

## WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID 19 - UPDATE

### Executive Summary

This report has been prepared to update the Executive on the Council's position during this COVID 19 crisis.

Later in the year a report will be produced on the wider financial and service implications arising from COVID 19 but at this stage it would be premature to forecast the likely outturn until recovery gets underway and the level of Government support is clarified, particularly a capitalisation directive.

### Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

#### **RESOLVE That**

the report be received and noted.

### Reasons for Decision

Reason: To receive the report on COVID 19 implication.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation set out above.
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<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Reporting Person:</b>	Ray Morgan, Chief Executive Email: ray.morgan@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3333
<b>Contact Person:</b>	Ray Morgan, Chief Executive Email: ray.morgan@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3333
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor David Bittleston Email: cllrdavid.bittleston@woking.gov.uk
<b>Shadow Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Ann-Marie Barker Email: cllrann-marie.barker@woking.gov.uk
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## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report seeks to update the Executive on the arrangements made and the activities undertaken by the Council in light of the Coronavirus Pandemic or otherwise referred to as COVID 19.
- 1.2 Officers implemented the Council's Business Continuity Plan to enable day to day management of events and the Leader of the Council initiated weekly meetings of the Leaders' Group (Leader and Deputy of the Conservative Group, Leader and Deputy of the Liberal Democrat Group, Leader of the Labour Group and Leader of the Independent Group – Councillors Bittleston, Azad, Barker, Hughes, Aziz and Bond).

### 2.0 Legislative and Regulatory Changes

- 2.1 The Government enacted the Coronavirus Act 2020 and issued two regulations relevant to the Council; one to cancel elections until May 2021 and the other to change meetings arrangements and enable virtual meetings.
- 2.2 The effect on Elections is that there will be no Elections held prior to 6 May 2021. Accordingly all Members due to retire in May 2020 remain in office until May 2021.
- 2.3 In addition to deferring all Elections until May 2021 it has made regulations under the Coronavirus Act 2020 which enables:-
  - Remote Attendance to any meeting;
  - Holding meetings at different times;
  - Altering the Frequency of Meetings;
  - Moving or Cancelling Meetings;
  - Appointments normally made at an Annual Meeting to continue until the next Annual Meeting;
  - The rules of voting, attendance, access to documents to be varied;
  - Remote access of Press and Public to meetings.
- 2.4 The Leaders' Group agreed revised arrangements which may be summarised as:-  
Annual General Meeting and Mayoral Arrangements.
- 2.5 In light of the Regulations the Annual Meeting(s) scheduled for 21st and 1st June 2020 were not held and will not be held until 20th and 24th May 2021.
- 2.6 This means that all appointments remain in place. The effect is that the format, membership and roles of the Executive, Committees, Task Groups and Working Groups will remain in force as will all appointments to external bodies.
- 2.7 It also means the Mayor (Cllr Hunwicks) and Deputy Mayor (Cllr Hussain), remain in office for another year.
- 2.8 Following consultation with Cllr Hussain and Cllr Lyons it has been agreed by Cllr Hussain that he will make way for Cllr Lyons to be appointed as Mayor at the Annual Meeting (Mayor Making) on 20 May 2021, for the year 2021/22, and will instead be appointed as Mayor at the Annual Meeting (Mayor Making) in May 2022 for the year 2022/23.
- 2.9 These arrangements will minimise the workload for officers have enabled them to concentrate on supporting the community during the crisis and then to direct resources to recovery.

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### 3.0 Executive and Committee Meetings

- 3.1 The Calendar of Meetings previously published for 2020/21, with the exception of the Annual Meetings scheduled for 21 May 2020 and 1 June 2020 Annual Meeting, will take place as scheduled.
- 3.2 All Meetings will be held 'virtually' as outlined later in the report.
- 3.3 One additional Meeting was arranged in respect of the Planning Committee to enable the Council to discharge its duty to Planning Applicants following the cancellation of the Planning Committee scheduled for 7 April 2020 (2019/20 Municipal Year). The Planning Committee met at 7pm on Thursday 7 May 2020.
- 3.4 Working Groups and Task Groups will be scheduled in accordance with normal requirements.

### 4.0 Virtual Meetings

- 4.1 All Meetings will be held virtually using Zoom and, for those that are normally public, will also be Web Cast.
- 4.2 Meetings that need to be Web Cast will be conducted from the Council Chamber. No Members will be physically present only two officers appropriately spaced, one to take the Minutes of the Meeting and to operate the Web Cast and one to support the Zoom operations as the "Meeting Coordinator".
- 4.3 Invitations to participate will be issued by Member Services with the Meeting ID number and Password. Please ensure that you keep the ID and Password private to avoid anyone that should not be joining the Meeting from doing so; if it is another Member, who is not a Member of that Meeting or participating in the meeting, or a member of the public they should use the Web Cast to observe the meeting. When joining the Meeting participants should mute their microphone to avoid background noise or interruption during the meeting. Members and other participants should take care in choosing where to sit during the Public Meetings as the camera will pick up all movements and images in the background which the public observing the Web Cast will also be able to see. A background picture of the Council Chamber has been issued for Members to use if they wish.
- 4.4 For Public Meetings the Zoom image will be displayed directly to the Web Cast. All participants will be identified and published; please refer to attendance at meetings. The Member or Person speaking will automatically be displayed in large format so that the contribution is readily witnessed by other participants and those observing via Web Cast.
- 4.5 It will be necessary to operate new protocols for these meetings and these are outlined below.

#### Attendance at and Participation in Meetings

- 4.6 A register will be maintained by the Members Services Officer supporting the Meeting based on who logs into the Meeting; this will be in four categories: - Members of the Meeting; Other Members invited to the Meeting; Officers and Public. This information will be included in the Minutes of the Public Meeting.
- 4.7 Public Attendance will be limited to only those that are, by invitation, contributing to the meeting. When the contribution for which they were invited is completed their participation will end and they will be restricted to watching and listening to the remainder of the meeting via Web Cast.

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### Papers for Meetings

- 4.8 These will be published electronically one week before the scheduled meeting; there will be no hard copies. Members will be advised of the publication of the Agenda and Papers and sent a link to the relevant Mod.Gov section. This will be enable Members to see all the papers for the meeting and to be able to look at the papers, online, during a meeting.
- 4.9 It will be important for Members of the Meeting to have read the papers at least two days before the Meeting and to notify Members Services by noon on the business day prior to the Meeting if they wish to participate in the debate on an item of business before that Meeting.
- 4.10 There will be the ability to "Request to Speak" during the Zoom meeting but Members are requested to identify in advance the business about which they wish to speak in order to support the Chairman of the meeting.

