



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

CABINET

1 March 2021

7.00 pm

Virtual meeting

Contact

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Publication date: 19 February 2021

Cabinet Membership

| | | |
|-------------|--|----------------|
| Mayor | P Taylor | (Chair) |
| Councillor | K Collett | (Deputy Mayor) |
| Councillors | S Johnson, I Sharpe, M Watkin and T Williams | |

Agenda

Part A – Open to the Public

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Disclosure of interests (if any)**
- 3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 8 February 2021 to be submitted and signed.

- 4. Conduct of meeting**

The Cabinet may wish to consider whether there are any items on which there is general agreement which could be considered now, to enable discussion to focus on those items where the Cabinet sees a need for further debate.

- 5. Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review task group - final report (Pages 4 - 25)**

Report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer

- 6. Approval of Croxley Business Plan (Pages 26 - 69)**

Report of the Interim Head of Property and Regeneration

Appendix, exempt under Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3

7. Exclusion of press & public

The Chair to move: that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during consideration of the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Section 100(1) of the Act for the reasons stated below in terms of Schedule 12A.

Note: if approved, the Chair will ask members of the press and public to leave the meeting at this point.

8. IT Services Contract Award (Pages 70 - 74)

Report of the Head of ICT

Exempt, Schedule 12A, Paragraph 3

9. Letting to West Herts Hospital NHS Trust (Pages 75 - 110)

Report of the Interim Head of Property and Regeneration

Exempt, Schedule 12A Paragraph 3

Agenda Item 5

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 1 March 2021

Report author: Senior Democratic Services Officer

Title: Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review task group - final report

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Cabinet with the final report and recommendations of the Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review task group. The full report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The report was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2021. An extract of the relevant minutes is attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.3 Cabinet is asked to consider the task group's recommendations for approval.

2.0 Risks

- 2.1 No direct risks to the council have been identified as a result of the task group's recommendations.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 that Cabinet approves the task group's recommendations:

Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities

- 1. Watford Borough Council should agree a corporate definition of BAME. The council should also assess how well the needs of other communities, not captured in the task group's agreed definition of BAME, are understood and served.
- 2. The council should establish an equalities forum to include representatives of protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3. The council should develop a corporate equalities policy.

4. The template for undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments for new council policies should be reviewed to reflect best practice.
5. The council, in partnership with ward councillors, should encourage all communities to complete their Census 2021 returns and to underline the importance of this data in formulating future council policies.
6. Councillors should maximise their community role to share public health messages and particularly to encourage take-up of vaccines for Covid 19 and promote wider health screening programmes.
7. The council should provide compulsory training on equalities and unconscious bias for staff and members.

Street name policy review

1. The council should adopt a new street naming policy for the borough which sets out the process for reviewing existing street names as well as naming new streets and buildings to reflect the rich diversity of the town.
2. The council should commission Watford Museum to develop an education programme based around a new exhibition which explores the background and history of the town's road names, including those identified as having negative historic links.

Further information:

Ishbel Morren

ishbel.morren@watford.gov.uk

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

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 At its meeting on 23 July 2020, Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed a scrutiny proposal to form a task group to consider the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities. The proposal also included a focus on the council's approach to naming its streets.

4.2 The following councillors were appointed to the task group:

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Councillor Favour Ezeifedi | Chair, Councillor for Holywell Ward |
| Councillor Dawn Allen-Williamson | Councillor for Callowland Ward |
| Councillor Peter Jeffree | Councillor for Park Ward |
| Councillor Asif Khan | Councillor for Leggatts Ward |
| Councillor Jennifer Pattinson | Councillor for Meriden Ward |

- 4.3 An initial meeting in November 2020 agreed the terms of reference and scope of its work, including the key witnesses to approach.
- 4.4 To provide context to the impact of Covid 19, the task group heard from the Director of Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council and the Head of Community Protection at Watford Borough Council. In addition, two witness sessions were held, first with representatives of the local community and voluntary sector and second with individuals from Watford's BAME communities. The views of all members were also invited.
- 4.5 Addressing the borough's approach to street naming, the task group reviewed the policy documentation already in place and determined how this could be updated and formalised.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that if Cabinet approves the recommendation that the council should commission Watford Museum to develop an education programme, there will be cost implications and that a budget will need to be identified for this work before it commences.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the report makes specific recommendations for new policies to be adopted by the council that would need to be agreed by Cabinet.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

- 5.3.1 The report makes specific recommendations to the council regarding its corporate equalities responsibilities, including that it should develop a corporate equalities policy.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review task group - final report
- Appendix 2 Extract of minutes from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 4 February 2021

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.



