given further consideration by the Health Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation 2: All partners to focus on ensuring all women have agency and a voice in their health and wellbeing matters, as a fundamental part of their patient experience. We recommend a workstream focusing on women, led by the Integrated Care Board. We also recommend the creation of women's health champions.

[To include:

- consideration of feedback from existing community champions that are women to ascertain the impact of their work and identify if/where support is required to reinforce their messages;
- consideration of the issue of gate keepers in communities and also the value of working with community leaders.]

2.1 The Topic Group highlighted the importance of focussing specifically on ensuring all women are able to access and make choices on their health and wellbeing matters. This arose from evidence and discussions with a number of witnesses. The Associate Lay Member, Herts Valleys CCG Board highlighted the major themes arising from a qualitative review of black experience of primary care in the UK and presented a number of examples that specifically related to women including a mother who said she would consent for her daughter to receive a vaccine if it were up to her, but she was not head of the household and the girl's father had said no.

2.2 It was noted that 70% of covid champions were women and the group heard from the Chief Executive Officer, Community Development Action (CDA) Hertfordshire that local trusted contacts reach into diverse groups and many women were interested and wanted to be involved as champions to help their own groups with the delivery of accurate messaging. The Topic Group welcome the fact that so many community champions were women and suggested that it would be of value to incorporate feedback from these community champions to ascertain the impact of their work with communities and identify where and if support is required to reinforce their messages.

Recommendation 3: Further development across the system of how to provide effective support, guidance and signposting to patients with diabetes or those that are pre-diabetic.

[To include:

- utilising diabetes nurses at GP surgeries in addition to GPs to signpost more effectively to community and peer support programmes;
- ensuring support is consistently available across the county, and accessible throughout patient's lifetime and not just at the time of diagnosis;
- ensuring monitoring and support is concentrated where it can have most impact, eg. measuring people's levels of HBA1C;
- Positive and pro-active and culturally appropriate messaging about what you can eat when diabetic;
- Community and peer support tailored to specific BAME communities;
- Focus on using language that is clear, realistic, tailored to specific communities and designed to promote understanding.]

3.1 The Topic Group heard from the Chairperson and Founder, the Adda Club, who had set up a diabetes lifestyle coaching programme for the Bangladeshi community in his local area. The Topic Group heard how important the peer support approach was in encouraging mindset changes around nutrition and exercise and also in providing information on how individuals can manage their own diabetes. This approach had shown some success but had also faced challenges in recruitment, timings and a tail off in attendance. Members heard of the reflection and learning that had taken place throughout the programme, highlighting the importance of taking into account other factors such as mental health challenges and other conditions like allergies, arthritis and food phobia.

3.2 The Topic Group discussed potential opportunities to extend the Adda Club diabetes programme and other similar programmes by recruiting pre-diabetic people. It was noted that GPs would not be able to send patient details to the programme due to GDPR so recruitment would rely on GPs providing details of the programme to patients for them to make contact themselves, in addition to advertising on social media and posters in community hubs such as Asian shops, places of worship and the local community centre. It was highlighted that the support individuals receive when diagnosed with type 2 diabetes is minimal and despite a lot of signposting to various organisations and websites, there is no real-life individualised support, which is where community-based programmes such as the Adda Club offer something valuable. There was discussion about the role of diabetic nurses based in GP surgeries and Members suggested they could be utilised to signpost patients, including pre-diabetic patients to programmes such as the Adda Club.

Recommendation 4: The Topic Group recommends that all partners involved in Health in Hertfordshire make a clear statement, with commitments which can be measured, to ensure the focus and starting point is the patient/service user when designing, delivering and communicating health interventions. This should include co-production where possible. In order

to ensure genuine inclusion and accessibility, a system-wide culture of adapting the system to meet the needs of the people rather than expecting or supporting people to adapt themselves and their lives to engage with the system, needs to be developed.

[To include focus on:

- individual and specific BAME communities;
- building on and learning from experience of the value of community groups, whatsapp groups and social media for support and guidance;
- Socio-economic aspects of individual's lives that may impact their access to services;
- Mental Health, with specific focus on those communities currently underrepresented in accessing mental health services and utilise the detailed data to measure impact and outcomes from this work;
- avoidance of language that may add to stigma or fear.]