### Speaking Time Limit

- 4.11 A time limit will be applied to all speaking at meetings, currently it only applies to Council, but similar rules. The time limit will be 5 minutes with the exception of the Planning Committee which will be 10 minutes.
- 4.12 Members will, as is provided for at Council, be expected to only speak once on an item of business; however in meetings other than Council speaking for a second time will be at the discretion of the Chairman.

### Speaking at a Public Meeting

- 4.13 At the start of the Meeting Members will be requested by the Chairman to keep their comments short and to avoid, wherever possible, repeating comments or views already expressed by other Members; they will also be reminded to mute their microphone unless they are called to speak.
- 4.14 The Chairman will call Members to speak and normal rules of conduct will apply. Members will need to activate the microphone to speak and mute it when finished.

### Voting

- 4.15 Where votes need to be taken the Chairman of the Meeting, or an Officer supporting the Meeting, will call the names of Members of the Meeting in alphabetical order and the Member called should state YES, if in favour of the Recommendation before the Meeting, NO if against, or ABSTAIN if neither.
- 4.16 The result of the Vote will be recorded by the Members Services Officers and announced by the Officer supporting the meeting.
- 4.17 Members who consider that a vote on the Recommendation before the Meeting is required will need to notify Member Services by noon on the business day prior to the meeting so that a schedule can be prepared for the Chairman to call for Votes at the relevant business item.
- 4.18 If no vote is required the Chairman of the Meeting will state that the Recommendation before the Meeting is agreed.

### Questions to Council

- 4.19 Members will be requested to submit questions by Noon on the Monday prior to the Council Meeting on the Thursday. Answers will be sent to all Members by close of business on the Wednesday. If the questioner wishes to ask a supplementary question they should notify

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Member Services, via email, by Noon on the day of the Council Meeting so that a schedule can be prepared for the Mayor and the Mayor can then call the relevant Questioner.

- 4.20 Both the Questions and Answers will be included in the Mod.Gov documents for the meeting and to the Web Cast for the meeting so that the public may read both the question and the answer as well as hear any supplementary question/answer.

### Notices of Motion to Council

- 4.21 A Notice of Motion will require the Proposer and Seconder to be named when it is submitted.
- 4.22 The Notice of Motion(s) before the Council will automatically be referred to the next meeting of the Executive and reported back for debate to the subsequent Council Meeting.
- 4.23 A Notice of Motion will not be taken on the Night.
- 4.24 If a Member considers that there is an urgent item of Business that the Council needs to address he/she should contact the Chief Executive who may include it as Urgent Business at an appropriate forthcoming meeting, with the agreement of the relevant Chairman.

### Public Questions to the Executive

- 4.25 The provision for public questions to be maintained but all answers will be in writing and there will no questions in person at the Executive.

### Public Speaking at Planning Committee

- 4.26 These will continue to apply but only through remote access. The normal 3 minute time limit will apply. After contributing to the Planning Committee Meeting the participant will be removed from the Zoom meeting and will need to continue watching the meeting through the Web Cast.

### Amendment to the Constitution

- 4.27 In accordance with the Coronavirus Act and the agreement with the Leaders' Group the Constitution has been amended to give effect to these arrangements. A copy of the Addendum to the Constitution is attached at Appendix 1.
- 4.28 Member Services have also produced a Guide to Participating in a Zoom Meeting which is attached at Appendix 2.
- 4.29 These arrangements will be kept under review.

## **5.0 Service Arrangements**

- 5.1 The Council has sought to operate as close to business as usual during the crisis. Following Government Guidance those officers who needed to isolate did so but maintained business activity by wherever possible by "working from home". It did take a few weeks to get that effective across all colleagues because of the need to procure additional IT equipment.
- 5.2 Many officers also volunteered to undertake different duties to ensure that the most vulnerable in the community received the support they needed.
- 5.3 The Business Continuity arrangements have worked well and we continue to operate them as we move towards recovery.

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- 5.4 In the following sections there are updates on different areas of Council activity and support for the community.

### Business Continuity Arrangements

- 5.5 The Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) was set up on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March to manage the Council's response to the COVID-19 global pandemic.
- 5.6 The BECC is the main link with the wider Surrey Local Resilience Forum (SLRF) response through daily teleconferences. In addition daily meetings with members of CMG and other colleagues allows for information to be disseminated quickly and efficiently through the Council.
- 5.7 The BECC operates on a rota basis with 2 separate officer teams resourcing the Control Room on alternating days. The 2 team approach provides resilience and allows for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week coverage with an out of hours phone number in use 01483 743315.
- 5.8 The Control Room has assisted with the organisations flexibility by assigning and distributing ICT equipment to colleagues who require it to carry out their roles and responsibilities from home.
- 5.9 The provision of PPE has been an issue for many but the purchasing of PPE before the outbreak and through donations and supply from Central Government, the BECC has ensured Woking BC have maintained sufficient stocks of PPE. This stock has been distributed to the areas within the Council that require it the most including Brockhill and Housing services.
- 5.10 The Council has also worked hard to assist shielded and vulnerable residents within the borough. Thousands of residents were highlighted as vulnerable and the Control Room has ensured the relevant teams have had the correct resources in order to carry out this important service. Practically, this has involved redeploying staff to make phone calls and welfare visits.
- 5.11 Government guidance regarding homelessness has been a challenge but through the daily CMG meetings the Control Room team, Housing and Surrey Police have adapted HG Wells, Woking Hotel, and use of Travel lodge and created a process for dealing with homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Business Rates

- 5.12 During March 2020 the Government gradually increased the Retail and Rural Businesses discounts already available to 100%, with the relief applying to occupied retail, leisure and hospitality properties in the year 2020/21; with no rateable value or State Aid limit on the relief.
- 5.13 The 100% discount resulting from the expanded retail discount is available to all the following categories of business, regardless of rateable value:
- Shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues, including for the sale of goods, the provision of specified services and the sale of food and/or drink to visiting members of the public;
  - Those for assembly and leisure, including the provision of sport, leisure and facilities to visiting members of the public, and those for the assembly of visiting members of the public; and

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- Hotels, guest & boarding premises and self-catering accommodation, where the non-domestic part is being used for the provision of living accommodation.

5.14 The discount was further expanded to include Estate agents, lettings agencies and bingo halls. A further Nursery (childcare) discount of 100% was also introduced for 2020/21.

5.15 All the occupied properties covered will pay no business rates in 2020/21.

5.16 The Council has applied the guidance and 642 businesses have received £18.27m in expanded retail relief with a further 12 businesses have receiving £0.3m nursery discount.

