



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 January 2018

7.00 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

Sandra Hancock

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01923 278377

For information about attending meetings please visit the [council's website](#).

Publication date: 10 January 2018

Committee Membership

Councillor K Hastrick (Chair)

Councillor Ahsan Khan (Vice-Chair)

Councillors J Dhindsa, A Dychton, A Grimston, Asif Khan, R Martins, D Walford and T Williams

Agenda

Part A - Open to the Public

1. Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership

2. Disclosure of interests (if any)

3. Minutes

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 23 November 2017 to be submitted and signed.

4. Watford 2020 update (Pages 4 - 9)

The scrutiny committee is asked to review and note the update.

5. Executive Decision Progress Report (Pages 10 - 18)

The scrutiny committee is asked to review the latest edition of the Executive Decision Progress Report and consider whether any further information is required.

6. Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Hastrick, the Council's appointed representative to the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee to provide an update.

Scrutiny Panels and Task Groups

7. Tackling Loneliness Task Group - Final report (Pages 19 - 37)

The scrutiny committee is asked to review the report prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

8. Budget Panel

Since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Budget Panel has met on the following occasions –

- 28 November 2017
- 16 January 2018

The [minutes](#) are available on the council's website.

The Chair of Budget Panel to provide an update to the scrutiny committee.

9. Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel

Since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel met on the following occasions –

- 6 December 2017
- 8 January 2018

The [minutes](#) are available on the council's website.

The Chair of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel to provide an update to the scrutiny committee.

10. Community Safety Partnership Task Group

Since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Community Safety Task Group has not met.

The [minutes](#) for previous meetings are available on the council's website.

11. Dates of Next Meetings

- Thursday 8 February 2018 (For call-in only)
- Thursday 8 March 2018
- Thursday 22 March 2018 (for call-in only)

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| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|-----------------|----------|
| Completed by: | Liam Hornsby | Period from: | 6 November 2017 | |
| Date completed: | 6 November 2017 | Period to: | 9 January 2018 | |
| <div>Current Programme Status</div> <div><div><div>R</div><div>R/A</div><div>A/G</div><div>G</div></div></div> <div><div>Trend since last report</div><div><div>Worse</div><div>Same</div><div>Better</div></div></div> | | <div>Programme Headlines</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Service innovations for all services across the organisation now complete and outputs shared with Programme Board. Proposed future operating model on schedule for presentation at Cabinet on 5 March 2018.Tranche 6 ('Working for the Future') added to the programme following approval by Programme Board on 11 December 2017. Projects shown below.Member face-to-face briefing held on 13 December 2017 with written briefing included in Members' Bulletin of 15 December 2017. Further work to be undertaken in order to raise the profile of the programme with Members'Council of the Future' event to be held for all staff on 24 January 2018 to launch programme supporting strategies and the Working for the Future tranche <div>Project Headlines</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Customer Relationship Management system procurement process complete and preferred supplier selected.Core infrastructure build complete. Remainder of ICT Infrastructure Transformation project running to scheduleDelay to historical Exacom data transfer in Idox Optimisation project. Idox providing an update on 15 January 2018. Final requirements in relation to public and consultee access to be confirmed by Project Team by same date.All file management work now complete but delay to the dissemination of information in light of the requirement to communicate process changes, relating to clear desk guidance/contract document repository in correct forumWBC Estate WiFi in place in Town Hall Annexe building and completion of WiFi on second floor of Town Hall to be completed in line with the current accommodation works.Housing Service operating model approved by Programme Board and on schedule to be reviewed by Cabinet on 22 January 2018. IT implementation underway.Commercial Strategy approved by Cabinet on 6 November 2017 and delivery plan meeting with key Officers scheduled for 6 February 2018ICT Strategy reviewed by ITSG and ICT Strategy Board. On schedule for final sign-off by Cabinet on 22 January 2018People Strategy approved by Cabinet on 4 December 2017 and delivery plan under review. | | |
| Schedule | Budget | HR | Communications | Resource |
| | | | | |

Key activities for next period

- CRM System contractual discussions to conclude and contract to be signed. Detailed project plan to be completed.
- WBC server room move to be completed for ICT Infrastructure Transformation. Active directory migration preparations to continue
- Clear Desk guidance and Contract Document Repository information to be disseminated following feedback from LT. IT to continue work to rationalise shared drives and M drives
- Work to implement WiFi on the second floor of the Town Hall to commence
- Service Innovation high level design work to be reviewed and fed into draft operating model for discussion by LT on 1 February 2018. Priority 1 'quick win plan' to be agreed with Section Heads.
- 'Council of the Future' staff event to be held to launch the programme supporting strategies and tranche 6 of the programme
- People Strategy delivery plan to be finalised and agreed by Programme Board on 2 February 2018
- Commercial Strategy delivery plan to be produced and onward governance confirmed
- ICT Strategy to be presented to Cabinet on 22 January 2018
- Initial tranche 6 project briefs, for Unified Communications and Our Mobile Workforce projects to be presented to Programme Board on 2 February 2018