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

**Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on
Watford's BAME communities and street name
policy review task group**

January 2021

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| 1. Task group proposal | |

Task group members

Councillor Favour Ezeifedi
Councillor Dawn Allen-Williamson
Councillor Peter Jeffree
Councillor Asif Khan
Councillor Jennifer Pattinson

Chair, Councillor for Holywell Ward
Councillor for Callowland Ward
Councillor for Park Ward
Councillor for Leggatts Ward
Councillor for Meriden Ward

Officer support

Ishbel Morren
Jodie Kloss

Senior Democratic Services Officer
Democratic Services Officer

Witnesses

Watford Borough Council

Kathryn Robson

Justine Hoy
Sarah Turnbull
Danielle Negrello
Ryan Rodrigues

Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and
Communications
Head of Community Protection
Environmental Health Officer
Head of Customer Experience
Geographic Information Manager

Hertfordshire County Council

Jim McManus

Director of Public Health

Community and charity representatives

Sohib Ali
Rhoda Amezado
Salim Bakirci
Ekene Banye
Kips Green

Yogesh Joshi
Enoch Kangaraj
Sumbo Kehinde
Clive Saunders
Harjit Singh
Zahid Zarin

Watford Central Mosque
Ngorli CIC
Watford Citizens Advice Bureau
Nigerians in Watford
YCH Services for Young People, Hertfordshire
County Council
Indian Community
One Vision
African community
Watford Afro-Caribbean Association
Watford Interfaith Association
Muslim Youth Centre

Residents from Watford New Hope.

Input from wider Watford councillors.

Proposed recommendations to present to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities

1. Watford Borough Council should agree a corporate definition of BAME. The council should also assess how well the needs of other communities, not captured in the task group's agreed definition of BAME, are understood and served.
2. The council should establish an equalities forum to include representatives of protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.
3. The council should develop a corporate equalities policy.
4. The template for undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments for new council policies should be reviewed to reflect best practice.
5. The council, in partnership with ward councillors, should encourage all communities to complete their Census 2021 returns and to underline the importance of this data in formulating future council policies.
6. Councillors should maximise their community role to share public health messages and particularly to encourage take-up of vaccines for Covid 19 and promote wider health screening programmes.
7. The council should provide compulsory training on equalities and unconscious bias for staff and members.

Street name policy review

1. The council should adopt a new street naming policy for the borough which sets out the process for reviewing existing street names as well as naming new streets and buildings to reflect the rich diversity of the town.
2. The council should commission Watford Museum to develop an education programme based around a new exhibition which explores the background and history of the town's road names, including those identified as having negative historic links.

Background to the task group

Early in the Covid 19 pandemic it became clear that the virus has disproportionately impacted Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. Some were hit particularly hard. The Public Health England review of June 2020¹ concludes that the unequal impacts of Covid 19 may be explained by social and economic inequalities.

At a local level, Watford has had one of the highest rates of Covid 19 cases in Hertfordshire as of 11 January 2021, the rate per 100,000 was 967.1. The rate in Hertfordshire as a whole was 826 per 100,000². There has also been a total of 149 deaths in Watford, with a death rate per 100,000 population of 154.3 compared to a rate of 126.2 in England as a whole.³

Watford has a very diverse population, the most recent census data available, from 2011, shows the following breakdown in terms of ethnicity: White British (61.9%), White other (7.7%), Pakistani (6.7%), British Indian (5.5%), British other Asian (4.4%) and African (3.5%), White Irish (2.3%) and Caribbean (1.7%). In 2016, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published population estimates by ethnicity. This did not report ethnicities to the level of granularity that the Census reported ethnicity. The estimates for 2016 were: White British (59% - 57,000 residents), Asian / Asian British (19% - 19,000 residents), All Other White (12% - 12,000 residents), Black / African / Caribbean / Black British (4% - 4,000 residents), Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Group (4% - 4,000 residents) and Other Ethnic Group (1% - 1,000 residents). The next UK-wide census will take place on 21 March 2021 which will provide a more accurate and up-to-date picture.

It is recognised that the BAME communities have specific areas of concern, including, but not limited to, the factors which appear to have led to worse health outcomes during the pandemic. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), in its capacity as the responsible authority for health, is reviewing the relevance and impact of the findings of the recent Public Health England report on the impact of Covid 19 on BAME communities. The review is creating an action plan focussing on addressing health inequalities. WBC officers are already working to ensure that Watford communities are fully engaged and considered in this work.

At Full Council on 14 July 2020, a [motion](#) from Councillor Ezeifedi was agreed to establish an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to provide research and insight into our local BAME communities, focusing on the issues that matter to them and working with them to develop recommendations that will deliver change and improved outcomes.

The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement of recent months has focussed on the experiences of the Black communities across the globe and the history of its struggles, including the legacy of slavery and oppression. BLM has highlighted symbols of the past, including street names which memorialise individuals who played a role in the slave trade and British imperialism.

¹ Beyond the data, understanding the impact of Covid 19 on BAME groups, Public Health England (June 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities>

² <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/cases> accessed 11 January 2021

³ <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/details/deaths?areaType=Itla&areaName=Watford> accessed 11 January 2021

At [Full Council](#) on 14 July 2020, it was agreed to look at the authority's policy for naming its streets. It was suggested that the task group should also review several street names and propose new approaches for the naming of roads within the borough to ensure they reflect Watford's diverse community and values.