### Business Grants

5.17 As part of the March Budget, the government announced that grants of £3,000 would be made available for businesses claiming Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief. As the full scale of the impact of COVID-19 on businesses became apparent, the government expanded the value of the grant to £10,000.

5.18 The government also introduced a further Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, which could award grants of either £10,000 for properties with a rateable value of up to £15,000; or £25,000 for properties with a rateable value of over £15,000 and less than £51,000. Only one grant from the schemes outlined can be awarded to any one hereditament.

5.19 Local authorities are responsible for distributing the grant monies. On 1 April the Council received £14.9m funding which was the government estimate of eligible businesses within Woking.

5.20 Using Business Rates records the Council wrote to 1,260 potentially eligible businesses to notify them of the schemes and also promoted the grant funding through the Council website, media channels and business contacts. If all of these businesses were eligible the grant value would be £17.1m, however it was acknowledged that not all would be, the Government Guidance set various criteria such as the premises being occupied and trading, not in liquidation or dissolved, not used to provide Financial services (e.g. banks), Medical Services (e.g. Dentists), Professional Services (e.g. solicitors).

5.21 To receive the grant funding businesses were required to provide details to the Council using an online form. During April and May 942 Woking businesses were provided with £13.185m in funding through these schemes.

5.22 Details continue to be received from a small number of eligible businesses and payments are being made quickly following receipt and appropriate checks.

5.23 A further scheme was launched on 1 May which would provide Local Authorities with an additional 5% funding with which to provide business grants to small businesses which have not been eligible for other support schemes. Woking has been allocated £671,750 to distribute. The government has indicated priority areas which they intend these grants to support:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces
- Regular market traders who do not have a business rates assessment
- Bed & Breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates
- Charity properties in receipt of business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business or Rural Rate relief

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- 5.24 The Woking scheme has been launched with a closing date of Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June. The applications received will be assessed using the government criteria, then prioritising businesses with on-going fixed property costs who have suffered a significant fall in income, and who transact a high proportion of their business in Woking.
- 5.25 Grants can be £25,000, £10,000 or any amount less than £10,000. The value of grants awarded will be based on the fixed property costs of the business and may be scaled dependent on the number of applications received.

### Council Tax

- 5.26 At the Budget for 2020, the government announced that they would establish a £500m hardship fund to support “economically vulnerable people and households” affected by COVID-19. This funding is to be used to reduce the council tax liability for individuals in an area; and Councils may also wish to use some funding to deliver increased financial assistance through other support mechanisms.
- 5.27 The government indicates that it should be used to reduce the liability of those receiving working age council tax support by £150 in 2020/21. Where a local council taxpayer had an existing liability of £150 or less, this would reduce the council tax liability to nil.
- 5.28 Funds were allocated to billing authorities on the basis of their share of the national caseload of working age Local Council Tax Support recipients using the most recent published data (2019-20, Q3) as shown in the table below:

Local Authority	Working Age Caseload (2019/20 Q3)	Allocation (£)
Woking	2,340	505,452

- 5.29 Application of the government funding requires Capita to make changes to the Council Tax system. These updates are expected soon and once available the £150 will be applied in accordance with the guidance. This will then establish the remaining allowance to be distributed either to existing recipients or new cases during the year.
- 5.30 Some Council Taxpayers have contacted the Council and staff have agreed rescheduled payment plans as a result of the economic impact of Covid-19. Those who indicated a reduction in income were advised to claim Council Tax Support and contact the Department for Work & Pensions to claim any Social Security benefits they may have entitlement too, such as Universal Credit. Charge payers following this advice and making claims should now have received any benefit entitlement and also a reduced Council Tax bill. These residents will restart payment of Council Tax during June. Most of those paying by Direct Debit have paid as scheduled and overall collection rates will be kept under review during the year.

### Housing Benefit

- 5.31 The government has increased the Earnings Disregard amount from £17.10 to £37.10 so that less of a claimant's earnings are counted in the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support calculation from April 2020.
- 5.32 In addition the Local Housing Allowance levels have been increased which determines the maximum Housing Benefit rent charge levels.
- 5.33 Both of these changes have increased the benefit awarded to claimants. The Council has recalculated those awards and this has given 1,000 claimants more benefit from April.

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### Government Funding

- 5.34 On 27 March the Council received £37,595 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This was the allocation of the £1.6bn funding announced by the government particularly to cover costs of social care, homelessness and the needs of those at higher risk. It was also intended to be used to cover pressures across other services.
- 5.35 A further £1.6bn was announced on 18 April. The allocation of this further funding was published on 28 April and the Council is due to receive almost £1m.

Local Authority	First Tranche of Covid-19 Funding	Second Tranche of Covid-19 Funding	Total Covid-19 Additional Funding
Woking	£37,595	£998,732	£1,036,327

- 5.36 On 17 March the Government announced £3.2m of emergency funding to help rough sleepers to self-isolate. The government indicated that this was initial emergency response funding. The Council was allocated £8,251 which will be the maximum amount which can be claimed. In addition Surrey County Council have agreed to contribute towards the costs being incurred by Districts and Boroughs, and will provide Woking with a further £37,917.
- 5.37 The government announced allocations of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support 'Reopening High Streets Safely' on 24<sup>th</sup> May and Woking was awarded £89,172. Funding can be claimed for eligible spend from 1 June.
- 5.38 The fund is to support:
- Developing an action plan for how local economies can be safely re-opened;
  - Communications and PR activity;
  - Business Facing awareness raising activities; and
  - Temporary public realm adjustments
- 5.39 A £300m package of funding to support the rollout of new test and trace services across England was announced on 22 May. The ring-fenced funding is intended to help each local authority develop tailored outbreak control plans, working with local NHS and other stakeholders. Allocations for each local authority have not yet been published.
- 5.40 The government have also committed to providing New Burdens funding to cover the estimated cost of implementation of the various Business Rates schemes.

### Cost Pressures

- 5.41 As set out elsewhere in this report, the Council has incurred costs in the immediate response to the crisis and the ongoing support for our community. It is envisaged that the Government will fund authorities for their reasonable costs and the announcement of an increased level of funding on 28 April was welcome.
- 5.42 Some costs may not be recoverable from the Government, but may be funded from within the Council's approved budget or reserves. Increased IT equipment to facilitate home working will be covered from ICT budgets. Community engagement through the support and expanded distribution of the Woking News and Mail could be funded from reserves as part of the WeAreWoking campaign.

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- 5.43 There may be some budgets which are not required in full during 2020/21 due to the reduction in activity and government restrictions. Any underspends will offset additional costs experienced elsewhere.
- 5.44 Some project and other expenditure decisions may need to be postponed until the post pandemic environment, and the financial position of the Council into the medium term, is clearer.