| Project RAG Statuses | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|-----|---|---|----|-----|--|-----|---|-----|--|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|-----|---|-----|
| CSC Refurbishment | | | | Customer Management System Replacement | | | | ICT Infrastructure Transformation | | | | Idox Optimisation | | | | WBC Estate WiFi | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Closed | | | | Scoping | | | | Implementation | | | | Implementation | | | | Implementation | | | | | |
| Sch | £ | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Project completed and closure report approved by Programme Board on 17 October 2017 | | | | Procurement process complete and preferred supplier selected. Contractual discussions now underway to ensure that contract is signed in advance of kick off meeting on 22 January 2018. | | | | Core infrastructure build now complete. Remainder of ICT Infrastructure Transformation project running to schedule | | | | Delay to Exacom data transfer but update to be received on 15 January 2018 from Idox. | | | | WiFi installation in Annexe building now complete. Remaining work on 2 nd Floor of Town Hall building to be completed in line with accommodation review works. | | | | | |
| File Management | | | | Service Innovations (High Level Design) | | | | People Strategy | | | | Commercial Strategy | | | | ICT Strategy | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Implementation | | | | Design | | | | Design | | | | Design | | | | Design | | | | | |
| Sch | £ | C | Sch | £ | £ | HR | C | Res | Sch | £ | HR | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All work undertaken but communication of changes to staff delayed to ensure that best forums are utilised. Project closure report to Programme Board in March 2018 | | | | All high level design work with services complete. Work underway to pull all information together into proposed operating model for discussion by LT on 1 February 2018 and approval by Cabinet on 5 March 2018 | | | | Approved by Cabinet on 4 December 2017. Each work stream sponsored by a member of LT and delivery plan to be discussed at Programme Board on 2 February 2018 | | | | Approved by Cabinet on 6 November 2017. Draft delivery plan created and to be discussed by key Officers on 6 February 2018 | | | | Draft ICT Strategy presented at ITSG and ICT Strategy Board. On schedule to go to Cabinet for final approval on 22 January 2018 | | | | | |

| Housing Service Implementation | | | | Unified Communications | | | | Our Mobile Workforce | | | | | Mobile Working Transition | | | | | Kit Rationalisation | | | |
|---|--------------|---|-----|---|---|---|---------------|---|-----|----|---|-----|---|---|----|--------------|-----|---|---|---|-----|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Implementation | | | | Not yet started | | | | Not yet started | | | | | Not yet started | | | | | Not yet started | | | |
| Sch | £ | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res | Sch | £ | HR | C | Res | Sch | £ | HR | C | Res | Sch | £ | C | Res |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft operating model and organisational structure approved by Programme Board on 11 December 2017. On schedule to go to Cabinet for final approval on 22 January 2018. Some delay to IT milestones but risk to end date of project has not increased | | | | Project Brief to be presented to Programme Board on 2 February 2018 | | | | Project Brief to be presented to Programme Board on 2 February 2018 | | | | | Project related to the roll out of new IT equipment and unified communications as a single package for staff across the organisation, having identified requirements through the Unified Communications and Our Mobile Workforce projects | | | | | This project will commence once the mobile working requirements have been established and the difference between existing equipment and new equipment understood. | | | |
| Benefits | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ref | Benefit Type | | | Benefit Description | | | Benefit Owner | | RAG | | Comment | | | | | Gross Saving | | Duration | | | |
| B1 | Financial | | | £1m revenue savings by 2018/19 | | | AC | | | | Savings to be identified by December 2017 with implementation as tranche 2 of the programme commencing March 2018 | | | | | £1m | | 18 months | | | |