4.1 The topic group heard how the Council worked with partners including community and faith groups and leaders to encourage vaccine uptake in specific BAME communities in Hertfordshire and the positive outcomes from this work. The public health work to identify and support specific BAME communities during earlier waves of the pandemic, such as taxi drivers who could not necessarily afford to stop working, so screens were provided to them as an additional safety measure, along with targeted, relevant information about covid safety. Members welcomed the targeted, swift, multi-partner approach to ensuring access to services and information that was implemented in relation to covid and suggested the learning from that could inform wider work across the system.

4.2 The Topic Group highlighted how the covid vaccine take up had been low in people from 'any other white background' and acknowledged the challenges in addressing this as it may include a diverse range of communities. The VPAC Programme Lead & Head of Community & People Wellbeing, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), explained how the work to address this involved looking at this demographic in more detail and breaking the data down into specific community groups. The Topic Group heard examples of this work. including successful work with Polish and Bosnia-Herzegovinian community groups and Saturday schools and noted that these groups also worked together and provided peer support for each other. The Topic Group acknowledged the importance of data and reporting to ensure an evidence-based approach could be used and heard that HCC] officers used weekly data to target specific ethnic minority groups in specific district areas and worked with district councils to understand the local data. Members suggested that breaking ethnicity data down to identify 1st, 2nd and 3rd generation immigrants might be helpful. It was noted that Public Health currently use census categories that don't expand on ethnicity in this way but it would interesting to consider as data shows that in some communities, although older members have taken the vaccine, they have been more reluctant to allow their children to do so.

4.3 The Public Health Project Manager, Hertfordshire County Council, outlined the project approach being implemented to address BAME health inequalities. It was noted that the project approach considered socio-economic conditions including protected characteristics such as race, religion, along with disadvantaged groups, such as vulnerable migrants as important factors in influencing a person's health over their lifetime. A BAME Health Network and a BAME Health Equity Working Group had been established and Health Eating programmes were being piloted. It was highlighted that partnership working was a key aspect of the project approach and the BAME Health Equity Working included community

group representatives, County Council service leads for Mental Health, Public Health and Adult Care Services and Health partners from the Integrated Care System (ICS) and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs.) It was noted that measuring the success and impact of any projects aimed at addressing BAME Health Inequalities was essential to ensure that funding and work could be aimed where it would make the greatest difference to people's lives.

- 4.4** The Topic Group heard from Councillor Asif Khan about successful work that had taken place during lockdown with taxi drivers in Watford from the Pakistani and Kashmiri communities. The foundations of this work were built on listening to this group and understanding their specific challenges such as loss of earnings when self-isolating and cultural aspects such as reluctance to take 'hand-outs.' Support and information were designed to address these issues and the council worked closely with community and religious leaders to convey important messages about the pandemic. The Topic Group heard that this work was supported by cross party collaboration from councillors who recognised the need to work together to make the greatest positive impact and ensure the right support was provided to local citizens.
- 4.5** The value of community champions in addressing vaccine hesitancy was recognised but it was highlighted that it was essential to identify the right community champions for the role and where community leaders had not been comfortable in taking on this role or had acted as gatekeepers in preventing the messaging reaching their communities, other means to approach these specific communities had been used.
- 4.6** The Associate Lay Member, Herts Valleys CCG Board outlined the key barriers for individuals from BAME communities in accessing health services. These included perceptions and mistrust of health services and medical professionals; language barriers and concerns that interpreters, who are often closely linked to their community hearing their personal health information; prohibitive cost with the example of dentistry; stigma around certain health conditions, particularly mental health; and a lack of cultural awareness. The Topic Group noted that engagement and communication with community leaders was important so that health services could understand the specific issues and needs a particular community group may have and use this information to tailor programmes to support them. The positive impact of addressing health outcomes and attitudes of BAME health workers was highlighted and the success of this work in terms of vaccination take-up influenced wider BAME communities so it was noted that engagement with this group was essential. In discussion, members highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer support programmes within specific BAME communities.
- 4.7** The Topic Group discussed the importance of getting health communications and messaging right in order to have the greatest impact, which would mean tailored language and consideration of cultural context and generational differences in how people access their information. This tailored and culturally sensitive approach would be essential in engaging with groups or individuals that were reluctant or found it difficult to access services. The Topic Group agreed that it was key that services adapt their offer to ensure it was accessible for all BAME groups and individuals rather than just offering support/education for BAME groups and individuals to access the services as they are. Members agreed it was important for all services to consider first whether it is the services