The task group was conscious that the term 'BAME' could be defined in a number of ways. It was important for the task group to agree a working definition at the outset. The definition used in this review is all ethnic groups except White ethnic groups i.e., all Mixed, Asian, Black and Other (non-white) ethnicities. The task group's intention was to reflect the unequal impact of Covid 19 on certain communities as set out in the Public Health England report which did not apply to other white communities within the United Kingdom. It is further recognised that the term 'BAME' is not used or welcomed by all communities.

The task group undertook its work mindful that there is a wider minority in Watford which has not been considered in the context of this specific review for the reasons set out above. This would include Other White minorities, aside from White British, who also have specific concerns and with whom the council should engage and consult on policies and recommendations addressing equality and diversity going forward.

Overview of the task group's programme of work

The task group held an initial meeting in November 2020 to agree the terms of reference and scope of work to be undertaken. At this meeting, the task group noted that the task group would be looking at the impact of Covid 19 and wider issues affecting the BAME communities as well as the council's street naming policies. It was agreed that the name of the task group should be amended to reflect the remit. Following discussions with the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the name was changed to 'Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review scrutiny task group'.

The work programme for the task group was also agreed including the format of meetings with witnesses. The initial focus would be on how to respond to the particular impact of Covid 19 on BAME residents. This would include taking evidence from the Director of Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council and the Head of Community Protection at Watford Borough Council to provide context. The task group was interested to hear from representatives from BAME communities and the voluntary sector about their lived experiences.

It was further noted at this meeting that Hertfordshire County Council had undertaken a scrutiny review of the response to the Covid 19 pandemic, including the impact on the local BAME population, and it was not intended to duplicate this work but to focus instead on the areas under the remit of Watford Borough Council. It was important for the council, however, to remain engaged with the work being undertaken by HCC's Health Scrutiny Committee and other groups and the task group noted that the chair of Watford Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee is a member of the Health Scrutiny Committee and represent the borough in that forum.

The task group was keen to review the council's equalities policy framework to ensure that it reflected best practice. The Executive Head of Strategy and Communications, who leads on equality as well as engagement work, subsequently attended a meeting with the task group. Recent work had been undertaken to ensure the data used in determining the impact of new policies on protected characteristics was sound. The task group also considered the targeted communications work for BAME communities.

Scrutiny members took evidence from Professor Jim McManus, Director of Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council, and Justine Hoy, Head of Community Protection at Watford Borough Council. Hertfordshire County Council is the lead authority on public health and Watford Borough Council has responsibilities in responding to local outbreaks. The task group welcomed the reports of a positive and proactive relationship between the two councils in responding to Covid 19. During the meeting, it was noted that BAME populations were not at a higher risk to Covid 19 for genetic reasons; instead BAME individuals often have higher exposure levels due to their professions values and roles held, greater use of public transport, as well as living arrangements and housing conditions, among other factors. A longer-term piece of work is planned through Hertfordshire's BAME Network and the task group is keen that Watford Borough Council plays an active part in this project.

Understanding the experiences of Watford's BAME communities during the ongoing pandemic and in a wider context was a cornerstone of the task group's review. Two witness sessions were held virtually. The first included representatives of the local community and voluntary sector to provide an overview of the issues experienced from their viewpoints. The second included individuals from Watford's BAME communities. Where attendance was not possible, witnesses were invited to provide written comments to the task group. These sessions focused not only on the immediate experience of the Covid 19 pandemic, including access to services, but also captured their views on issues of wider concern. Issues raised in this session included the higher risks of infection associated with living in multi-generational or overcrowded housing as well as discussions about community cohesion and inequalities. In addition, the views of all members were invited drawing on their interactions with residents in their different wards.

Following the work to consider issues of importance for BAME communities, the task group undertook to review the policy documentation for street naming. As well as individual research work carried out by task group members, a meeting was held with officers involved in this area. At this meeting, the task group considered the policy guidance that was already in place, an early draft for a full policy and priorities for the renaming of new streets. Members also discussed a number of street names in the borough with negative historical links and considered the most appropriate way forward.

Additional research work was carried out by Democratic Services to inform the task group's work and to produce this report

A list of the witnesses who provided evidence to the task group is listed on page 3 and a bibliography is provided at the end of this report.

Recommendations and comments

Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities

1. **Watford Borough Council should agree a corporate definition of BAME. The council should also assess how well the needs of other communities, not captured in the task group's agreed definition of BAME, are understood and served.**

The task group acknowledges that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) could be defined in a number of ways. For the purposes of this review, the task group's agreed definition encompasses all ethnic groups except White ethnic groups i.e., all Mixed, Asian, Black and Other (non-white) ethnicities. This definition seeks to reflect the unequal impact of Covid 19 on certain communities as set out in the Public Health England report of June 2020 which provided impetus to this scrutiny review.

