

Minutes

of a meeting of the

Council

held on Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 7.00 pm
as a virtual meeting



Open to the public, including the press

Present:

Members: Councillors Margaret Crick (Chair), Jerry Avery, Matthew Barber, Paul Barrow, Ron Batstone, Eric Batts, Samantha Bowring, Nathan Boyd, Cheryl Briggs, Andy Cooke, Andrew Crawford, Eric de la Harpe, Amos Duveen, Neil Fawcett, Andy Foulsham, Hayleigh Gascoigne, David Grant, Debby Hallett, Jenny Hannaby, Simon Howell, Alison Jenner, Bob Johnston, Diana Lugova, Robert Maddison, Sarah Medley, Patrick O'Leary, Helen Pighills, Mike Pighills, Judy Roberts, Val Shaw, Emily Smith, Bethia Thomas, Max Thompson, Elaine Ware, Catherine Webber and Richard Webber

Officers: Steven Corrigan, Steve Culliford, Margaret Reed and Mark Stone

Council observed a minute's silence in memory of the following former district councillors who had died since the last meeting of Council:

Vernon Butt
Beth Fleming, a former Chair of the council
Jeanette Halliday
Beryl Prentice
Terry Quinlan

Co.81 Apologies for absence

None.

Co.82 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 12 and 19 February 2020 as correct records and agree that the chair sign them as such.

Co.83 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest

None.

Co.84 Urgent business and chair's announcements

The chair advised councillors of general procedures to be followed in virtual meetings.

She invited Council to observe a minute's silence in memory of those residents of the Vale who had lost their lives as a result of Covid-19.

Co.85 Chief Executive's update

Mark Stone, Chief Executive, addressed Council. His address is available on the council's [website](#)

Co.86 Public participation

Councillor Goodman of Wantage Town Council and Chairman of the Wantage & District Chamber of Commerce submitted a written statement in support of Motion 1 on the agenda. His statement is set out at Minute 93.

Co.87 Petitions

None.

Co.88 Recommendations from Cabinet, individual Cabinet members, and committees

Council was advised that Cabinet, at its meeting on 10 July 2020, considered a recommendation from the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee to recommend to Council that it writes to the county council to show the district council's support for its work on the promotion of active travel and the consideration of traffic restriction measures to improve cycling infrastructure. In light of the fact that Council would consider a motion at this meeting (Motion 5 on the agenda) calling on the Leader of the council to write to the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council on similar issues, Cabinet had not made any recommendation to Council.

Co.89 Progress on approved Council motions

Council received and noted a progress report on motions approved by Council since May 2019.

Council welcomed the report. A suggestion was made that those actions which had been actioned and resolved should be removed from future update reports.

Co.90 Virtual meeting procedure rules and scheme of delegation

Council considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on proposed changes to the council's virtual meeting procedure rules to allow public participation to resume and clarification of the scheme of delegation to the head of planning.

RESOLVED: to

1. adopt the revised Virtual Meeting Procedure Rules attached at appendix one to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 15 July 2020 which provide for public participation at virtual formal council meetings, to apply from the date of this meeting;
2. agree corrected wording for the head of planning's delegation 1.1 a i in the council's constitution to clarify call-in of planning applications by ward councillors as set out in appendix two to the report of the head of legal and democratic to Council on 15 July 2020, to apply from the date of this meeting;
3. note the intention to resume Planning Committee site visits but authorises the head of planning, in consultation with the chair of the Planning Committee, to suspend them if at any time it becomes unsafe to do so;
4. authorise the head of legal and democratic to make the necessary changes to the constitution and to make any minor or consequential amendments to the constitution and the rules for consistency and to reflect the council's style guide.

Co.91 Report of the leader of the council

Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of the council, provided an update on a number of matters. The text of her address is available on the council's [website](#).

Co.92 Questions on notice

A. Question from Councillor Simon Howell to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Emily Smith

In March, this Council launched a COVID-19 Grant Scheme aimed at supporting community initiatives in our respective areas to respond to the pandemic. Three months on, I believe that there is no visibility as to how much has been spent and what remains of this funding. Can the Leader provide an update on the status of this scheme and whether community groups can still apply for any funds still available?

