

In moving forward from the past 5 months where Corona Virus has dominated the lives of people across the world we need to build on the commitment of all those public sector workers who have given so much to treat and care for those suffering from the virus, those who kept us safe, those who fed us and those who continued to educate our children or were just there as a friendly voice on the end of a phone. That goodwill must not be squandered, and we must recognise and mend the cracks in our public services which became so visible. We are all aware of the tragic death of George Floyd in the US which prompted waves of protests across the world. In Oxfordshire despite the threat of COVID many people went onto the streets and into the Parks to call for an end to racism and discrimination against the black community. Our BAME community has suffered disproportionately as a result of COVID and we know that many children from that community will have fallen even further behind in their educational attainment.

I welcome your statement Leader in relation to Black Lives matter and I believe that the approach in this document could pave the way to an Oxfordshire which is Inclusive, Diverse and Thriving. We have many of the pillars in place in our Corporate Plan and our Director of Public Health Report. As this report says some of the objectives will need to be reprioritised. The suggestion that we prioritise Health Checks in our BAME Communities is welcome as is work with vulnerable children and families. Revisiting and reprioritising needs to be undertaken urgently. But we must also continue and learn from the work which is being done in Banbury as a result of the DPH report. Working together and with and not just for Communities has to be the norm.

The lockdown has changed working and travelling patterns. Inevitably some people will be going back into offices but as this report considers we should be ensuring that the digital technology which has been developed is used and that innovative ways of delivering services take priority. This of course means that we should be ensuring that no one is digitally homeless. In education that means that we ensure that not only do children have the Chrome Books etc, but they also have access to the internet. We had already considered how technology could be used to access and deliver services and that now needs to be accelerated. It is important that there is inclusive consultation with communities across the county. Everywhere is different and one size doesn't fit all but unless we have the tools of inclusivity, we will lose the opportunity to change the lives of the those suffering the most disadvantage. We need to be clear and accountable. That means that we need assurance that community engagement is taking place. We need to be collecting the evidence so that when outcomes can be properly scrutinised as we go forward and Leader, I would like assurance from you that will happen.

The financial impact on Local Government of the pandemic is still uncertain however we do know that there will need to be significant injections of money if we are not to reach the end of the year with a deficit which will have to be funded. I know the LGA is lobbying for additional funding. When this report was written we were waiting to hear about the money promised for test and trace. Have we been told how much of the £300m we will get, and will this be enough to cover the actual cost? You, Leader have been very active in highlighting the problems associated with the infection control funds £7.3m. 75% was allocated to Oxfordshire Care Homes on bed numbers. Have we got any further forward in securing this money and does the

county lose almost £2m if the Government is not satisfied with the returns from the Care Homes about the expenditure of the 75%? We have received £27m of the £64m deficit. Whilst I accept there are at this point of time variables as to what we might receive. how confident is the Cabinet that Oxfordshire along with other local authorities will receive what is due to them?

At the beginning of this Pandemic Local Authorities were doing what they do best responding to need in their local communities we were testing and tracing which is the bread and butter of Public Health Authorities who regularly undertake this activity in relation to 100 notifiable diseases. That stopped and National Government stepped in and we know the catastrophic narrative which followed.

Today the officers of this Council, who I thank for all they have done throughout this awful time. have put in front of you a thought through deliverable report which will engage with other local authorities and stakeholders alongside our staff and their Trade Unions, our communities and all the people who live there. It will be overseen by robust local Government Arrangements to deliver recovery for all of our residents. We look forward to working with you to make this happen.