Scrutiny members noted that the term 'BAME' is not used or welcomed by all communities, some of whom prefer to be identified more precisely e.g., as Tamil or Pakistani. BAME can also include people who would classify themselves under 'other White'. As such, BAME people can therefore include: Arabs, Asian or Asian British people, Black (African/African Caribbean) or Black British people, Chinese people, People of mixed heritage, Roma, Gypsies and Travellers, first peoples of America and Australia (Aboriginal), 'other White' e.g. White Irish, Australian, French, Polish etc. It is noteworthy that the ONS population estimate 2016 by ethnicity demonstrates that 12% of Watford's population was categorised as 'Other White'.

Against this background, the task group considers that it is important for the council to agree a corporate definition. This should reflect Watford's diverse community, including Other White minorities, aside from White British, who also have specific concerns and with whom the council should engage and consult on policies and recommendations addressing equality, diversity and unconscious bias going forward.

2. **The council should establish an equalities forum to include representatives of protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act 2010.**

Task group members consider that a council-led equalities forum should be established to provide regular engagement on a range of equalities issues. To underline its importance, it is hoped that the forum will be chaired by the elected Mayor and will include representation from local councillors.

Whilst the scrutiny task group's remit focussed on issues affecting BAME residents (as set out previously), mindful of the council's responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, members are keen to broaden membership of the new equalities forum. This would enable comprehensive representation of protected characteristics in discussions drawing on Watford's diverse community and faith groups. The protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act are: age, gender reassignment, being married or in a civil partnership, being pregnant or on maternity leave, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Having heard from witnesses who worked with young people, the task group was particularly keen to include them in such discussions. During the course of the review, a number of witnesses considered that opportunities to participate in ongoing discussions with the council would be a valuable way to address specific issues faced. Convening this forum would also be a positive way to encourage participation in policy making and review from Watford's different communities.

3. The council should develop a corporate equalities policy.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, Watford Borough Council has an agreed policy statement on equalities and diversity which is published on the council's website.⁴

Although recognising that there is no requirement under this Act for the council to adopt a formal equalities policy, the task group considers that work should be undertaken by the end of 2021 to develop the statement into a corporate policy which should be both Coronavirus Act 2020 and Care Act 2014 compliant.

It is further suggested that there should be opportunities for representatives of protected characteristics, potentially from the proposed equalities forum, to input the work undertaken to develop this policy.

4. The template for undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments for new council policies should be reviewed to reflect best practice.

The council's current template for undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) was last reviewed in 2017, at which time training was provided for officers. Watford Borough Council requires an EIA to be undertaken for any new or updated policy or strategy at the same time as the decision is being taken. This is already a higher standard than is required in legislation, which is welcomed by the task group.

Task group members learnt that EIAs are often undertaken as a group to provide additional challenge as well as support for the officers responsible for the assessment. Officers are encouraged to consider the positive impacts of new or updated policies and how these can be delivered. Task group members emphasise the importance of the council ensuring that the external impacts of its policies as a service provider are assessed alongside the internal impacts as an employer. This internal perspective should ensure that reasonable adaptations are made e.g., in human resources policies for employees.

It is suggested that the current EIA template should be reviewed and re-issued. In addition, renewed training should be provided to meet with changes to staff policies and strategic roles in the council.

As part of their strategic role, councillors are regularly required to review and scrutinise EIAs accompanying new policy proposals. The task group suggests that

⁴ https://www.watford.gov.uk/info/20016/the_council/701/equalities/2

members should also be offered training to develop their understanding of how EIAs should be interpreted.

5. The council, in partnership with ward councillors, should encourage all communities to complete their Census 2021 returns and to underline the importance of this data in formulating future council policies.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) will be undertaking a census of all people and households in the UK in England and Wales on Sunday 21 March 2021. Separate arrangements are in place for Scotland and Northern Ireland. The data provided is crucial to assisting the council in determining effective policy development and service provision for local residents and businesses over the next decade. The data is used as a basis for formulating the EIAs discussed above.

Although completing the census is compulsory, it is recognised that some people have concerns about submitting data because they fear being highlighted. The census has a vital role to play in capturing new and less well-established communities and by not providing a census return, people risk being left out and, therefore, unrepresented.

Ward councillors have an important part to play in dispelling misconceptions around the purpose and use of the data provided and should use their community ties to encourage people to complete the census. Crucially, councillors should stress that there is no link between the census and other data sets. The council's communications team could assist councillors by putting together some wording to help with this work.

Following the publication of the latest census data, task group members suggest that the council's Geographic Information System officers should map local deprivation levels against ethnicity data to help inform policy setting in the future.

6. Councillors should maximise their community role to share public health messages and particularly to encourage take-up of vaccines for Covid 19 and promote wider health screening programmes.

During the pandemic, the council's communications team has produced a regular flow of targeted messages to residents, businesses and community groups to promote awareness and understanding. This has involved not only distilling changes to government rules and their applicability to the council's services, but also highlighting the support available to local residents and businesses in the form of voluntary services and financial grants. It is important to continue to ensure that messaging goes out in a variety of media and modes of delivery in ways that are accessible to residents across Watford's diverse communities and across all age groups. The pace of change has been considerable and it remains important to provide clarity and focus in a challenging and fast-moving environment.