that are hard to reach for BAME communities and why that is, rather than assuming the patients from certain BAME community groups were hard to reach.

4.8 The Director of Improvement and Innovation, HPFT showed the Topic Group how data could identify factors that may influence mental health and how this could be used to improve the performance of services. HPFT had worked in partnership with HCC to develop a system of data management for mental health patients which could be interrogated in detail to identify and compare factors influencing mental health and access to treatment such as socio-economic barriers like distance from services and cultural or language issues. With this information, appropriate adjustments can be made to address these barriers and make changes to pathways to ensure greater accessibility if necessary. The topic group noted the value and potential of collecting and using this sort of data to plan and adapt services and highlighted that services would need to be flexible and willing to make changes in the way they are provided to ensure they are easy to access for all.

5. Recommendation 5: That HSC establishes a Topic Group on the experience of, and outcomes of, maternity services for BAME patients.

[To include:

- impact of the ethnicity of the midwife;
- maternal deaths;
- push within system and society towards natural birth and avoidance of medical intervention;
- named midwives;
- how it is communicated to patients if they are classed as high risk due to their ethnicity with explanation to avoid feelings of blame, fear or prejudice.]

5.1 The topic group welcomed the evidence provided by Hertfordshire and West Essex Local Maternity & Neonatal System (LMNS) Maternity Transformation Programme Manager, about Maternity services for BAME patients and the work currently being undertaken in Hertfordshire to address inequalities, including ensuring learning about ethnicity based disparities and inequalities are built in to mandatory staff training package; increasing support of at-risk pregnant women – e.g. making sure clinicians have a lower threshold to review, admit and consider multidisciplinary escalation in women from a BAME background; reaching out and reassuring pregnant BAME women with tailored communications and Minimising risk of vitamin D insufficiency.

5.2 As this area is so important and within the context of significant issues being reported nationally, members agreed this area should be the sole focus of a separate scrutiny in 2022. With a further piece of scrutiny in mind, Members suggested key areas to investigate as listed above in the recommendation.

Conclusions

- 6.1** The Topic Group acknowledged that while Covid had brought attention to the issue of BAME health inequalities, there were wider systemic issues that needed to be addressed and would require focus from a range of partners such as NHS, community groups, voluntary sector and all tiers of council.
- 6.2** The Topic Group recognised the importance of tailoring information and services to meet the needs of specific BAME in order to ensure the services were genuinely accessible. The Topic Group identified a number of priority areas of health for further work to prevent health inequalities, namely diabetes, mental health and women's access to information and services.
- 6.3** Members welcomed the examples of detailed data collected and used to identify health inequalities and target support and improvements where it is most needed. Members endorsed further use and development of this approach and sharing of key findings across the system.
- 6.4** In order to provide some continuity and build on the evidence gathered by this Topic Group, it was suggested that where possible Members of this Topic Group be invited to take part in the scrutiny of Maternity Services for BAME patients in 2022.

Members of the Review

Judi Billing MBE (Chairman), Helen Campbell, Fiona Guest, Reena Ranger OBE, Sunny Thusu

Witnesses

Jim McManus	Executive Director Public Health HCC
Carol Young	Black Asian Minority Ethnic Project Manager, HCC
Faizal Hakim	Equality & Diversity Manager, HCC
Monir Ali	Chairperson and Founder, The Adda Club
Oyinkansola Ojo-Aromokudu	Associate Lay Member on the Herts Valleys CCG Board
Kristy Thakur	VPAC Programme Lead & Head of Community & People Wellbeing, HCC
Asif Khan	Watford Borough Councillor and County Councillor
Kate Belinis	Chief Executive Officer, CDA Herts
Simon Pattison	Head of Integrated Health and Care Commissioning Team, HCC
Michael Thorpe	Deputy Director of Improvement & Innovation, HPFT
Geoff Brown	Chief Executive, Healthwatch Hertfordshire
Chloe Carson	Healthwatch Hertfordshire
Nicola Judd	Local Maternity & Neonatal System Maternity Transformation Programme Manager, HCC