### Income risk

- 5.45 Whilst the cost of supporting the current response is significant, a greater risk to the Council's financial position is the potential loss of income during 2020/21.
- 5.46 With government restrictions requiring many of our activities to close there is little opportunity to generate income from fees and charges to cover fixed costs.
- 5.47 The 2020/21 Fees and Charges budgets are summarised in the table below and provide an indication of the possible pressure on budgets depending on how long lock down arrangements are in place and what follows. There are also other income streams for example planning fees and developer contributions.

	Budget 2019/20 £'000	Estimated Yield 2020/21 £'000
People	£1,039,758	£970,242
Place	£9,939,524	£10,217,513
Us	£502,507	£382,974
Total	£11,481,789	£11,570,729

- 5.48 The most significant income within these budgets is from the Council's car parks, which is circa £8m. Car park charges are currently suspended with a loss of approximately £2m to the end of June. Charges will be reinstated from 1 July, however parking levels may not increase to previous levels at all during 2020/21, as the lockdown conditions are slowly eased, and the public reaction is likely to be gradual.
- 5.49 Some services, for example community meals, will be experiencing increased levels of demand and will generate additional income during this period. However, it is also likely that it will not be possible to recover all of the income due for these services. As the priority is the welfare of our residents, there will be a risk of non-payment.
- 5.50 Other areas won't be affected as a direct consequence of service closure, but the impact of any following slowdown in the economy would be more significant.
- 5.51 The Council budgeted for commercial rent income of approximately £21m in 2020/21. The closedown of some sectors of the economy, in particular retail and leisure, puts the recovery of these rents, and the survival of some tenants, at risk. A number of arrangements have been made which allow businesses to defer or reschedule rent and service charge payments. Further detail on the proposed approach to managing the Council's commercial properties is included in the Part 2 paper also on this agenda. It is too early to assess the impact for this year or forecast how future years' budgets may be affected by changed economic conditions.

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### Supporting Vulnerable Residents

- 5.52 The Council identified 2,275 of the most vulnerable residents known to us through their previous engagement with a range of Council services, including Careline, Community Meals, Centres for the Community, NVH tenants and Social Prescribing. Contact was made of all of these residents to ensure that they were safe, and that they had sufficient support in place throughout the lock-down. The objective was to establish initial contact, and then offer a weekly call to check the ongoing welfare of each resident and provide access to a regular friendly voice.
- 5.53 A case file system was established to hold key information about each resident and provide a central record of any concerns or specific needs after each conversation. Over 120 members of staff, including NVH colleagues, volunteered to make calls the residents, this work being in addition to their 'day-job'. Staff were trained, guidance issued, and the calling commenced on 30th March. Case Officers worked with other Council departments to enable a range of support, including prescription collections, support with food/shopping, and access to Adult Social Care etc. was provided.
- 5.54 If a resident could not be contacted, either initially or subsequently after contact had been made, it was agreed that it would be prudent to undertake a welfare visit to the property to ensure that there were no issues. The Police and Freedom Leisure colleagues have been deployed for this role, and over 170 successful visits have been made to date.
- 5.55 Over the last several weeks, 1,388 cases have been closed because the resident has confirmed that they have sufficient support in place. This currently leaves 887 active cases that are being called on a weekly basis. Feedback has been extremely positive, with residents and family members expressing gratitude for the support that the Council has been able to provide.
- 5.56 As part of the welfare response to the most vulnerable within the Borough, we have also made telephone calls to over 1,800 residents who have been notified by the Government or their GP that they need to shield during this time. Most people have been glad of the call and those who have wanted more regular contact have been added to the above vulnerable call list to be assigned a designated case officer from WBC staff. These residents have been reassured and some who have needed urgent care have received food parcels on the same day and been referred to wider ongoing support provided by the Borough such as Community Meals and Careline.
- 5.57 Over this period of lockdown a newly formed team of Council staff, redeployed to respond to community needs, have been taking calls and dealing with requests from staff, partners and residents during the week and weekends. They have already delivered 300 prescriptions to isolated residents across the Borough and responded to 700 requests for food, medicine and information and guidance; utilising local community resources. They have mapped the ever-increasing community offers and resources and been a contact for leaders of local of groups who have sought advice when setting up new initiatives.
- 5.58 They have also been in contact with local supermarkets and developed new opportunities for food deliveries to the most vulnerable, as well as supporting local foodbanks with access to new supply chains so they can continue to receive food and deliver food parcels. Hundreds of leaflets have also been passed out to residents receiving food parcels regarding staying safe and avoiding scams during this time.
- 5.59 The Woking Community Choir has continued to lift spirits via online participation each week and our Arts Development Officer is currently looking to develop craft activities for children and families as well as opportunities to send and receive letters to residents who are isolated.

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5.60 Contact has also been made with Woking schools to ensure they are aware of meal delivery options from local charities for vulnerable families and those who are eligible for free school meals.

### Waste & Recycling Services

5.61 Essential waste and recycling services have been proactively managed in Woking with inevitable staff absence covered by agency staff and the public reaction to the continued service provision has been very positive. Crew morale is high and the continued support from residents is still evident and greatly appreciated.

5.62 There has been an increase in the volume of food waste and rubbish since the emergency measures began and this will continue to be monitored.

5.63 Bulky household waste collections are generally down in volume but bookings can still be made and may help some residents while the CRC's remain closed.

5.64 Four main communication themes have been agreed as below.

- Asking residents to hold onto waste if they are having a clear out;
- Advising them that recycling banks are not all being emptied, so if a bank is full they shouldn't leave recycling next to it as this is fly-tipping;
- Reminding residents that fly-tipping is against the law; and
- Encouraging residents to compact their recycling, e.g. flatten and fold cardboard, wash and squash plastics.

5.65 Further information can be found at the [JWS website](#)

### Serco Environmental Maintenance Activities

5.66 The Serco environmental maintenance activities have continued whilst allowing flexibility to assist with the Council's wider response. Initially, this was in the form of play areas closures one day ahead of Government restrictions before supporting mobilisation of the emergency accommodation at HG Wells and similar tasks.

5.67 Serco has continued to deliver services whilst practising social distancing which does impact productivity but we can still provide a good level of service. A number of similar contracts in the UK significantly reduced service levels, but in Woking this has not been the case and the overwhelming public reaction has been positive.

5.68 Serco's continue to provide specialist works such as sports pitch renovation currently being undertaken. Some subcontractors in fencing and hard landscaping furloughed staff due to limited supply of materials and will restart hopefully during May. Preparation for summer bedding and other seasonal works continue to keep the Borough green, clean and cared for.