Councillors too have a strategic role to play in publicising and disseminating information to residents and businesses. They are in a unique position to identify

specific groups and individuals in their wards who may require assistance in interpreting and understanding the myriad of information in circulation.

Covid 19 has demonstrated the importance of public health messaging and there is a particular opportunity for councillors in the immediate term to promote the uptake of Covid 19 vaccinations and counter any misleading information around them. Looking ahead, there is a longer-term role for councillors to promote health screening programmes which seek to promote the long term health of our local community.

7. The council should provide compulsory training on equalities and unconscious bias for staff and members.

Task group members welcomed the input of a range of representatives from local BAME communities and voluntary sector organisations to provide a detailed understanding of the lived experiences of Covid 19. As well as exploring cultural differences between communities, witnesses talked about issues around equalities and unconscious bias and the importance they have for individuals and communities.

It is suggested that regular and mandatory training should be provided for all staff and members on these issues. The task group believes such training would have a positive impact on the way the council serves its communities. This training should be renewed at least every two years.

Street name policy review

1. The council should adopt a new street naming policy for the borough which sets out the process for reviewing existing street names as well as naming new streets and buildings to reflect the rich diversity of the town.

Although the council currently uses a guidance document for naming the town's streets, this has not been developed into a comprehensive policy. Task group members are keen that a formal policy be adopted by the council covering the naming of streets and buildings as well as providing a mechanism for reviewing existing street names. It is noted that a draft document is currently on circulation and this should form the basis of a final policy to be adopted by Cabinet in the course of 2021.

There are a number of ideas for future street names to recognise individuals, including those from BAME backgrounds, who have enriched and made a positive contribution to the town. Watford Museum, which has considerable expertise and knowledge of local history, should be the curator of this list to ensure it reflects the town and its communities. It is proposed that suggestions for additions to the list of people to be recognised could be made directly to the Museum.

2. The council should commission Watford Museum to develop an education programme based around a new exhibition which explores the background and history of the town's road names, including those identified as having negative historic links.

Education and understanding of the town's history and its people is important. It is suggested that the Watford Museum should lead on developing an exhibition exploring the background and history of the town's diversity including an explanation of certain road names. This could include an online offering. It is acknowledged that planned changes in the provision of the museum and heritage service could provide an opportunity to afford the prominence that this exhibition merits. Children and young people could be a key audience for the exhibition and the museum might explore working with Herts for Learning to devise a resource pack to be promoted to local schools. This would help to develop understanding of Watford's history among children and young people. It is recognised that a number of local groups and councillors could have valuable contributions to this piece of work and the task group would welcome their input and engagement with this project. Visitors to the exhibition should be afforded an opportunity to suggest future street names drawing on the resources they have seen.

Having had consideration of the street naming motion to Full Council, the task group acknowledged that whilst it was important to explore the provenance and appropriateness of some street names, residents and businesses would incur costs should changes be proposed. It was also recognised that local businesses had been significantly impacted by the ongoing pandemic.

The proposed new street naming policy should ensure that any changes were supported by a majority of residents and businesses in the affected roads and strict thresholds and a consultative framework should be established. It is suggested that the proposed education programme would provide a starting point for establishing whether the desire exists amongst residents and businesses to reconsider some names identified as having negative historic links.

The task group would like to thank all their witnesses who gave their time to assist with this review as well.

Bibliography/background papers

Beyond the data, understanding the impact of Covid 19 on BAME groups, Public Health England (June 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities>

Hertfordshire Matters – A needs analysis report for Hertfordshire Community Foundation - OCSI

Street and Place Names in Watford – Alan W. Ball

UK government statistics on Covid 19 <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>

Watford Borough Council population analysis, August 2020

WBC Equalities Statement 2019
https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3347/equalities_statement_2019