Answer

On 25 March 2020, we launched an Emergency Councillor Grant Scheme that gave each councillor £2,000 to award to community groups delivering community initiatives in their ward to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, particularly those supporting vulnerable residents.

For audit purposes, we provided councillors with a spreadsheet for capturing and recording all the requests they receive and the awards they chose to make. Councillors will be aware that officers have recently requested updates on their individual emergency councillor grant budgets, and to offer their support in connecting them with groups that still need funding towards their work supporting vulnerable residents.

As we ease out of lockdown, and in anticipation of the national shielding programme coming to an end on 1 August 2020 and the potential for a second response spike or wave of positive cases, it is our intention to keep the scheme open until the end of September 2020. By then, we'll hopefully have more certainty nationally that we're in the recovery phase of the pandemic and officers can put a further call out for grant budget returns. It is at that point we're likely to recover any unspent funds if a second wave has not materialised and is considered unlikely.

Supplementary question

Councillor Smith undertook to provide a written response to a supplementary question regarding the possible widening of the Covid-19 Grant Scheme to help communities with innovative and creative ways to recover from the economic shock of the pandemic.

B. Question from Councillor Nathan Boyd to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Emily Smith

On 27 May 2020 the Leader wrote a letter to the Prime Minister Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP regarding the behaviour of one of his advisors, Dominic Cummings. Considering the reluctance of the administration to even support the proposal of writing a letter on a planning matter, which directly affected this council previously, can the leader please explain why it was appropriate to write, on behalf of the council, with no motion being put before council beforehand?

Answer

The actions taken by this individual had the potential to undermine the vital public health message that our staff and partners were actively working so very hard to promote to our communities to keep residents safe and protect the NHS. If evidence was ever needed that this individual operates entirely within the political sphere, I would draw your attention to the fact that he subsequently then gave a televised account of his actions from the Rose Garden of 10 Downing Street, the home of the Prime Minister. It was the Government, both directly and via the LRF that asked Local Authorities to act to promote and highlight the importance of the national messages around COVID19. I would draw your attention to the wording of the Durham Constabulary ".....have concluded that there might have been a minor breach of the Regulations that would have warranted police intervention. Durham Constabulary view this as minor because there was no apparent breach of social distancing."

As Leader of the Council, I am able to act on such matters of an urgent nature impacting on the work of this council without a motion from full Council.

Supplementary question

Councillor Smith undertook to provide a written response to a supplementary question requesting details of how many letters she had sent in her capacity, as Leader of the council, on behalf of the council in the past twelve months without a motion from Council.

C. Question from Councillor Elaine Ware to Councillor Helen Pighills Cabinet Member for Community Services

In July 2019 the Leader reported that a Health & Well-being Strategy was being developed. What progress has been made in preparing this strategy?

Answer

The council plays a key role with partners on the Health Improvement Board for Oxfordshire which supports the delivery of health and wellbeing across Oxfordshire. Following discussions with these partners, the development of the strategy has been re-focused on an active communities strategy to align with the areas of responsibility that the council has, and in light of the decision to undertake a review of the council's leisure team. This is particularly pertinent given the Covid-19 pandemic, and the resulting changes to leisure and associated financial modelling, which will impact on the council's ability to deliver and run large scale leisure facilities in the future. The brief for the strategy required to be revised in light of the pandemic and it is hoped that a consultant will be appointed within the next month to progress the development of the strategy, including consultation with our communities as to what forms of activity they would like to access to support their health and wellbeing.

Supplementary question

In response to a supplementary question Councillor Pighills stated that budgetary provision had been made prior to the Covid-19 pandemic to employ a consultant to undertake this work. She also confirmed that the strategy would address the mental health needs, as well as physical wellbeing needs, of residents.

D. Question from Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne to Councillor Emily Smith, Leader of the Council

We were all horrified to hear in the world media about what happened to George Floyd at the hands of the Minnesota Police Department, and all the other similar events that have been highlighted, involving wrongful killing of black people at the hands of the very people who are meant to protect them. This has spurred a huge movement across the UK to address racism. In our own district, a number of groups have formed such as Black Lives Matter Didcot, and Black Lives Matter Abingdon and they are fiercely committed to tackling racism. One of their demands is "Accountability in Council Policy & Decision Making".