5.69 With more parked cars on the streets grass cutting, street sweeping and tree work is either slower or cannot be fully completed. To take advantage of reduced traffic volumes on the more rural roads Serco are instigating temporary, local road closures to allow a thorough cleanse of normally difficult to access areas.

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### Housing Services

- 5.70 The Covid-19 emergency has been challenging for the Housing Service both in terms of supply and demand. On 26 March 2020, housing authorities received a direction from Government that all rough sleepers or those facing homelessness should be offered emergency accommodation ("everyone in") and any dormitory-style night shelters should close. This announcement coincided with the closure of most hotels and Bed and Breakfast accommodation around the country in response to the lockdown, severely hampering local authorities' ability to achieve this objective.
- 5.71 Woking Borough Council has a long-standing, well-developed and strong partnership with local charity, York Road Project, which has been highlighted in our joint response to Covid-19. Working together, all York Road Project support services and night shelter operations have relocated to the Woking Hotel and HG Wells Centre. Whilst the Woking Hotel offers 26 en-suite bedrooms (considerably more than the 10 spaces at the night shelter), it became quickly apparent that this alone would not fulfil the rising demand from rough sleepers. Therefore, the Council commissioned the installation of a further 10 single bedroom pods in the HG Wells Centre to increase capacity. York Road Project staff and volunteers have been working very hard to support clients and encourage them to engage with local drug and alcohol support services. There are now 33 rough sleepers accommodated at the Woking Hotel and HG Wells Centre.
- 5.72 The Council also secured the exclusive use of the Woking Travelodge hotel for general homelessness for 3-months to ensure suitable accommodation was available throughout the lockdown. The intention was to make some rooms available for key workers and hospital discharges, but the anticipated demand did not materialise. Therefore, the Council has let some of the rooms to other Surrey local authorities to help them meet their homelessness duties, as well as, to construction workers requiring local accommodation. Council staff have had to go the extra mile to secure access to wider services for those staying at the Travelodge, including arranging personal laundry services and meal provision.
- 5.73 Whilst the Council has seen a decline in families presenting as homeless due to loss of private rented accommodation (the primary cause of homelessness before Covid-19), there has been a significant increase in single people presenting as homeless due to family/relationship breakdowns, no longer being able to "sofa surf" or loss of employment. 46 rooms are currently occupied at the Travelodge (local homelessness provision, other local authority bookings and construction workers) with a further 11 reserved through other local authority block bookings.
- 5.74 Choice-Based Lettings, the bidding system used for allocating vacant affordable homes, was suspended in March, when it was unclear how this process could operate under lockdown. Guidance then followed from Government, which permitted certain essential moves within social housing through direct lets, which the Council has been following. On 14 May 2020, the Government announced it was lifting restrictions on house moves across all sectors, including social lettings (except for the requirement to comply with social distancing). The Council therefore resumed Choice-Based Lettings in June, with the first bidding cycle commencing on 9 June 2020.
- 5.75 New Vision Homes (NVH) and its contractors have managed to maintain most services through the pandemic. Where Covid-19 has affected supply chains and staffing levels, New Vision Homes has amended services to ensure, wherever possible, emergency and urgent services have remained operational. Throughout the period, all contractors have implemented measures to ensure compliance with government guidance and new legislation, including maintaining social distancing and limiting face-to-face contact, in order to keep residents as safe as possible.

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

- 5.76 A small number of housing services have been fully suspended. These are mainly on the planned works side, such as kitchen/bathroom replacements, new door/window installation and disabled adaptations, to minimise contact with residents. In addition, New Vision Homes' face-to-face tenant interaction, such as tenant events, home visits and tenancy audits, have been replaced with alternative forms of engagement, including welfare calls to vulnerable tenants.
- 5.77 In the first 5 weeks of 2020/21, rent collection has been approximately 10% less than the same period last year as tenants have struggled with the financial impacts of Covid-19. It is unclear at this stage what the ongoing impact will be on the Housing Revenue Account. However, assuming most affected tenants start to claim Universal Credit, we could anticipate the projected increase in arrears due to Covid-19 to be approximately 8% in 2020/21, equating to a full-year impact of circa £1.5 million.
- 5.78 The Housing team are now working with York Road Project and Thamesway Housing to look at the "Next Steps and Recovery Strategy" with the focus being on securing sustainable housing and support pathways for rough sleepers and reducing dependency on the use of hotels. Key to this will be securing long-term affordable housing across the Borough.

### Community Meals

- 5.79 Community Meals team have been extremely busy. The daily service continues to grow in demand. A sixth van round has been introduced and some meals are now being delivered by hot boxes by cars. 1374 hot meals are provided each week representing a 50% increase on the same time last year. The team have also introduced the provision of breakfast and lunch for the Travel Lodge residents and more recently an additional hot meal in the evening.

### Brockhill and Independent Support

- 5.80 Brockhill remains in "lock down" and the staff manage it 7 days a week. The team has organised delivery of meals to the rooms, shopping needs, prescriptions, cleaning, washing etc. Brockhill lunches are now provided by outside local caterers The Red Lion at Horsell and Fair Oaks Catering in order to reduce the work load for the team and safe guard meals supplies for the wider Borough.
- 5.81 The Independent Support team are still contacting every tenant in our 9 NVH sheltered schemes and those tenants in general needs property who normally have their support on a weekly basis mostly by phone and in some circumstances visiting ensuring they are safe and have no urgent needs.

### Careline

- 5.82 Careline has completed 12 installations since 1 April of which 2 have been the new OwnFone which have been installed on the 'doorstep' talking through alarm connection either with client or family. 'Lost' pendants have been replaced and cancelled alarms have still been collected (families disconnecting equipment and leaving outside property). Smoke detector are still being install for clients with COPD and have oxygen in property. For those residents waiting to have an alarm installed but who do not want a visit at the moment the team are calling them weekly to check that health has not deteriorated and if any help is required.

### Homelink and Handyperson Service

- 5.83 The Handyperson Service is still operating for emergency work and to assist hospital discharge. We have enabled 40 hospital discharges so far, this includes provision of grab rails, bannister rails and moving furniture for hospital beds to be delivered.

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

- 5.84 The service is also carrying out urgent work if we can do it safely outside e.g. key safes and external rails where there is no client contact. The Service is also used to help deliver food to the Travel Lodge and Brockhill.
- 5.85 Homelink Disabled Adaptions client requirements are being discussed by phone rather than initial visits so cases can be assessed and prioritised. Our Senior Occupational Therapist continues to make home assessments where considered urgent (e.g. for stair lifts) and has been assessing for urgent equipment. We have completed installation of two access ramps and two stair lifts during this Covid period but most contractors are not working. Our OT has created a SCC Community Equipment Store at The Vyne Community Centre in order to assist and speed up delivery of equipment for residents after discharge.