Highlighted Risks

| Ref | Risk | Cause | Consequence | Response | Original Risk Assessment | | | Action agreed to respond / mitigate / control | Status | Date Raised | Raised by | Risk Owner | Current Risk Assessment | | |
|------|--|--|--|----------|--------------------------|--------------|------------|---|--------|-------------|-----------|------------|-------------------------|--------------|------------|
| | | | | | Likelihood 1-4 | Severity 1-4 | Risk Score | | | | | | Likelihood 1-4 | Severity 1-4 | Risk Score |
| PR8 | The new operating model proposed is not acceptable, either politically or corporately | Politically or corporately uncomfortable with radical transformation | Requirement to undertake high level design for a second time incurring additional, unscheduled costs and anticipated benefits not realised | Treat | 2 | 4 | 8 | 22.06.2017 - Tranche 1 methodology requires collaborative working with services to inform a future operating model which continues to deliver necessary services in a way that is acceptable to services 03.08.2017 - Programme has Portfolio Holder overview and will be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee 17.10.2017 - Additional engagement with Cabinet to be undertaken 23.11.2017 - Programme presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Members' Briefing arranged for 13.12.2017 13.12.2017 – Members' Briefing held but not well attended so risk increase – further consideration given to engagement of members. | Open | 22.06.17 | LH | AC | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| PR14 | Existing council ICT providers will not be able to integrate with the new CRM system within the timescales outlined in the Project PID | To ensure that the CRM delivers the council's ambition for services to be end-to-end digital by design, existing back office systems must fully integrate with the new CRM. If the Project Manager does not understand these requirements, it will be difficult to accurate project plan | CRM system will not be able to provide the capability anticipated across the organisation. Lagan and Ebase will not be able to be retired when anticipated resulting in additional costs to the organisation | Treat | 3 | 4 | 12 | 31.08.2017 - Project Manager to establish resource requirements and interactions between CRM and existing ICT suppliers. To be actioned following conclusion of procurement process. 06.12.2017 – selected supplier can integrate with existing providers. Project Manager seek confirmation on availability of APIs | Open | 10.08.17 | ML | LH | 2 | 3 | 6 |

Watford 2020
Progress Update Report
9 January 2018

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|---|--|---|-------|---|---|----|---|------|----------|----|----|---|---|---|
| PR17 | Housing Service Operating Model Implementation will be undertaken twice | Homeless Reduction Act is due to be implemented on 1 April 2018 and will require significant operational change to ensure that the service can manage the increased demand | Increased cost and reduction in immediate level of benefit. | Treat | 4 | 4 | 16 | 19.09.2017 - Programme Board approved PID allowing Housing Service Operating Model Implementation Project to commence in advance of the rest of tranche 2. 28.09.2017 - Project Board to ensure that scope includes Watford 2020 baseline analysis and ideas generation work 03.12.2017 - Housing Operating Model and mitigation plan in place and to be shared with Programme Board on 11.12.17 11.12.17 - Housing Operating Model approved by Programme Board with list of Service Innovation ideas included | Open | 18.09.17 | LH | AC | 1 | 4 | 4 |
|------|---|--|---|-------|---|---|----|---|------|----------|----|----|---|---|---|

No issues at the current time



Executive Decision Progress Report

May 2017 – May 2018

Contact Officer: Sandra Hancock
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

Telephone: 01923 278377

Email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

10 January 2018

All officer decisions are available on the [Officer Decision Register](#) or on the full [Decision Register](#). Only key decisions are shown below. Further information about [forthcoming decisions](#) is available online.

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|---|---|----------------|---|---|
| To note the business plan associated with Watford Riverwell is being updated and that there will be a number of associated changes relating to the masterplan | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | June 2017 | Part B decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as it relates to commercially confidential information. Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 5 June 2017 Not called in |
| To increase delegation limit of the Portfolio Holder for Property to enable the Property Investment Board to acquire and dispose of property | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | June 2017 | Part B decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as it relates to commercially confidential information. Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 5 June 2017 Not called in |
| To adopt the Cycle Parking Supplementary Planning Document, to supplement policies in the Local Plan Core Strategy | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | July 2017 | Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 3 July 2017 Not called in |

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|---|---|---------------------|---|---|
| Local Plan Part 2 (Site allocations and development management policies) – not to submit Local Plan Part 2 for examination, but to focus on progressing the Local Plan review | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | September 2017 | Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 September 2017 Not called in |
| Funding for public realm improvements to High Street, Watford | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet and Council | September 2017 | Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 September 2017 and Council on 17 October 2017 Call-in not applicable |
| Construction of a four-storey building and raised deck car park on Town Hall campus | Democracy and Governance | Cabinet | September 2017 | Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 September 2017 (Appendices are Part B, covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as they relate to commercially confidential information.) Not called in |

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------|---|---|
| Watford Riverwell | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | September 2017 | <p>Part B decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as it relates to commercially confidential information.</p> <p>Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 September 2017</p> <p>Not called in</p> |
| Business Rates Pilot for 2018 | Finance | Mayor Council | October 2017 | <p>In accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rule 15, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee was notified that the decision was to be considered by the Mayor on 2 October 2017, followed by Council on 17 October 2017.</p> <p>Call-in not applicable</p> |