Officers supporting

Fiona Corcoran Scrutiny Officer

APPENDICES

SCRUTINY REMIT

DATE DUE AT HSC: 21 July 2021

COMMITTEE APPROVED: HSC: 21 July 2021

PROGRAMMED: 23 November 2021

OBJECTIVES:

To consider lessons learned from working with BAME¹ communities on covid impacts on inequalities in health outcomes and whether local services have action plans in place to address them

BACKGROUND:

BAME scrutiny was identified as a priority when OSC and HSC met July & Aug 2020 to consider the impact of Covid-19 on Herts residents, and their health outcomes. There was particular concern from members regarding the health impacts and inequalities in outcomes ranging from death to service access and health status for communities in Hertfordshire, primarily BAME communities. Following that meeting regular updates were provided to HSC.

Public Health England reported on the impact of Covid-19 in BAME communities. It highlighted that there is a need for better understanding of the social and structural determinants of health, and the socio-economic, occupational, cultural and structural factors (racism, discrimination, stigma) influencing COVID-19 outcomes in BAME groups within and outside the health sector.

It became clear during the pandemic that for BAME communities there were issues of trust with the NHS and institutions of state.

A community led BAME network was established to work alongside key public sector agencies.

A Public Health review of BAME experience of Health Services has been commissioned. Findings from the research will enable long term sustainable change to address occupational risk, act to mitigate the impacts to co-produce a community led Health Inequalities Action Plan. Desired outcomes will be to improve access, experiences and outcomes of NHS, local government and Integrated Care System commissioned services for BAME communities.

As part of the policy review, a review of inequalities in health outcomes in BAME populations in Hertfordshire will be undertaken. This will include working closely with

¹ The term BAME has been used until an alternative preferred term is agreed

the University and other research partners on this.

KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY:

1. What has been the impact of covid-19 on BAME communities in Hertfordshire? And what actions have been taken to mitigate these impacts?
2. How are partners and stakeholders working together to address systemic, long term issues affecting the health and wellbeing outcomes of BAME communities?
3. How will the effectiveness of future and existing services in reducing inequalities in health outcomes for BAME communities be measured?

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS on services *and* on the lives of citizens:

- That areas that impact BAME communities have been identified
- The actions to address these impacts have been identified along with the timescale for implementation

CONSTRAINTS: *What are the topics that are irrelevant to the objective or that do not answer the questions?*

- Inequalities beyond health

FINANCIAL IMPACTS:

- What are the financial implications of the action plan

EVIDENCE & WITNESSES (i.e. individuals, organisations, documents)

Jim McManus HCC	User / community group reps (such as One Vision, N Herts Ethnic Forum)
Faz Hakim HCC	Healthwatch Herts (HwH)
District & boroughs	University of Hertfordshire
ICS / NHS	CDA
Carol Young HCC	

METHOD: 1 day

DATE: 23 Nov 2021

MEMBERSHIP:

J Billing (Chairman), H R Campbell, F Guest, R Ranger; S Thusu

SUPPORT:

Scrutiny Officer: Fiona Corcoran

Lead Officer: Jim McManus

DSO: Theresa Baker

HCC Ambitions - how this item helps deliver the Ambitions *delete as appropriate*

1. Opportunity to live in thriving places ✓
2. Opportunity to share in Hertfordshire's prosperity ✓
3. Opportunity for everyone to achieve their potential ✓
4. Opportunity to enjoy healthy and safe lives ✓

CENTRE FOR GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY ACCOUNTABILITY

OBJECTIVES: *delete as appropriate*

1. provide constructive “critical friend” challenge
2. amplify the voice and concerns of the public
3. be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
4. drive improvement in public services.