### Social Prescribing

- 5.86 The Social Prescribing team are working closely with the Primary Care Networks where the GPs have produced their own list of approx. 1000 patients who are "vulnerable". These lists are in addition to the SCC shielded list and our own vulnerable list and our Social Prescribing team are contacting the patients with the GP script asking medical related questions e.g. regarding immunisation and medical concerns.

### Leisure Services

- 5.87 The Leisure Centres, Pools, Pavilions and Play Areas are closed. Freedom Leisure colleagues have been redeployed to assist with supporting vulnerable people.

### Marketing Communications

- 5.88 Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, a comprehensive programme of engagement with residents, businesses and internal staff has ensured that clear and concise messages have been delivered, and continues to do so, in a swift and timely manner.
- 5.89 Communications Officers have worked closely with key stakeholders, including central government, Surrey County Council, the local CCG, NHS and Surrey Police, to deliver government guidance, key health and wellbeing messages and our own service-specific updates via Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Through continuous monitoring of social media, communications officers identified and responded promptly to emerging issues, as well general day-to-day queries such as parking, waste and recycling collections, fly-tipping, council tax arrangements and payments, and environmental health related matters.
- 5.90 As a central resource for residents and businesses, it has been imperative to maintain the corporate website with the latest service information, national advice and guidance from partners. A central hub was created for information making it simple and readily accessible for those visiting the site. It was also accessible via various points on the homepage. Individual services pages were also updated to reflect the latest Council service information.
- 5.91 To widen our communications reach, we have created and delivered a residents' email newsletter which conveniently brings together the latest council news and information. To drive sign-ups, visitors to the corporate website are presented with a pop-up box asking them to sign-up. It's quick, simple to do and will benefit our future communications.
- 5.92 Whilst digital communications offers many benefits, it does have its drawbacks, with many groups within our community not having access to the internet. To enable us to deliver key messages and positive community news to hard to reach groups, such as the elderly, vulnerable and disadvantaged, we partnered with the Woking News and Mail. Since 13 April 2020, the partnership has delivered by Royal Mail a weekly 16-page newspaper to all households in the borough, in addition to around 5,500 households in Surrey Heath. That's a total of around 48,300 properties. Whilst maintaining their independence, officers have

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

worked closely with the editorial team to ensure a balance of council and partner news and positive community-led features. The weekly cost of this service is circa £12,000 less the 50% of any advertising revenue.

- 5.93 The WeAreWoking team is delivering a positive community-centric campaign called #WeAreWoking Together. Through its strong online presence, the targeted campaign has supported the Council in disseminating its key messages, whilst creating community-led news which celebrates residents' ingenuity and spirit.
- 5.94 To ensure that members of staff are kept informed of developments and the latest guidance and council policies, a series of intranet pages were developed on ewok+. To support colleagues who may not have been able to access Citrix, we also developed an extranet which replicated ewok+. This extranet can be accessed without logging on to Citrix and was password protected. To help build a sense of community amongst colleagues, we also created a private, password protected Facebook group for staff.

### Staffing

- 5.95 Currently just over 60% of the workforce are undertaking their duties at home. Of those 4% are also juggling childcare responsibilities. The remainder are either combining working from home/office or working in the office or other Council locations the whole time.
- 5.96 There are currently eight employees absent due to sickness, of which two have Covid 19 symptoms.
- 5.97 The Council has 22 employees who are at home and not working and could be regarded as 'furloughed'. There are a variety of reasons for this either due to their health situation, or the health of someone in their household, and they are currently unable to work from home.
- 5.98 Many employees have come forward to volunteer to undertake other roles alongside their normal role; 21% are undertaking weekly welfare calls. Other employees have undertaken 3 days of training to deliver hot meals to residents 7 days a week, or are working alongside the York Road Project in HG Wells or the Woking Hotel. Employees have been 'manning' the control centre 7 days a week and covering work within independent living to include providing an exceptional service to the residents at Brockhill again 7 days a week. Lastly extra resources were deployed into the co-ordination of providing food and prescriptions to shielded residents.
- 5.99 This report has highlighted the specific activities which have arisen as a direct response to the pandemic. However, it is important to note that the delivery of all the Council's normal services has continued with staff adapting working practices as necessary.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 This report outlines a significant range of activity being undertaken either in respect of its own activities and/or that of partners in health and social care.
- 6.2 As Chief Executive, I am grateful for the efforts of those colleagues who have been dealing with the emergency and those that have been keeping as much of the Council's business operational as possible. I am also grateful for the positive and supportive comments and cooperation from Members as it enables me to direct as much officer resource as possible to respond to the emergency.

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

### 7.0 Moving to Recovery

- 7.1 Business Liaison Officers have been preparing a Draft Framework for Recovery which is due to be considered by the Economic Development Task Group. The initial draft has been reviewed and amended by the Corporate Management Group and is attached at Appendix 3 for information. The Executive, and Council, will be requested to support the Framework for Recovery at a future meeting.
- 7.2 Set out at Agenda Item 21 (Part 2) is a report on Commercial Tenant Management; the approach outlined therein should help those businesses that are Council tenants manage their financial affairs as they recover.

### 8.0 Implications

#### Financial

- 8.1 The financial position of the Council remains unclear as outlined in the report. The critical issue will be the degree to which the economy recovers, thereby restoring some income flows, and the extent to which the Government provide further support.
- 8.2 It is unlikely the Government will fully compensate the Council for all the effects of COVID 19 hence the request made to the Local Government Association to argue for a Capitalisation Directive for the current and next two years to allow Councils' to spread any deficits over future years rather than cut services and create more adverse outcomes.

#### Human Resource/Training and Development

- 8.3 The Council's employees have responded well to the challenges presented by COVID 19. Future working patterns will change and new skills will need to be developed to support a workforce that will increasingly work from home.

#### Community Safety

- 8.4 The Council's response to the COVID 19 emergency has positively supported the community and placed the safety of people first. Collaboration with Surrey Police has been excellent.
- 8.5 Concerns remain about the potential increase in Domestic Violence.

#### Risk Management

- 8.6 COVID 19 presented the extreme of challenge to the Council Business Continuity Plans; they have worked well.
- 8.7 Managing the risks of recovery will be a major challenge for the Council. The Draft Plan outlined earlier in the report, and attached at Appendix 3, sets out how the Council will seek to do so.

#### Sustainability

- 8.8 COVID 19 has put the sustainability of the UK under major stress; Woking is not immune. Economic vitality will be critical to recovery and re-establishing sustainability; some services will be at risk if the Council cannot phase recovery and secure the capitalisation of deficits.
- 8.9 The Climate Change "Planet Woking" proposals are proceeding so as to take advantage of the heightened interest in the environment and Climate Change.