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|---|---|----------------|---|--|
| To approve disposal of council interest in a Watford property | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Mayor | October 2017 | <p>Part B key decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as it relates to commercially confidential information.</p> <p>The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the decision could be dealt with in accordance with Access to Information Procedure Rule 16 of the Constitution, "Special Urgency".</p> <p>Considered by the Mayor on 27 October 2017</p> <p>Call-in not applicable</p> |
| To agree to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order at the request of Watford Community Housing Trust for the redevelopment of land on the Meriden Estate | Democracy and Governance | Cabinet | November 2017 | <p>Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 November 2017</p> <p>Not called in</p> |
| To adopt a Supplementary Planning Document relating to the use of commuted sums for the provision of affordable housing | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | November 2017 | <p>Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 November 2017</p> <p>Not called in</p> |

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|--|---|----------------|---|---|
| Approval of the commercial strategy for Watford Borough Council | Community and Environmental Services and Service Transformation | Cabinet | November 2017 | Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 November 2017 Not called in |
| To agree to provide a Parent Guarantee to a loan for the Riverwell Development | Finance | Cabinet | November 2017 | Part B decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, as it relates to commercially confidential information. In accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rule 15, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee was notified that the decision was to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 6 November 2017 . Not called in |
| To recommend a level of fine under the Unauthorised Deposit of Waste (Fixed Penalties) Regulations 2016) | Community and Environmental Services | Cabinet | December 2017 | Originally due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 September 2017, deferred to meeting on 4 December 2017 Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 December 2017 Not called in |

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------------|---|--|
| Restructure of the ICT Section | Service Transformation | Cabinet | December 2017 | Part B decision covered by Paragraph 4, Schedule 12A, as it relates to staffing matters and individual staff employment. Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 December 2017 Not called in |
| To appoint a contractor to deliver the new leisure centre management contract to operate the three council owned leisure facilities: Central and Woodside Leisure Centres and Woodside Stadium | Community and Environmental Services | Cabinet | December 2017 | Part B decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, due to information being commercially sensitive. Considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 December 2017 Not called in |

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|---|--|
| Award of parking enforcement contract | | | | <p>Part B decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, due to the report containing information which related to the financial or business affairs of the council.</p> <p>In accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rule 15, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee was notified that the decision was to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 December 2017</p> <p>Not called in</p> |
| Award of parking ICT contracts | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | December 2017 | <p>Part B decision covered by Paragraph 3, Schedule 12A, due to the report containing information which related to the financial or business affairs of the council.</p> <p>In accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rule 15, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee was notified that the decision was to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 December 2017</p> <p>Not called in</p> |

| Decision | Department | Decision maker | Date Key Decision to be taken (as shown on the Notice of Executive Decisions) | Status |
|--|---|----------------|---|--|
| Amend the council's Housing Nomination Policy to comply with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 | Place Shaping and Corporate Performance | Cabinet | February 2018 | Due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 19 February 2018 |
| Cassiobury Park car park | Community and Environmental Services | Cabinet | December 2017 | Originally due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 9 October 2017, following deferral from the meeting on 4 December 2017, it is due to be considered at the meeting on 4 June 2018. |

Agenda Item 7

PART A

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting: 18 January 2018
Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Title: Tackling Loneliness Task Group

1.0 **Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the final report and recommendations of the Tackling Loneliness Task Group. The report is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 The scrutiny committee is asked to review the report and recommendations prior to its presentation to Cabinet on 19 February 2018.

2.0 **Risks**

No risks have been identified as a result of the task group's recommendations.

3.0 **Recommendations**

- 3.1 that the final report and recommendations of the Tackling Loneliness Task Group be agreed and forwarded to Cabinet.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Democracy and Governance

4.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 4.1 In March 2017 Councillor Mauthoor moved a motion at Council calling for strategic ways to be found to help tackle loneliness in the borough. The motion was seconded

by Councillor Taylor. Council unanimously agreed to set up a task group to look at the prevalence of loneliness within the borough and to address ways in which Watford Borough Council might make a difference.

- 4.2 Councillor Mauthoor completed the scrutiny proposal form which was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 22 June 2017. The scrutiny committee agreed to the establishment of the task group. In addition it agreed the following membership –
- Councillor Bilqees Mauthoor (elected as Chair at the task group’s first meeting)
 - Councillor Stephen Bolton
 - Councillor Stephen Cavinder
 - Councillor Kareen Hastrick
 - Councillor Rabi Martins
- 4.3 Prior to the first meeting councillors were provided with various documents and links to websites that covered the subject of loneliness and campaigns to tackle the issue. They were also provided with details of several radio programmes that had been broadcast about loneliness and its impact.
- 4.4 The task group held two formal meetings. The first meeting took place on 22 September, when the councillors considered the issue of loneliness and social isolation in Watford. It was acknowledged that Watford Borough Council did not have a specific remit in this area. However councillors were interested in the well-being of the local Watford community. They agreed to hold a second meeting which would be held during the day.
- 4.5 The second meeting was held on 1 December 2017, commencing at 10.30 a.m. The task group had agreed to invite representatives from a range of organisations to provide evidence against a list of agreed questions. The evidence helped the task group to understand the extent of the problem in the local community and ways in which the organisations were tackling the issue.
- 4.6 As part of the review Councillors Mauthoor and Cavinder attended a seminar ‘Tackling Isolation and Loneliness in the UK: Improving Well Being and Social Inclusion at all Ages’, which had been organised by the Public Policy Exchange. Speakers included representatives from local government, Public Health England and charitable organisations.
- 4.7 Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to review the report and recommendations prior to its submission to Cabinet.

4.0 Implications

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 The Head of Finance comments that there are no further direct budget implications from the recommendations in the report or the Appendix.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in this report.

4.3 Equalities/Human Rights

- 4.3.1 Loneliness can affect all sectors of the community and all ages. The aim of the task group's recommendations is to ensure that people have access to information and organisations that can help in this issue.

Appendices

Appendix A – Tackling Loneliness Task Group report

Background Papers

There are no specific background papers for this report. All background information used during the task group's work is referenced in the final report.

File Reference

None



Tackling Loneliness Task Group

January 2018

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| 1. Task group scope and proposal | |

Task group members

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Councillor Bilqees Mauthoor | Chair, Councillor for Leggatts Ward |
| Councillor Stephen Bolton | Councillor for Central Ward |
| Councillor Stephen Cavinder | Councillor for Woodside Ward |
| Councillor Kareen Hastrick | Councillor for Meriden Ward |
| Councillor Rabi Martins | Councillor for Central Ward |

Officer support

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Ishbel Morren | Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer |
| Sandra Hancock | Committee and Scrutiny Officer |
| Jodie Kloss | Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer |

External organisations

| | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Age UK | Mark Hanna and Deborah Lee |
| Youth Connexions, Hertfordshire | Mary Walsh |
| Disability Watford | Leigh Hutchings |
| Hertfordshire County Council | Sue Darker |
| Home Start | Emma Power |
| New Hope | Pete Belfield |
| The Silver Line | David Dingley |
| Small Acts of Kindness | Lynne Misner |
| Watford & Three Rivers Trust | Bob Jones |

Proposed recommendations to present to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To provide:

- signposting to appropriate organisations for those experiencing loneliness, through the use of:
 - a dedicated page on the council's website
 - leaflets and publications from relevant organisations in the customer service centre at the Town Hall and in other council owned facilities e.g., community centres, Watford Museum and the leisure centres
 - information from external organisations displayed on community noticeboards
- training for councillors to help them to recognise and assist people vulnerable to loneliness in the course of their work in the local community
- best practice guidance for councillors – to be included as a downloadable document on the council's intranet

Also to:

- ask the Mayor to write to
 - HCC underlining the importance of tackling loneliness amongst Watford residents and encouraging them to ensure the issue remains a priority and is reflected in the allocation of resources
 - the MP for Watford underlining the importance of tackling loneliness and encouraging him to take an active part in cross-party efforts to address the issue and to speak out on behalf of residents who may be affected
- encourage councillors to be mindful of local organisations and events which attempt to tackle loneliness in their ward when allocating money from their Neighbourhood Locality Funds
- the Task Group Chair to write and encourage the Portfolio Holder for Community to be mindful of local organisations and events which attempt to tackle loneliness in Watford in their consideration of the council's Small Grants Fund applications.

Background to the task group

There has been a growing focus on the potentially harmful effects of loneliness and social isolation on health and longevity, especially among older adults. This has been supported by various studies and surveys, including a major study by The Co-op and the British Red Cross (2016) which revealed that over 9 million people in the UK across all adult ages – more than the population of London – were either always or often lonely.

The impact of loneliness on health is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day (Holt-Lunstad, 2015). It is not confined to particular groups, although is most prevalent amongst the elderly. The task group learnt that:

- 200,000 older people said they had not had a conversation with friends or family for a month, while 3.9 million older people agreed the television was their main form of company (Age UK, 2014)
- 1 in 5 GP visits were for non-clinical purposes (Citizens Advice, 2015)
- 43% of 17 – 25 year olds who used the Action for Children service had experienced problems with loneliness (Action for Children, 2009)
- 24% of parents surveyed said they were always or often lonely (Action for Children, 2015)
- 50% of disabled people were lonely on any given day (Sense, 2015)
- 58% of refugees and migrants surveyed in London described loneliness and isolation as their biggest challenge (The Forum, 2014)
- 8 out of 10 carers have felt lonely or isolated as a result of looking after a loved one (Carers UK, 2014)
- almost 10% of people with dementia leave the house once a month or less (Alzheimer's Society, 2014).

The Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness was established in January 2017 to continue the work of the murdered MP, Jo Cox. It brings together a group of 13 charities and businesses to respond to the challenge of loneliness. Inspired by the late MP, their vision is to encourage people to work together to make a real difference to the lives of those affected by loneliness.

Against this background, in March 2017 Councillor Mauthoor moved a motion at Council calling for strategic ways to be found, across party lines, to help tackle loneliness in the borough. The motion was seconded by Councillor Peter Taylor. Council unanimously agreed to set up a task group to look at the prevalence of loneliness within the borough and to address ways in which Watford Borough Council might make a difference.

Councillor Mauthoor's proposed review observed that being alone or living alone or in total isolation was a public health issue and a risk that should be tackled at a local level. It further noted that feelings of loneliness and social isolation could affect people at any stage of their lives, but were most acute in older age.

In addition, the review proposed the need to consider loneliness in terms of its detrimental impact on health and well-being as well as the effects on individuals and public services.

The task group was agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2017, when its membership was approved.

Councillor Mauthoor was elected chair by the task group.

Overview of the task group's programme of work

At their first meeting on 22 September, the task group considered the issue of loneliness and social isolation in Watford. It was reflected that the issue could affect anyone at any stage and was experienced by a range of different groups within the community often at pinch points in their lives. These included, young new mums, individuals with mobility limitations, health issues or who were recently divorced or separated, those living without children at home, retired people and the recently bereaved.

Task group members considered that understanding the issue of loneliness was important both to them in their role as councillors and to council officers who, in the course of their work, might come into contact with members of the public experiencing loneliness problems.

The task group acknowledged that Watford Borough Council did not have a remit in this area. However, councillors took a keen interest in the wellbeing of their constituents and wished to understand and support their communities.

In order to understand fully the extent of the problem in the local community and ways that they might respond positively, the task group proposed a full fact finding day inviting a range of representative organisations to provide evidence against a list of defined and previously agreed questions. Additional comments were sought from other organisations playing an important role in the community to inform the task group's work.

A full list of the organisations which provided evidence to the task group for this review is listed on page 3 of this report.

The task group met formally on two occasions.

Additional research work was carried out by officers to inform the task group and to produce this report.

In addition, Councillors Mauthoor and Cavinder attended a Public Policy Exchange seminar “Tackling isolation and loneliness in the UK” on 4 October 2017, reporting back its conclusions and recommendations to the task group.

Recommendations and comments

To provide:

- **signposting to appropriate organisations for those experiencing loneliness, through the use of:**
 - **a dedicated page on the council’s website**
 - **leaflets and publications from relevant organisations in the customer service centre at the Town Hall and in other council owned facilities e.g., community centres, Watford Museum and the leisure centres**
 - **information from external organisations displayed on community noticeboards**

All of the organisations questioned sought channels to promote the help and advice they offered to lonely and socially isolated people. In addition to word of mouth, they advised that one of the most effective means of getting their message out was the use of leaflets and magazines at obvious points of contact. These included public buildings, community halls and health establishments (GP surgeries, hospitals and opticians).

The task group considered the council should commit to ensuring that relevant leaflets and publications were displayed in the customer service centre at the Town Hall and in other council owned facilities, such as community centres, Watford Museum and the leisure centres. In addition, community noticeboards around the borough should be used to display further information and organisations offering support.

It was noted that not all groups experiencing loneliness and social isolation accessed information in the same way and a wide ranging communications strategy was therefore required. This should include the internet and, where appropriate, social media. The task group proposed establishing a dedicated page on the council’s website which would signpost people to information and relevant websites.

The task group acknowledged that not all groups had access to, or the skills to use, the internet. As a consequence, despite the council's drive to use digital solutions for information, the task group proposed that the internet should not replace the availability of paper-based information over time.

- **training for councillors to help them to recognise and assist people vulnerable to loneliness in the course of their work in the local community**

The task group considered the great variety in Hertfordshire's social, cultural and racial mix. It was reported that the loneliness problem was particularly acute amongst the elderly (especially when housebound), those with learning disabilities and mental health issues.

All of the organisations which provided evidence to the task group were keen to promote a better understanding of the loneliness problem in Watford. To this end, all offered to provide practical advice and assistance in devising and running a training programme for councillors to help them to recognise and assist people vulnerable to loneliness in the course of their work in the local community.

One of the key areas of evidence provided to the task group was the indicators that councillors might look for to suggest that an individual was lonely or socially isolated. The task group learnt that there were three recognised scales to assess potential loneliness: Campaign to End Loneliness Measurement tool, the De-Jong Giervald 6-Item Loneliness Scale and the UCLA 3-Item Loneliness Scale.

Practical indicators that they might look for whilst carrying out their work included:

- people who undertook only single visits outside their houses e.g., to the shops or GP, where contact with the GP or health services was for only minor complaints
- individuals isolated in their communities, who had limited social networks and could not name friends or family with whom they were in touch, who watched TV constantly and tended to lack awareness, who said too little or too much (because they were unused to company) and who adopted strategies to stop visitors leaving
- those living in untidy, poorly maintained properties, who might be housebound or lacked mobility and the means to get out
- individuals who were deaf, or were suffering from mental health issues or who had communication difficulties.

This was by no means an exhaustive list. Generally, people did not wish to self-identify, feeling a sense of shame or inadequacy and the complete picture of loneliness in Watford was therefore unclear. All of the task group's witnesses spoke of the difficulty of developing a full picture of the loneliness problem. The task group therefore considered that training to identify and assist people vulnerable to loneliness in the course of their work was important.

Recognising the wide-reaching implications of the problem of loneliness in society, task group members suggested that the training would also be relevant to officers, particularly those who came into regular contact with members of the public.

- **best practice guidance for councillors – to be included as a downloadable document on the council's intranet**

As a part of the above training, task group members suggested that some best practice, quick reference guidance, drawing from a wide range of resources, should be produced for councillors. This should summarise what to look out for and how to help when councillors encountered lonely people whilst carrying out their work in the local community.

The best practice guidance should take the form of a downloadable document, which would be accessible on the council's intranet. A number of organisations providing evidence advised that 'real stories' provided a useful means of illustrating the issues. This might form part of any guidance material.

As noted above, the task group considered that any training and best practice advice should be available to all council officers, but particularly to front-line staff who had greater direct contact with members of the public.

Also to:

- **ask the Mayor to write to**
 - **HCC underlining the importance of tackling loneliness amongst Watford residents and encouraging them to ensure the issue remains a priority and is reflected in the allocation of resources**
 - **the MP for Watford underlining the importance of tackling loneliness and encouraging him to take an active part in cross-party efforts to address the issue and to speak out on behalf of residents who may be affected**

The task group was mindful of Watford Borough Council's limited remit in regard to policies which might impact on tackling the loneliness problem in Watford. Greater policy influence and resources were available at county level. In addition, task group members recognised the considerable focus the issue was receiving at a national political level, not least from the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness which had attracted cross party support in Parliament.

With this in mind, the task group considered that it would be appropriate for the council's elected Mayor to write to both Hertfordshire County Council and to the MP for Watford to underline the importance of tackling loneliness in Watford and to promote actions within their powers to enable solutions to the benefit of local residents.

- **encourage councillors to be mindful of local organisations and events which attempt to tackle loneliness in their ward when allocating money from their Neighbourhood Locality Funds**
- **the Task Group Chair to write and encourage the Portfolio Holder for Community to be mindful of local organisations and events which attempt to tackle loneliness in Watford in their consideration of the council's Small Grants Fund applications.**

Within each of Watford Borough Council's 12 wards, councillors have a small Neighbourhood Locality Fund of £2,500 per annum. The fund is intended to enable councillors to meet with residents, businesses and other community groups, and facilitate the enhancement of their area and the amenities of those living and working in the ward. This could include providing grants for community projects, match funding, or carrying out small projects. The protocol for any expenditure requires a focus on local organisations promoting grass roots groups and activities, rather than larger national charities with other funding streams at their disposal.

In addition, Watford Borough Council has an annual Small Grants Fund. This offers voluntary and community sector groups the opportunity to apply for a grant of up to £2,000 to help towards a project or to purchase an item of equipment. Applications are encouraged from informal groups, such as groups of neighbours, as well as from small formal community organisations, grass roots groups, charities, social enterprises and community interest companies.

The task group considered that both funds offered the opportunity for councillors and Watford Borough Council to promote activities which would assist in the efforts to tackle loneliness in Watford.

To this end, it was suggested that councillors should be mindful of local organisations and events within their wards which attempted to tackle loneliness when allocating money from their Neighbourhood Locality Funds.

In addition, whilst the assessment criteria for the Small Grants Funds sat comfortably with the aspirations of the task group, it was agreed that the task group chair should write to the Portfolio Holder for Community to remind her of the work of the task group and encourage her to be aware of the opportunities to tackle loneliness when allocating money to groups.

Bibliography/background papers

Trapped in a bubble: an investigation into triggers for loneliness in the UK, Co-op and British Red Cross, 2016

http://www.redcross.org.uk/~media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/UK%20services/Co_Op_Trapped_in_a_bubble_report_AW.pdf

BBC Radio 2 Loneliness Week, 9-14 July 2017

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/3gk9N7qRMcW2hhcVhmBJ5D/loneliness-week-2017>

Growing up: transition to a successful adulthood, Action for Children, 2015

https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/8275/growing_up_-_transition_to_a_successful_adulthood.pdf

This is how it feels to be lonely - A report on migrants and refugees' experiences with loneliness in London, The Forum, 2014

https://migrantsorganise.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Loneliness-report_The-Forum_UPDATED.pdf

Dementia 2014: Opportunity for change, Alzheimer's Society, 2014

https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/2317/dementia_2014_opportunity_for_change.pdf

A very general practice How much time do GPs spend on issues other than health? Citizens Advice, 2015

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Public%20services%20publications/CitizensAdvice_AVeryGeneralPractice_May2015.pdf

Alone and Caring, Carers UK, 2015

<https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/alone-caring>

Websites for the following organisations:

[Age UK](#)

[Youth Connexions Hertfordshire](#)

[Carers UK](#)

[Disability Watford](#)

[Hertfordshire County Council](#)

[Home Start](#)

[New Hope](#)

[The Silver Line](#)

[Small Acts of Kindness](#)

[Watford & Three Rivers Trust](#)

Suggestions for topics to be scrutinised – evaluation table

A Member, Officer or member of the public suggesting a topic for scrutiny must complete Section 1 as fully as possible. Completed tables will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny for consideration.

| | |
|--|---|
| Section 1 – Scrutiny Suggestion | |
| Proposer: Councillor/Officer/Member of public | |
| Topic recommended for scrutiny: <i>Please include as much detail as is available about the specific such as;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • areas which should be <u>included</u> • areas which should be <u>excluded</u> • Whether the focus should be on past performance, future policy or both. | <i>Tackling loneliness</i> |
| Why have you recommended this topic for scrutiny? | I would like this council to help find strategic ways across party to help tackle loneliness. This Council notes that being or living alone in total isolation can be a public health issue and risk that must be tackled starting at a local level. Feelings of loneliness and social isolation can affect people at any stage of their life but are particularly more critical when it happens to older age. We know that loneliness has two important distinctions a) risk factors leading up to a deterioration in health and well-being b) effects this would have on individuals and public services. |
| What are the specific outcomes you wish to see from the review? | I would like to see that there is a clear point of contact that people can have access to either the person who is suffering or any other person who knows of someone. This could be a local councillor who comes across a vulnerable person |

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| | <p>they could be referred.</p> <p>I would also like to see more shared partnerships between all the varies local charities that may be able to help bring about change. I am concerned that local charities are not talking to each other often enough and I would like to see a task group that also includes some of the most appropriate charities represented so we can work together.</p> <p>At present Manchester and Coventry councils have adopted and worked out a plan to fit this in the council.</p> <p>It is predicted that between 2008 and 2033 there will be large increases in the number of older people living alone particularly in the 85+ age range.</p> <p>Raising councillors' awareness of the issue, how to identify potential lonely people and what to do.</p> |
| How do you think evidence might be obtained? | <p>I would like to start off by carrying out a survey and using social media to reinforce our efforts.</p> <p>From councillors during their canvassing door to door who may have identified people who are living alone.</p> <p>We would need to collect data from various sources, mosaic profiling, council services, local charities/community groups.</p> <p>Herts county council will also be a good source.</p> <p>Information from expert witnesses</p> |
| Does the proposed item meet the following criteria? | |
| It must affect a group or community of people | <p>Old aged people mainly</p> <p>Young people who have lost partners</p> <p>Single parents</p> <p>Young people</p> |
| It must relate to a service, event or issue in | Health and well-being and the town's vulnerable communities |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| which the council has a significant stake | | | |
| It must not have been a topic of scrutiny within the last 12 months | This topic has not been covered by scrutiny | | |
| It must not be an issue, such as planning or licensing, which is dealt with by another council committee | Not applicable | | |
| Does the topic meet the council's priorities? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify ways to manage the borough's housing needs 2. Champion smart growth and economic prosperity 3. Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities 4. Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community 5. Secure our own financial future | | |
| Are you aware of any limitations of time, other constraints or risks which need to be taken into account? | None that I am aware of | | |
| Does the topic involve a Council partner or other outside body? | Local charities police, and herts county council. | | |
| Are there likely to be any Equality implications which will need to be considered? | | | |
| <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">Councillor/Officer <i>Bilqees Mauthoor</i></td> <td style="width: 20%;">Date 15 May 2017</td> </tr> </table> | | Councillor/Officer <i>Bilqees Mauthoor</i> | Date 15 May 2017 |
| Councillor/Officer <i>Bilqees Mauthoor</i> | Date 15 May 2017 | | |