What are we doing as a district council to tackle racism within our own operations and within our communities? How can we strive for better representation of 'the Black voice'?

Answer

The council's corporate equalities policy sets out our statement of commitment to the principles enshrined in the Equalities Act 2010, and as Leader of the Council I recently re-stated our commitment in an open letter, published on the council's website. The council have a dedicated equalities officer and carry out equality impact assessments (EIAs) on all new policies, strategies and significant changes to services. The policy and insight team continuously review data from the range of sources available, to help us better understand the demographics of the communities we serve and inform service delivery, policy and decision making. We also include equality and diversity clauses in all major contracts, relevant contract specifications and tender documents.

As an employer, we have an equal opportunities in employment policy which incorporates equal pay and dignity at work, and a number of other policies that ensure fair and equal treatment of staff who share a protected characteristic. Mandatory training is provided for all staff on equalities and diversity, and the council publicly reports annually on equalities indicators.

The South and Vale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) reviews the prevalence of hate crime and hate incidents in the two districts on a quarterly basis, with the view to agreeing remedial action if a significant issue is identified. The CSP helped set up 12 hate crime reporting centres in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse in 2018/19, in partnership with Citizens Advice, Wantage IAC, both district councils, Soha and Sovereign. If people do not feel able to report hate crime/incidents to the police, this service provides them with an alternative where they can speak in confidence to a specially trained member of staff. Staff will talk to the individual about the incident and can offer to report it to the police on their behalf. They will also refer them to Victims First, a service dedicated to ensuring that victims or witnesses receive the support they need to cope with and recover from their experience. The team also promotes the annual hate crime awareness

week to staff and local communities; in 2019, the team encouraged people to report hate crime as part of the launch of the 'Safe Places' scheme in Didcot, Wallingford, Wantage and Faringdon. The scheme, co-ordinated by the community safety team, helps vulnerable people feel confident and safe whilst out in the community. If someone feels they are being abused or harassed, they have a safe place to go. Window stickers are displayed in public places (shops, libraries, community centres) to identify themselves as Safe Places.

However, there is always more we can do to tackle racism and strive for better representation of our communities, and as you will see in our draft corporate plan which is imminently due to go out for public consultation, we have made a clear commitment to doing so within our proposed themes and programmes.

Supplementary question

In response to a supplementary question in respect of what councillors could do as individuals, Councillor Smith responded that a number of councillors had participated in the LGA training on unconscious bias. There was also the opportunity to undertake the inhouse equalities training provided to officers. Councillors could take the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the council's draft corporate plan which includes a programme on equalities issues. Councillors could also, via their political parties, seek to encourage to encourage candidates from BAME communities to stand at elections.

Co.93 Motions on notice

Motion 1: Councillor Simon Howell moved, and Councillor Nathan Boyd seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 13.

"Council recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown both the national and local economy into a state of turmoil and crisis. The impact on our local businesses and our local communities will only grow in the coming months and requires an immediate response. This Council will urgently set up a new committee called the Local Economy Resilience Advisory Committee, to guide this council's response to this crisis. Following the model of the Climate Emergency Advisory Committee, this new committee will be advisory to the Cabinet and should be made up of seven members in total based on political balance (the head of legal and democratic to make appointments to the committee seats and substitute positions in accordance with the wishes of the relevant group leader). The term of reference for the new committee should be drawn up by the Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place, in consultation with the Cabinet member for development and regeneration and group leaders. It will operate alongside and have equal weight to the Climate Emergency

Advisory Committee, to ensure this council works cross party and does everything it can to help local business, the high streets of our market towns and villages, and our communities survive this economic shock”.

The following written statement was submitted by Councillor Goodman of Wantage Town Council and Chairman of the Wantage & District Chamber of Commerce in support of the motion.

“Council,

Thank you for taking the time to read/read out this statement. I had hoped to present to you in person, but sadly we are constrained in the current environment.

I wish to address you in respect of Motion 1 on the Agenda papers.