**Watford Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Task Group Scope and Terms of Reference**

| | |
|---|--|
| Scrutiny review title | Responding to the impact of Covid-19 on Watford's Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and street name policy review. |
| Scrutiny proposer | Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillors Favour Ezeifedi and Asif Khan |
| Details of specific area for review | <p>Early in the COVID 19 pandemic it became clear that the virus has disproportionately impacted BAME communities with certain communities hit particularly hard. The Public Health England review of June 2020 concludes that the unequal impacts of COVID 19 may be explained by social and economic inequalities.</p> <p>At a local level, Watford and Hertsmere have both had the highest rate of COVID 19 cases and the highest crude mortality rate of COVID-19 registered deaths per 10,000 population in Hertfordshire (12.7 in Watford and 17.6 in Hertsmere – as of 23 June 2020).</p> <p>It is recognised that the BAME communities have specific areas of concern, including, but not limited to, the factors which appear to have led to worse health outcomes during the pandemic. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) in its capacity as the responsible authority for health is reviewing the relevance and impact of the findings of the recent Public Health England report on the impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities. The review is expected to create an action plan that will focus on addressing health inequalities. WBC officers are already working to ensure that Watford communities are fully engaged and considered in this work.</p> <p>It is proposed to identify the issues that matter to members of our BAME communities and work with them to develop recommendations that will take these issues forward.</p> <p>The Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement of recent months has focussed on the experiences of the Black community across the globe and the history of its struggles, including the legacy of slavery and oppression. BLM has highlighted the symbols of the past that people are confronted with on a daily basis. These include street names and statues which memorialise individuals who played a role in the slave trade and/or British imperialism.</p> <p>At Full Council on 14 July it was agreed to look at the authority's policy for naming its streets. It is suggested that the task group also reviews several street names and proposes new approaches for the naming of roads within the borough to ensure they reflect Watford's diverse community and values.</p> |
| Why this has been proposed for review, | Watford Borough Council is committed to championing equality and embracing diversity in everything we do. This encompasses our role as a |

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| <p>including the council themes it supports</p> | <p>leader in our community, in the delivery of our services and as an employer. The commitment goes beyond our statutory duty so that we understand the community we serve and are working with them, and for them, to make sure everyone is able to access and enjoy all that Watford has to offer. We work with other organisations to influence and champion the advancement of equalities to make sure everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. ⁵</p> <p>The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities presents an opportunity to create a sustainable change that would mitigate further impact.</p> <p>In focussing on the issues that matter to the local BAME community, it is proposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • speak with individuals/groups from Watford’s BAME community to identify issues • explore the data around the issues raised • focus on the issues that matter to the community and working with them to develop recommendations that will progress them • use the findings of the review to recommend any updates to the council’s equalities statement and policy. <p>It is further recognised that as representatives of the local population, a provider of local services and key stakeholder in the local community, the council has a central role to play and leads in identifying what and who should be celebrated in the naming of streets in the town. It is proposed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review some street names • understand the legal process for consulting on any proposed changes to existing streets names • consider the street naming policy to ensure that future street names reflect Watford’s diverse community and values. <p>The scrutiny suggestion supports the following theme in the Council Plan: a council that serves our residents and a healthy and happy town.</p> |
| <p>Purpose / objectives of the review, including key questions</p> | <p>To determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The make-up of Watford’s residents including data on ethnicity, faiths and languages. • Key issues that matter to Watford’s BAME communities by taking evidence from witnesses. • Any appropriate updates required to the council’s equalities statement and policy. • Views on changes to the council’s street naming policy and process for altering current street names. • Any appropriate updates to the council’s policy for naming its streets to reflect our town and its history and diversity. <p>To investigate:</p> |

⁵ WBC Equalities Statement 2019
https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/3347/equalities_statement_2019

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background and further details about these issues. • Next steps required to progress the issues. <p>To develop recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • which reflect the concerns of the communities and ensure that momentum is maintained in addressing them • for any amendments to the council's equalities statement and policy • for any amendments to the council's street naming policy. |
| Any areas excluded from the scope | None. |
| Desired outcomes / indicators of success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of the local BAME communities. • An overview of the issues which concern residents who belong to BAME communities in particular. • The development of recommendations which enable these issues to be taken forward by relevant groups, authorities or services. • Recommendations for any changes to the council's equalities and diversity policy statement. • Recommendations for any changes to the street naming policy. • Suggestions on any changes to the council's street naming policy and process for altering current street names. |
| Timescale and key dates, including proposed meeting format | <p>24 Sept: Task Group outline, membership and chair to O&S</p> <p>Oct/Nov: Preparation with Chair to agree witnesses, draw up and arrange a schedule of meetings and meeting formats.</p> <p>Nov/Dec: Send out and publicise survey. Establish evidence base on the issues raised in the surveys</p> <p>Dec: Meetings with witnesses</p> <p>04 Feb: Final report and recommendations to O&S</p> <p>01 Mar: Final report and recommendations to Cabinet</p> |
| Key departmental lead officer | <p>Ishbel Morren Senior Democratic Services Officer</p> <p>Jodie Kloss Democratic Services Officer</p> <p>Andrew Cox Liaison with Leadership Board</p> |
| Witnesses | <p>Initial suggestions include:</p> <p>Council officers:</p> <p>Kathryn Robson Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications and others in the Communications team</p> <p>Justine Hoy - Head of Community Protection</p> <p>Ryan Rodrigues – Senior Geographic Information Officer</p> <p>Community and voluntary sector organisations:</p> <p>Watford Afro-Caribbean Association</p> <p>Representatives of Watford Mosque</p> <p>Representatives of black majority churches</p> <p>Representatives of Watford's Sikh community</p> <p>Representatives of Watford's Hindu community</p> <p>Other representatives from the BAME communities</p> <p>Youth Connexions</p> <p>Hertfordshire County Council</p> |