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

### Equalities

8.10 There are no equality issues raised by this report.

### Safeguarding

8.11 There are no safeguarding issues raised by this report but there are concerns that with the extended lockdown period and the slow phasing back into "normal" operations there may be cases and/or safeguarding issues that have not been reported.

## **9.0 Consultations**

9.1 There have been no consultations in the preparation of this report but The Leader's Group has been briefed on a weekly basis.

9.2 Colleagues have consulted with local business, the Portfolio Holder and the Chairman of the Economic Development Task Group in respect of the preparation of the Draft Framework for Recovery set out in this report.

REPORT ENDS

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADDENDUM TO THE CONSTITUTION – APRIL 2020

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**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This Addendum to the Council's Constitution gives effect to changes to the Council's operational arrangements necessitated by the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 1.2 This Addendum incorporates requirements of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (S.I.2020 No. 392).
- 1.3 In drafting this Addendum, regard has been had to The Remote Meetings Protocol and Procedure Rules published by Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO).
- 1.4 Save to the extent varied by this Addendum, the Council's Constitution shall remain in full force and effect. In the event of there being a conflict between the provisions of this Addendum and the Constitution, the provisions of this Addendum shall prevail.
- 1.5 The provisions of this Addendum shall apply until 7 May 2021 (unless varied beforehand).

**2.0 Annual Meeting of the Council**

- 2.1 The next Annual Meeting(s) of the Council shall be held on 20 May 2021 (Mayor Making) and 24 May 2021 (Formal Business).
- 2.2 Appointments made at the Annual Meeting(s) of Council on 16 May 2019 (Mayor Making) and 20 May 2019 (Formal Business) shall remain in force and effect.
- 2.3 Meetings shall take place on the dates and times set out in the Council's published Calendar of Meetings for 2020/21, with an additional meeting of the Planning Committee being held at 7.00 pm on 12 May 2020.

**3.0 Conduct of Meetings**

**3.1 Access to Information**

- (a) For the purposes of the Constitution, the terms "notice", "summons", "agenda", "report", "written record" and "background papers", when referred to as being a document that is:-
  - (i) "open to inspection", shall include for this and all other purposes being published on the Council's website, and
  - (ii) to be published, posted or made available at the Council's Offices, shall include for this and all other purposes publication on the Council's website.

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

- (b) The summons, agenda, reports and background papers for meetings shall be published one week before the meeting. Hard copies of such papers will not be produced.

### 3.2 Remote Access to Meetings

- (a) For the purposes of the Constitution, the terms:-

- “meeting” is not limited to a meeting of persons, all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place;
- “place” in the context of where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place, including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers, and
- “open to the public” includes access to the meeting being through remote means including video conferencing, live webcast, and live interactive streaming. Where a meeting is accessible to the public through such remote means, the meeting is open to the public whether or not members of the public are able to attend the meeting in person.

- (b) If the Chairman of the meeting is made aware that the meeting is not accessible to the public through remote means, due to any technological or other failure of provision, then the Chairman shall immediately adjourn the meeting. If the provision of access through remote means cannot be restored within a reasonable period of time, the Chairman shall adjourn the meeting for such period of time that he/she considers reasonable and conducive to the dispatch of the remaining business.

### 3.3 Remote Attendance at Meetings by Members

- (a) A Member in remote attendance is present and attends the meeting, including for the purposes of the meeting's quorum, if at any time all three of the following conditions are satisfied, those conditions being that the Member in remote attendance is able at that time:-
  - (i) to hear and, where practicable, see and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by the other Members in attendance;
  - (ii) to hear and, where practicable, see and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting, and
  - (iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.
- (b) A Member in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance in 3.3 (a) above are not met. In such circumstances, the Chairman of the meeting may, as he/she deems appropriate:-

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

- (i) adjourn the meeting for a short period of time (not exceeding ten minutes) to permit the conditions for remote attendance of a Member contained in 3.3 (a) above to be re-established;
- (ii) count the number of Members in attendance for the purposes of the quorum, or
- (iii) continue to transact the remaining business of the meeting in the absence of the Member in remote attendance.

### 3.4 Remote Attendance at Meetings by Members of the Public

- (a) A member of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting is in remote attendance at any time if all three of the following conditions are satisfied, those conditions being that the member of the public in remote attendance is able at that time:-
  - (i) to hear and, where practicable, see and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by Members in attendance;
  - (ii) to hear and, where practicable, see and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public entitled to attend the meeting in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting, and
  - (iii) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public attending the meeting.
- (b) A member of the public in remote attendance will be deemed to have left the meeting where, at any point during the meeting, any of the conditions for remote attendance in 3.4 (a) above are not met. In such circumstance. The Chairman of the meeting may, as he/she deems appropriate:-
  - (i) adjourn the meeting for a short period of time (not exceeding ten minutes) to permit the conditions for remote attendance contained in 3.4 (a) above to be re-established, or
  - (ii) suspend consideration of the item of business in relation to the member of public's attendance until such time as one or more following item(s) of business on the agenda have been transacted and the conditions for the member of the public's remote attendance have been re-established.

If the conditions for the member of public's remote access cannot be re-established before the end of the meeting, the item of business in relation to the member of public's attendance shall be determined in the absence of the member of public.

### 3.5 Declaration of Interests

Where a Member is required to leave a meeting as a result of having declared an interest in an item of business, the means of remote attendance to the meeting for that Member shall be severed whilst any discussion or vote takes place in respect of that item of business.

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

### 3.6 Part II Business

When a meeting goes into Part II to consider confidential/exempt items of business (as defined in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972), each Member in remote attendance shall ensure, and verbally declare, that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to hear, or see, consideration of such item(s).

### 3.7 Method of Voting

(a) A Member who considers that a vote on a recommendation before a meeting is required shall notify Member Services of that by noon on the working day prior to the meeting.

(b) Where a vote needs to be taken at a meeting, the Chairman of the meeting shall call, in alphabetical order, the names of the Members in remote attendance. The Member called shall state:-

“YES” if he/she is in favour of the recommendation, motion or amendment before the meeting, or

“NO” if he/she is against the recommendation, motion or amendment before the meeting, or

“ABSTAIN” if he/she does not wish to vote on the recommendation, motion or amendment before the meeting.

The result of the vote shall be announced by the Meeting Coordinator supporting the meeting.

(b) Where no vote needs to be taken, the Chairman of the meeting shall state that the recommendation, motion or amendment before the meeting is agreed.