In Wantage I have watched as shops have come and gone, empty units have stood deserted and then were refilled over the last few years, with some new, successful, local businesses. The pandemic turned every town into a ghost town, and while people are now coming back to our shops and cafés, we don't know how long those businesses will last in this harsh environment, or what will happen if there is a second wave. We need to do “whatever it takes” to secure the future for our wonderful local businesses.

The committee proposed in this evening's motion would be a great starting point to help us with our recovery, locally. I know we already have a great business team in the Vale, but with what could come around the corner, and how hard recovery is set to be, local businesses will need all the support they can get.

I am very reassured to see that the suggestion is that it will follow the model of the already well-established Climate Emergency Advisory Committee. This existing committee has already shown how much of its consultation can make a difference to policy of the council, and businesses will need such a committee to be able to do this for them in the coming months. It will also act as a focal point for engagement, sharing of ideas and generation of proposals to take positive action to support businesses in every corner of the Vale.

Establishing this committee now sends a positive message to our market towns and villages that as a council you care about local businesses, irrespective of political party, and that you will stand by local businesses in the years to come as they go through some of the toughest economic conditions for a lifetime.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this statement and I hope with your full and unanimous backing of this Motion, that the Vale of White Horse Council can send a strong message out to residents and local businesses”.

Councillors supported the need to address the economic prosperity of the district especially at this time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the majority of councillors did not support the establishment of a committee which it was considered would detract officers in the economic development team from the excellent work they are already undertaking to support local businesses at this time and could actually slow down this work. Any additional resources should be deployed to engage in groups across the county to support the economic recovery.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared lost.

Motion 2: Councillor Nathan Boyd moved, and Councillor Elaine Ware seconded the motion as set out in the agenda at agenda item 13

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council notes that when a councillor is asked a question or a follow up, the constitution states that the response should be published within five days. It is only right that all communications from ministers or government departments that either thank officers and councillors for their hard work on behalf of residents or bring up any shortcomings or failures of the council are published in a similar way. This seems only fair to our residents and would help us further abide to the principles of Objectivity, Accountability and Openness that The Nolan Principles demand.

Therefore Council requests that all future official central government correspondence to and from the Vale of White Horse District Council is published within five working days so that there is openness and transparency in how central government correspondence influences decisions we make for our residents and that any embargoed or confidential correspondence is circulated to councillors in the same timeframe.

Motion 3: Councillor Nathan Boyd moved, and Councillor Matthew Barber seconded the motion as set out in the agenda.

“This Council recognises the excellent work of all local government staff across Oxfordshire during the COVID-19 crisis. Councils have worked together in difficult times, showing that organisational barriers to joint working can be overcome.

All Councils have gone the extra mile in delivering services to our residents that prioritise the most vulnerable. This has inevitably incurred additional costs.

All Councils acknowledge the additional Government funding to date, but we have a duty to respond to the national financial challenge ahead and to be open with residents.

All Councils across Oxfordshire are now considering how they can balance budgets and protect frontline services. No Councillor nor party wants to see drastic cuts to vital Council services.

We, as a group of democratically elected representatives, should take the opportunity provided by the devolution white paper to ensure that we provide the best possible public services for our residents.

Further to the motion passed at the December 2019 Council meeting, and reflecting that much has changed since, Council calls on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State requesting that we re-open and actively pursue consideration of a Unitary Authority for Oxfordshire and re-start a wide-ranging conversation with our local authority partners, residents and stakeholders to explore all options for a new future for Oxfordshire. Our aims are clear: safeguard public services in the future, support a vibrant local democracy and ensure a strong economy”.

Amendment

Councillor Emily Smith moved, and Councillor Richard Webber seconded the following amendment with deleted words shown by a strikethrough and additional words shown in bold.

“This Council recognises the excellent work of all local government staff across Oxfordshire during the COVID-19 crisis. Councils have worked together in difficult times, showing that organisational barriers to joint working can be overcome.

All Councils have gone the extra mile in delivering services to our residents that prioritise the most vulnerable. This has inevitably incurred additional costs.

~~All~~ **This** Councils acknowledges the **failure of** additional Government funding to date to **fully compensate for financial losses**. ~~but we~~ **We** have a duty to respond to the national financial challenge ahead and to be open with residents.