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| What activities need to be taken to achieve the outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate data on the make-up of Watford’s population. • Carry out a survey of community groups as the primary means for gathering responses. There will need to be some support from the Communications team with the publicity of this. • Undertake desktop research into the issues raised through the survey to explore them and provide further detail where possible. • Undertake interviews with witnesses – this could take the form of concentrated daytime discussions grouping witnesses together in a series of themed back-to-back sessions (half day at a time) or evening meetings • Devise areas of questioning for officers and organisations – send out to witnesses in advance and seek responses from those unable to attend. • Produce a final report with recommendations reflecting the issues raised and suggesting ways forward. |
| Key policies / documentation / baseline information needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on Watford’s communities • WBC Equalities Statement • Street naming policies |
| Any other sources of evidence (e.g., site visit) | None |
| Risks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That any barriers to access and equality for BAME residents are not identified and addressed • That the council does not effectively manage its relationship with its BAME communities or build confidence that it is listening and acting on what it has heard • That the authority’s policy for naming its streets does not reflect the town’s values. |

9 November 2020

Extract from Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4 February 2021

Present: Councillor Parker (Chair)
Councillor Dhindsa (Vice Chair)
Councillors Allen-Williamson, Crout, Dychton, Jeffree, Martins,
Mauthoor and Turmaine

Officers: Group Head of Transformation
Senior Democratic Services Officer

73. Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review task group

The Chair of the Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and street name policy review task group, Councillor Favour Ezeifedi, was invited to introduce the task group's final report and recommendations.

Councillor Ezeifedi thanked the committee for the opportunity to lead this important task group which followed her motion to Council on 14 July 2020. She described the task group's activities, the evidence gathered from witnesses and the arguments to support the final recommendations. Councillor Ezeifedi noted that local BAME communities were keen to continue to engage with the council about how policies were shaped in the future.

Commenting on concerns raised during the witness sessions about the higher risks of infection associated with living in multi-generational or overcrowded housing, Councillor Ezeifedi suggested that whilst action was needed at a national level the council should continue to work with its partners and other agencies to tackle concerns locally wherever possible.

Councillor Ezeifedi asked for her thanks to the Democratic Services Officers who had supported the task group to be placed on record.

The scrutiny committee welcomed the task group's thorough and well-argued report which had shone a light on the experiences of local BAME communities during the current pandemic and produced a set of sensible and worthwhile recommendations. In particular, the recommendation for councillors to maximise their community role by sharing public health

messages and encouraging Covid 19 vaccination take-up was both timely and crucial.

There was wide support for the council to renew its focus on equalities issues. Scrutiny members supported the task group's recommendations in this area, including the development of the authority's existing equalities statement into a corporate equalities policy and for mandatory training on equalities and unconscious bias for all staff and members to be renewed regularly.

Addressing the task group's work on the council's street name policy, members particularly welcomed the proposal to commission Watford Museum to devise an exhibition exploring the background and history of the town's road names. It was suggested that the work might include individual histories of BAME residents who had set down roots in the town.

The Portfolio Holder for Community, Councillor Collett, congratulated the task group on its excellent work. She noted that the task group's recommendations dovetailed with the authority's Road to Renewal activities and gave impetus to the council's desire to engage with the town's diverse communities to support the town as it emerged from the Covid 19 pandemic.

RESOLVED –

that the final report and recommendations of the Responding to the impacts of Covid 19 on Watford's BAME communities and street name policy review task group be agreed and forwarded to Cabinet.

Action: Senior Democratic Services Officer

Agenda Item 6

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 1 March 2021

Report author: Interim Head of Regeneration & Property

Title: Approval of Croxley Business Park Business Plan

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 At the point of entering into the long lease of Croxley Business Park in July 2019, the council and its team of advisors inherited a business plan from the Park's then owners, Columbia Threadneedle. This Plan had been developed since 2014 and was geared to upgrading the environment to ensure Croxley was considered one of the leading business parks in the South East. A new business plan was however required in order for the council to meet its own objectives and to ensure the Park delivered on the rationale behind the council's acquisition.
- 1.2 The key financial objectives that were agreed by Council at its meeting of 23rd January 2019 was that there would be a net revenue of £1.5m (unindexed) per annum delivered over the first 10 years, and thereafter £1m per annum. The capital contribution secured by the council as part of the lease agreement was to serve two primary purposes, being to fund planned and preventative maintenance across the buildings on the park and to ensure the primary financial objective was met by acting as a reserve fund to deliver the same.
- 1.3 Since the council acquired the Business Park in 2019, contracted rents have grown from £9,669,940 to £11,961,107. When compared to the original projections prior to purchase, this is a positive improvement compared to the original financial model, and to date the Park is meeting the performance objectives adopted at the time of acquisition.
- 1.4 To assist in any business plan formulation, over the course of 2020 a financial model was developed by the council with the assistance of the asset management team at Lambert Smith Hampton Investment Management (LSHIM) and Grant Thornton (GT), to allow forecasts to be made on a letting by letting basis across the Park. This will allow decisions to be taken by the council on letting terms, refurbishment proposals and lease events (rent reviews, lease renewals/extensions, dilapidation claims etc) that aligned with the key financial metric as outlined in 1.2 above.
- 1.5 With the benefit of this model, the Croxley Business Park team, comprising WBC officers, LSHIM, Columbia Threadneedle Investments (as asset advisors) and Workman LLP have developed an initial Business Plan for the 2021/2022 financial

year with the intention that this plan is updated annually and brought back to Cabinet for approval on that basis.

- 1.6 To allow WBC officers to actively asset manage the Park during the course of the year, it is proposed that delegated authority be granted such that lease events (including rent review, lease regears, dilapidation claims etc) can be approved, provided such approvals are in line with the tolerances set out and described in the Business Plan. Such delegated authority will not require renewal annually, but will be aligned in accordance with the prevailing Business Plan as approved by Cabinet.

2.0 Risks

2.1

| Nature of risk | Consequence | Suggested Control Measures | Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer) | Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood) |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| No Business Plan is developed and approved | There will be no means by which Finance can accurately forecast the performance of the park | Adopt a Business Plan for each financial year | Treat | 4 |
| No Business Plan is developed and approved | Individual decisions will be taken with no ability to ensure they will meet the performance expectations | Adopt a Business Plan for each financial year | Treat | 4 |
| No Business Plan is developed and approved | Authority for entering into leases, and other lease events will be brought back to Cabinet on a frequent basis, leading to possible abortive deals | Adopt a Business Plan for each financial year | Treat | 4 |
| The market moves significantly within year and the Plan is no longer relevant | The forecasts in the model will no longer be relevant/realisable. | Monitor, through the quarterly PIB reports the performance of the Park against the adopted Plan | Treat | 8 |

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is asked to:
- 3.2 Approve the Business Plan for 2021/2022 as produced by LSHIM, and more particularly as attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 Approve the delegations to the Head of Regeneration & Property as outlined in Appendix 1 and as further detailed in the report below.

Further information:

Peter Hall
peter.hall@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Donna Nolan, Managing Director

4.0 Detailed proposal

Performance

- 4.1 Whilst full details of the income performance is contained within the Part B Appendix, it is relevant to note the following achievements.
- 4.2 The projected headline rental levels assumed at the time of purchase have been met to date where a lease event (new letting, lease renewal or rent review) has occurred.
- 4.3 The completion of Building 1 comprising 85,000 sq ft is set for March 2021, a month ahead of schedule, despite Covid and the national lockdowns.
- 4.4 It is anticipated that some occupiers will vacate due to lease expiries or breaks and a further programme of refurbishment of vacant units will be required. However, the refurbishments authorised by Cabinet in November 2020 will ensure that an appropriate level and variety of suites/floors will be completed as a phase 1 in the first half of 2021 to ensure product availability.

Delegations

- 4.5 Once endorsed by the Council, this business plan will provide the Head of Regeneration & Property with the authority to agree all matters within the parameters of this report, specifically items covering:

| Items | Delegated Authority subject to: |
|----------------|---|
| New lettings | The headline rents and rent free being at, above (or not less than 95%) of the operational model assumptions in Section 1 of the business plan. |
| Lease renewals | The headline rents and rent free being at, above (or not less than 95%) of the operational model assumptions in Section 1 of the business plan. |

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|----------------|--|
| Rent Reviews | The average rent over the review period being at or above (or not less than 95%) of the levels in Section 9 of the business plan. |
| Refurbishments | The Phase 2 refurbishments be committed up to at levels specified in Section 8 of the business plan, with a 10% tolerance if costs increase during the year. |
| Dilapidations | Dilapidations to be agreed at levels specified in Section 8, with a 15% tolerance if dilapidations assessments are marginally below these levels. |
| Service Charge | Approval given to authorise the budget for 1 st July 2021 – 30 th June 2022 at a tolerance of between 10% +/- from the current 2019/20 budget. |

4.6 Items not covered by these approved delegations will be authorised on a business case basis in accordance with the council’s Scheme of Delegation.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the proposals are within current budgets and the business plan is in line with the originally projected financial model.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that providing delegated authority to the Head of Property and Regeneration will enable transactions to be completed promptly.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council’s obligations under s149, it is considered that no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Having had regard to the council’s obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 The modelling is being undertaken by existing team members within Finance with support and training from external advisors and surveying support from within the Regeneration & Property team. No additional staffing is required as a result of adopting the Business Plan or the use of the model in order to assess the performance of the Plan.

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 There are no accommodation issues arising

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 There are no community safety/crime and disorder issues arising

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 The Business Plan, by identifying refurbishment and other work necessary to prepare buildings for reletting, will take into account the requirements of building regulations prevailing at the time and any relevant works of repair will consider appropriate energy efficiency measures.

Appendices

- Part B Appendix 1 – Croxley Park Business Plan – 2021.

Background papers

- Acquisition of Leasehold Interest in Croxley Business Park – Extraordinary Council, January 23 2019 Council Report.