### 3.8 Council Meetings – Notices of Motion

(a) When submitted to the Chief Executive's office under Standing Order 5, a Notice of Motion shall include the names of the Proposer and Secunder of the Motion.

(b) Every valid Notice of Motion shall automatically be referred to a meeting of the Executive falling before the next ordinary meeting of Council for consideration and report.

(c) No motion under Standing Order 5 shall be debated and considered (i.e. “taken on the night”) at the Council meeting for which the Notice of Motion was given.

### 3.9 Council Meetings – Questions by Members

(a) Questions under Standing Order 8 shall be submitted to the Chief Executive's office not later than noon, three working days before the Council meeting (i.e. by noon on the Monday prior to a Council meeting on a Thursday).

(b) Replies to questions shall be sent to all Members by 5.00 pm on the last working day before the Council meeting (i.e. by 5.00 pm on the Wednesday prior to a Council meeting on a Thursday).

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

- (c) If the Member asking the question wishes to ask a supplementary question, he/she shall notify Member Services of that fact, by email, by noon on the day of the Council meeting.
- (d) Subject to paragraph 3.9 (c) above having been complied with, the Mayor shall call the Member to ask the supplementary question at the Council meeting.

### 3.10 Executive and Committees – Time Limit for Speeches

- (a) A Member wishing to speak on an item of business before a meeting shall notify Member Services of that by noon on the working day prior to the meeting.
- (b) Unless the Chairman of the meeting agrees otherwise, no speech shall exceed the following time limit:-
  - (i) Five Minutes:- Executive, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Standards and Audit Committee (and its Sub-Committee), Licensing Committee (and its Sub-Committees) and Appeals Committee.
  - (ii) Ten Minutes:- Planning Committee.

### 3.11 Executive Procedure Rules – Questions by the Public

- (a) A member of the public asking a question of a member of the Executive under Rule 3 of the Executive Procedure Rules shall not be entitled to attend the meeting to put the question in person.
- (b) All replies to questions of members of the Executive, submitted by members of the public, shall be in writing.
- (c) No supplementary questions shall be asked by a member of the public.

### 3.12 Urgent Business

- (a) If a Member considers that there is an item of urgent business, he/she shall notify the Chief Executive of that item.
- (b) Subject to the relevant Chairman agreeing, the Chief Executive may arrange for the item of urgent business to be considered at an appropriate forthcoming meeting.

Addendum Ends

## Members Guide to Participating in a Zoom Meeting

### Prior to the Date of the Meeting

**Ensure you have read the agenda papers** well in advance of the meeting. All documents will be published through Mod Gov and will be available both through the Council's website (Part I documents only) and your iPad (Part I and Part II documents).

Paper copies of agendas, reports and minutes will no longer be issued to Members or Officers.

**Raise any questions** you have on agenda items with the relevant officers in advance of the meeting.

Submit to the Democratic Services Team ([member.services@woking.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@woking.gov.uk)):

- the list of agenda items you wish to **speak on**; the speakers will be taken in the order the requests are received. Deadline is noon on the working day before the meeting. This applies to all Councillors, whether or not they are Members of the Committee.
- whether there are any items you wish to hold a **vote** on. Deadline is noon on the working day before the meeting.
- your **apologies** in the event you are unable to attend. Deadline is noon on the working day before the meeting.
- any items you will **declare an interest** in. Deadline is noon on the working day before the meeting.
- Any **Notices of Motion** you wish to be considered by Council including the names of the proposer and seconder. Deadline is noon, seven days before the meeting.
- Any **Questions to Council** you wish to be considered. Deadline is noon, three working days before the Council meeting. Replies to questions will be sent to all Members by 5.00 pm on the last working day before the Council meeting. If you wish to ask a supplementary question, you must notify Member Services of that fact, by email, by noon on the day of the Council meeting.

Ensure you have read the **addendum to the Constitution** which sets out the way in which the Council will operate virtual Council meetings.

## Before the Start of the Meeting

**Choose a suitable room** from which to join the meeting, having consideration of your background. Avoid being too far from your wifi hub and be aware that other members of your household using the wifi may affect your connection.

**Dress smartly.** Bear in mind you and your surroundings will be visible during the whole of the webcast, not just when you speak.

Ensure your **equipment is set up** for ease of use and that both your laptop and iPad are connected to charging points. You may wish to have a pen and pad of paper available to make notes.

Ensure you have the **Zoom meeting ID and password** to hand, together with the phone number which would allow you to join a meeting in the event your internet connection fails. Ensure you have access to a phone.

**Join the Zoom meeting 10-15 minutes before the start time.** Open up the agenda papers on your iPad in preparation.

## During the meeting.

Ensure that your microphone is **muted** unless invited to speak by the Chairman.

The Chairman will call upon those who have previously advised that they wish to speak on an item. The **order of speakers** will be based on the order in which the requests were received.

For the Planning Committee only, the Ward Member for an application, where they are not on the Committee and have indicated in advance of the meeting that they wish to attend and speak, will be called first to speak.

If you wish to speak, but have not previously advised that you wish to do so, use the **Chat function** on Zoom to send a message to everyone that you wish to speak. Use RTS X, a shortened version of Request To Speak where X represents the agenda item number e.g. RTS 8). The Chairman will take the list of speakers in the order the messages are received.

**Members speaking will be time limited** to under five minutes (ten minutes for the Planning Committee) and asked not to repeat points made by other Members of the Council. Officers are similarly asked to keep their comments short.

## Woking Borough Council's Response to COVID 19 - Update

If you wish to **speak for a second time** during a debate, please use Chat to message the Chairman accordingly (RTS 7 for example).

If you have a **declaration of interest** in an item that requires you to leave the meeting, you will be placed in a virtual waiting room through Zoom for the duration of the item. While in the waiting room, you will not be able to listen to or view the Zoom meeting.

If a **vote** has been requested, the Chairman will ask each Member of the Meeting, alphabetically by surname, to which the response would be one of the following options:

**"YES"** if he/she is in favour of the recommendation, motion or amendment before the meeting'; or

**"NO"** if he/she is against the recommendation, motion or amendment before the meeting; or

**"ABSTAIN"** if he/she does not wish to vote on the recommendation, motion or amendment before the meeting.

Where no further Members have indicated a wish to speak on an item, and a vote has not been requested, the Chairman will state that, in the absence of any further speakers, the recommendation before the Meeting is taken as agreed.

If the meeting has to go into **Part II (Press and Public Excluded)** to consider confidential/exempt items of business (as defined in Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972), you will have to ensure, and verbally declare, that there are no other persons present who are not entitled to hear, or see, consideration of such item(s).

**Draft Recovery Framework**