All Councils across Oxfordshire are now considering how they can balance budgets and protect frontline services. No Councillor nor party wants to see drastic cuts to vital Council services, **but in some cases this may be inevitable.**

~~We, as a group of democratically elected representatives, should take the opportunity provided by the devolution white paper to ensure that we provide the best possible public services for our residents.~~

Further to the motion passed at the December 2019 Council meeting, and reflecting that much has changed since, Council calls on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State requesting that we ~~re-open and actively pursue~~ **continue working with other Oxfordshire Council Leaders and OxLEP and start a conversation with residents and other stakeholders to consider possible options** ~~consideration of~~ **for a Unitary Authority or unitary authorities** for Oxfordshire **should the government bring forward the expected white paper on Recovery and Devolution later this year or the financial position of one or more council make this essential.** ~~and re-start a wide-ranging conversation with our local authority partners, residents and stakeholders to explore all options for a new future for Oxfordshire. Our~~ **priorities in any new structure would include; aims are clear: safeguard public services in the future, support a vibrant local democracy and ensure a strong economy. safeguarding and improving local services, moving decision making closer to residents, simplicity for residents, increased democratic accountability for elected members, greater transparency, and positive impact on the climate emergency”.**

With the consent of Council, the mover and seconder of the original motion accepted the amended wording.

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion, as amended, was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That this Council recognises the excellent work of all local government staff across Oxfordshire during the COVID-19 crisis. Councils have worked together in difficult times, showing that organisational barriers to joint working can be overcome.

All Councils have gone the extra mile in delivering services to our residents that prioritise the most vulnerable. This has inevitably incurred additional costs.

This Council acknowledges the failure of additional Government funding to date to fully compensate for financial losses. We have a duty to respond to the national financial challenge ahead and to be open with residents.

All councils across Oxfordshire are now considering how they can balance budgets and protect frontline services. No Councillor nor party wants to see drastic cuts to vital Council services, but in some cases this may be inevitable.

Further to the motion passed at the December 2019 Council meeting, Council calls on the Leader to continue working with other Oxfordshire Council Leaders and OxLEP and start a

conversation with residents and other stakeholders to consider possible options for a Unitary Authority or unitary authorities for Oxfordshire should the government bring forward the expected white paper on Recovery and Devolution later this year or the financial position of one or more council make this essential. Our priorities in any new structure would include; safeguarding and improving local services, moving decision making closer to residents, simplicity for residents, increased democratic accountability for elected members, greater transparency, and positive impact on the climate emergency.

Motion 4: Councillor Andrew Crawford moved, and Councillor Paul Barrow seconded the motion as set out in the agenda

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council notes that the latest data show the number of COVID 19 deaths per 1,000 Care Home beds in the Vale of White Horse to be almost twice that of the average of local authorities across the UK.* This picture is reflected across the majority of Oxfordshire's District Councils.

We also note that the County's rate of COVID 19 infection to be close to the average of local authorities, so the anomaly highlighted above is not explained by a higher general infection rate. We further note Oxfordshire is listed as the 6th worst Local Authority in England for the percentage of care homes which have experienced an outbreak of COVID 19 with 73% of all care homes affected.**

As the first serious phase of the pandemic recedes, we owe it to all those who have died, their relatives and all those that have worked hard throughout the pandemic to determine the reasons for these significant anomalies.

Council therefore asks the Leader of the council to request the Chair of the Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee of Oxfordshire County Council to convene a meeting with the aim of setting up a rapid and transparent Task Force to analyse and ascertain the reasons for the observed excess deaths and infection rates in Oxfordshire's care homes during the previous three months. Such a review would allow lessons to be learnt and recommendations to be made to reduce both future COVID 19 infections and subsequent deaths, as well as the additional pressure this puts on local public services and the economy.

Statistical Notes

*Cumulative deaths to 12.6.20 show the Vale of White Horse has 53.8 COVID related deaths per 1,000 care home beds against a mean for all English counties of 28.1. Source LG Inform using ONS data. https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/covid-19-and-care-homes?mod-area=E07000180&mod-group=AllDistrictInRegion_SouthEast&mod-type=namedComparisonGroup

** Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine, University of Oxford. COVID-19 Care Homes in England. <https://www.cebm.net/covid-19/covid-19-care-homes/>

Motion 5: Councillor Eric de la Harpe moved, and Councillor Hayleigh Gascoigne seconded the motion as set out in the agenda

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council notes that:

- The Council has declared a Climate Emergency and set a goal to achieve a carbon-neutral District by 2045.
- Towns in this District suffer from traffic congestion and, consequently, poor air quality.
- Low levels of physical inactivity contribute to poor health outcomes for many residents in this District.
- All three of the above challenges can be addressed, in part, by encouraging more residents to use active travel more often.
- During the recent COVID-19 lock-down, levels of active travel increased significantly with some bicycle retailers seeing nearly 200% increase in sales (1) and air pollution fell by 60% in some places. Many residents remarked how pleasant it was.
- As we come out of lock-down, however, the situation may revert to status quo unless bold an ambitious action is taken towards a new normal.
- There is a groundswell of public enthusiasm for creating a new and different normal and an available resource in volunteer groups willing become involved.
- New developments, such as Didcot Garden Town, present ideal opportunities to incorporate and showcase a new normal for active travel networks.
- While people usually adopt active travel for recreational purposes, the primary goal is to reduce car usage in day-to-day activities. Active travel networks need, therefore, to be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive connectors between:
 - Oxford and surrounding towns and villages as proposed in the Oxfordshire Greenways Project,
 - Towns and villages themselves,
 - Towns and villages and the Science Parks as in the Science Vale Cycling Network, and
 - Residential areas and places of employment and retail within towns as proposed in Local Cycling and Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

While not strictly a form of active travel, this Council recognises the benefits of e-scooters and includes them under a broader definition of active travel that also includes e-bikes.

This Council therefore:

1. calls upon the Cabinet to:
 - i. Include policies to enhance active travel outcomes across the district as part of the new Vale Local Plan and more urgently as part of the Design Guide.
 - ii. Include active travel as part of the proposed new Active Communities Strategy.
 - iii. Actively engage with the County's consultations on their emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan to ensure the County are better aware of this Council priorities.
2. calls upon the Leader of the Vale to write a letter to Leader of County Council, Cabinet Member for the Environment and the Walking and Cycling Champion asking them to:
 - a. Prioritise quality control of all active travel infrastructure in accordance with the Oxfordshire Cycling Design Standards, ensuring all proposals are audited for safety and encouragement of active travel.

- b. Review their Parking Standards considering the risks poor car parking poses to people on cycles and pedestrians.
- c. Establish systems for the County to work with Town and Parish Councils to identify CIL funding that could be used to enhance cycle ways and footpaths that link with new routes within new housing development
- d. Continue to resource the work on the Science Vale cycle network and expand this work planning cycle networks within the designated Science Vale area across the Vale of White Horse District.
- e. Continue to resource the Oxfordshire Greenways project.
- f. Expedite the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) for all towns and parishes in the Vale District, engaging with local cycling and walking group volunteers to undertake the preliminary groundwork.
- g. Work with our towns and parishes to identify local needs in addition to sources of funding to implement their LCWIPs.
- h. Fast-track bold and ambitious measures in our towns and parishes to make social distancing possible at pinch-points and consider these measures permanent rather than temporary.

Motion 6: Councillor Emily Smith moved, and Councillor Simon Howell seconded the motion as set out in the agenda

After debate and on being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Council notes that since early March the Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on our district and the country. At least 120 have lost their lives. Many have been seriously ill and are still fighting the virus.

Local businesses have and will continue to suffer the economic impact of this pandemic and young people have had disruption to their education and employment prospects damaged by the resulting lockdown.

Council recognises the huge effort of our officers during the period. Adjusting to working remotely, volunteering to go beyond the day to job to help support shielded people and those isolating and working long hours to keep vital council services running. Council also recognises the quick establishment of new ways of working with community groups and responding incredibly quickly to the demands made of us as part of the Thame Valley Local Resilience Forum operation to protect the NHS.

Council thanks and recognises the huge response from every town, village and hamlet to put in place an infrastructure to help. It is the feet on the street and the community effort that has truly helped look after all elements of the community across the Vale.

Council thanks every officer for the heroic part they have played, and will continue to play, helping residents in need of support through this dangerous and uncertain time.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm