
Report To:	Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee	Date:	21 April 2020
Report By:	Chief Executive	Report No:	LP/053/20
Contact Officer:	Aubrey Fawcett	Contact No:	01475 712701
Subject:	COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Scrutiny Report		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report updates the Sub-Committee on actions taken by officers of the Council in order to address and mitigate the risks arising from the COVID-19 emergency.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 As approved at the Executive Sub- committee's previous meeting, this report ensures there is Elected Member oversight and scrutiny of all actions implemented by officers to ensure in the COVID-19 emergency. Officers have taken actions based upon the principles that essential services continue to be delivered to the public, wherever possible, and the core business of the Council is maintained with key regard to the safety of its workforce.
- 2.2 The Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 24 March 2020 authorised the suspension of all Council, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings for the duration of the emergency and delegated full powers in the emergency to this Executive Sub-Committee. This report ensures that Members have clear oversight of all actions taken by relevant officers and with particular regard to service impact.
- 2.3 The items in the **Appendix 1** are updates of actions taken since the previous meeting and are detailed for Member scrutiny. The Executive Sub-Committee will wish to review the appendix for the strategic direction taken in response to the emergency and also for their assessment of how the operational aims of maintaining crucial public services whilst safeguarding the workforce were achieved. The log of actions is indicative of the position on Wednesday 15 April 2020 and Members will appreciate this is a constantly evolving situation.
- 2.4 There will be reports with updates in this format to each meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Sub-Committee notes:

- 3.1 the actions taken to date to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 emergency in Inverclyde;
- 3.2 that further reports will be submitted regularly for Members' scrutiny and review; and
- 3.3 that the current suspension of parking enforcement should remain in force for a further 6 weeks, to 2 June 2020 or alternatively, until there are any significant changes to Government Guidance on social distancing, whichever is the sooner.

Aubrey Fawcett
Chief Executive

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council and its partners have been working to implement arrangements to deal with the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These arrangements are based upon an established corporate and incident response structure. Staff are able, by virtue of their roles and responsibilities, to deal with the emergency and it is recognised that the challenges posed by the current circumstances are profound and will require a continuous process of planning and preparation until its conclusion.
- 4.2 Internal and external communications, all decision-making by officers and the response arrangements are already firmly established through existing strategic and tactical meeting structures. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) is responsible for the strategic response and the tactical arrangements are discussed and proposed through the Council's Resilience Management Team (CRMT) (which also incorporates the Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership (H&SCP)). Additionally, the HSCP has activated its Local Management Resilience Team (LMRT) in which the Council has a number of representatives and this ensures that the Council and the HSCP are entirely joined up in decision-making. From a multi-agency perspective, the LMRT contributes to a Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board-wide gold command structure which covers acute, primary and social care. The Council is meeting weekly with multi-agency partners through the West Local Resilience Partnership (WLRP). At a strategic level LRP is also now operating at the level of the Health Board and this incorporates the six constituent Councils and appropriate multi-agency partners.

5.0 CURRENT ISSUES

- 5.1 The decisions noted in **Appendix 1** have been taken by the CMT on the basis of tactical updates provided by the CRMT and, also, assessment by the relative Corporate Directors and their teams. Notwithstanding the developing situation, a clear audit trail of all decisions has been maintained with relevant but brief, focused backing papers being circulated for consideration and decision at the CMT daily meetings.
- 5.2 In addition to the daily briefings which have been immediately implemented by the CMT to ensure that all Members of the Council had advance notice of any service impact decisions, there continues to be constant dialogue and contact with relevant Conveners and, where appropriate, Minority Group spokespersons/contacts on key issues.
- 5.3 It has to be noted that there continues to be many operational demands on the Council by reason of the emergency, but as the situation to an extent stabilises in part in relation to workforce issues, it is the intention to continue to report in this format to the Executive Sub-Committee for purposes of scrutiny and review of all decisions taken but it can also be anticipated that the more usual format and content of the Council's reporting to Members will be resumed (albeit for the duration of the emergency to this Sub-Committee).
- 5.4 Although a significant number of decisions have been taken across the range of Council services, the following key issues are identified and summarised as ongoing items for Members' information and for future business planning:

HSCP

- 5.5 **Update on PPE.** Then Council has maintained a reasonable level of stock in relation to PPE in Inverclyde due to frequent deliveries in early March. There are priority areas to ensure supply to front facing staff across services. The list includes;

- Care at Home
- James Watt Court Learning Disability Service
- Children's Homes
- Inverclyde Centre
- Assessment Centre Greenock Health Centre
- Testing Centre Port Glasgow

- District Nursing
- Care Homes(External)
- Supported Living Providers(External)
- Carers Centre

5.6 The main PPE store is in Central Greenock and has a well-defined process now for ensuring stock reaches the teams that require PPE. The PPE stock includes, gloves, aprons, masks and eye protection. Last week 9000 masks were moved to Care at Home teams across Inverclyde. 1000 masks were provided to personal assistants who look after a small number of service users in the community who rely on various mechanical aids to assist with breathing.

5.7 It is important moving forward that fresh stock is received from the various sources to ensure seamless supply to front line services. This is monitored daily by staff and reported back to SMT.

5.8 **Mobilisation Plan.** The HSCP has moved to a Hub delivery model. Linked to this a local mobilisation plan has been developed and submitted through the Health Board to Scottish Government. On 9th April the Cabinet Secretary confirmed agreement in principle to fund the first 3 months of that mobilisation plan.

5.9 The mobilisation plan includes:

- the purchase of up to 70 additional care home beds, with provisional plans to increase this if required
- anticipated additional staffing costs to cover demand increase and increased staff absence
- anticipated additional provider costs
- anticipated loss of day centre income
- anticipated costs of the assessment and testing centres
- additional security costs to support the Inverclyde Centre and Addictions services
- additional PPE and IT costs

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES

5.10 **Hubs.** The hubs continue to run well and did not close over the Easter holidays, including the bank holidays. On average the number of pupils attending is in the 90s each day. Of this number approximately 70% are the children of Key Workers and 30% are vulnerable pupils. Daily monitoring returns to the Scottish Government have allowed officers to support hubs to review their staffing rotas so that capacity is maintained in the long term.

5.11 As of the 20th of April hubs reduced from 9 to 11, having moved Rainbow into the Newark and the Glenbrae hub into All Saints. This is mainly due to low numbers at Rainbow and Glenbrae and also the challenges of having to maintain 11 sites being cleaned and open.

5.12 The 9 hub model looks to be more sustainable in terms of numbers and staffing for the foreseeable future but this will be kept under weekly review.

5.13 The attendance of vulnerable pupils is also part of procedures to track and monitor pupils in relation to child protection. Transport is being provided where this has proven to be a barrier to pupils attending

5.14 A handbook of guidance agreed across Education and HSCP has been created and is included with this report. This tracking process across Education, HCSP and Barnardos is ensuring that professionals have sight of all pupils where there are concerns or where they are on the child protection register. Where there is no sight of the most vulnerable pupils then members of the Social Work and CLD teams are making visits to houses to check in on families and promote the hubs to them.

5.15 Officers have been able to make an offer to all applicants via the initial online survey. Since then communications has been issued to encourage any parents who are key workers and require childcare to contact the hubs for this. The Head of Education is acting as the arbiter in

this process i.e. to deal with issues and complaints. To date the need of this has been minimal.

- 5.16 **SQA.** One of the next challenges facing Education is securing outcomes for pupils across the Senior Phase. At the time of writing we have received an initial statement from the SQA with some detail as to how this will be achieved. Further guidance from the SQA is expected on the 20th of April 2020.
- 5.17 Officers are liaising with authority colleagues across Scotland via the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) Curriculum and Qualifications group. This is allowing the Council to be part of consultations and negotiations with the SQA as to how the guidance on the 20th April will look.
- 5.18 The biggest issue is to ensure the integrity of the assessment evidence being used to award grades to young people without an exam i.e. a greater focus than ever before is being made on teacher professional judgement. As such officers must ensure the integrity of this in each schools, across Inverclyde and then nationally. Hence the need for a highly coordinated approach through ADES.
- 5.19 Officers are confident that schools have already considered what they need to do at this stage however challenges will remain and hope that the process of negotiation between ADES and SQA will somewhat alleviate these.
- 5.20 The Head of Education and Head Teachers have written to parents to keep them up to date with the current situation and will communicate with them again once the national picture is clearer.

ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION AND RESOURCES

- 5.21 **Business Grants Scheme.** A dedicated team within Revenues & Benefits are processing applications for the Scottish Government Business Grants Scheme. As at 15 April almost 600 applications have been received and 111 payments made totalling £1.245million. The speed of payments has increased as the team gain experience. Further information is being sought on over 200 applications due to incomplete forms being received. The Scottish Government is issuing more detailed guidance/advice based on questions being raised by Councils and there are several areas where clarification is awaited before officers can progress certain applications.
- On the 15th April further changes were made to the scheme to expand eligibility and officers await guidance on the eligibility detail and application process. This will undoubtedly increase pressure on the team.
- 5.22 **Scottish Welfare Fund.** The Scottish Welfare Fund has seen a more than doubling in the number of Crisis Grant awards and that allied to the decision to increase the value of awards by 20% means the Council is currently spending money in line with the level of funding awarded by the Government. Currently the team require to be present in the Municipal Buildings to deliver this service although officers are examining ways by which the service could be delivered in whole or in part remotely.
- 5.23 **Registrars.** The Registrars are delivering a 7 day a week service with effect from 11 April. This is in line with a national agreement. Due to the fact there are no Birth Registrations or Marriages being arranged and the team are all present all deaths are being remotely registered timeously with no backlog despite the increased numbers being experienced.
- 5.24 **Humanitarian Assistance Centre.** The Council and partners have a Humanitarian Assistance Centre working group meeting regularly to refine processes for dealing with firstly the "Shielding " group of extremely vulnerable people, amounting to some 2000 in Inverclyde and secondly the wider group of those more vulnerable to COVID 19 on health grounds in Inverclyde, amounting to approximately 25,000 people.
- 5.25 **Shielding.** It is hoped that the majority of the Shielding group will have been contacted by the

Council by the time of this meeting. The purpose of the call is to assess their needs in a number of areas and to ensure that the relevant support, whether from the national programme for supplying food to this group or for any other purpose is provided to them. We have also started receiving calls from the wider vulnerable group redirected from the national helpline as of 14th April and will advise and signpost them to any appropriate assistance primarily from the third sector.

5.26 **Parking Enforcement.** Members will be aware from the previous meeting that the decision was taken by the CMT on 23 March 2020 to suspend parking enforcement, car park charges and the service of PCNs for overstay and failure to display time clocks in Inverclyde. Enforcement remains an option for parking on yellow lines and bus stops etc. The Inverclyde decision is broadly in line with later operational advice issued through COSLA on 6th April. At the time of the CMT decision it was decided that this would be reviewed in 4 weeks' time. As this was due on 20th April it would be appropriate for members to make the decision. The CMT recommends that the current suspension should remain in force for a further 6 weeks, till the 2nd June or until there are any significant changes to Government Guidance on social distancing, whichever is the sooner.

6.0 HORIZON SCANNING

6.1 There are continuing issues that require to be dealt with at the present time.

6.2 **Workforce issues.** The issues in terms of workforce availability and confidence are crucial. Officers from Organisational Development, Policy & Communications are in contact with COSLA colleagues relative to workforce statistics, illness/absence rates, working from home, etc. This information is being collated at a national level and is helping to inform discussions between senior leaders in SOLACE, COSLA and the Scottish Government regarding the impact of COVID-19 on service provision, and the key staffing issues that require some form of national consideration.

6.3 Employee attendance Information is being gathered on a daily basis by managers across the Council. This allows managers to assess resource implications for delivering essential services and also to maintain contact and support those unable to attend work. The table below provides approximate absence levels across the council as at 14 April 2020.

6.4 A summarised table of workforce attendance figures for the Council is as follows:-

<u>Council</u>	
Historic average absence rate (%) (Pre Covid-19 to give a baseline comparator.)	4.3%
Absence rate on 14 April 2020 (%) (This includes all those employees reporting sick, those isolating, those absent with caring responsibilities and those non-essential employees at home unable to work from home). Please note that this excludes employees working from home.	19.3%

6.5 From this, the Executive Sub-Committee should note that it is essential for all officers to focus all efforts and available resources on addressing the Council's response to the emergency and, for that key reason, the support of all Members is requested in circumstances where the expectations of routine enquiries or normal timescales for operational response to Councillors cannot be met. The emergency will involve delays to otherwise usual Council business and recognition of this impact is needed and officers will, of course, continue to focus service support on the vulnerable in the community.

- 6.6 **Annual Accounts.** The Annual Accounts preparation process is progressing with no relaxation yet on the statutory timescales in Scotland, unlike England where the timescales have been extended by 2 months. It is expected that greater use of estimation and higher thresholds will be required in closing the 2019/20 accounts and discussions are ongoing with the Auditors. Members will require to review the unaudited accounts before the 30 June although indications are that this timescale is likely to be extended.
- 6.7 **Early Learning and Childcare.** 1140 Hours Expansion Plan: On 1 April 2020, The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (Modification) (No. 2) Revocation Order 2020 was approved by the Scottish Parliament. The order revokes the change to the 2014 Children and Young People's Act that requires education authorities to secure 1140 hours of ELC provision for all eligible children from August 2020, rather than 600 hours. It effectively means that there will be no statutory duty to provide 1140 hours from August 2020.
- 6.8 Work is currently underway to identify the key issues in Inverclyde. This will include infrastructure, staffing, finance, admissions and funded provider sustainability. A detailed report is being compiled and be submitted to Committee in due course.
- 6.9 It is anticipated that most children will receive their allocation of 1140 hours by August 2020; however careful consideration will need to be given to defining a criteria for this to ensure equity in allocations.
- 6.10 **Recovery Plan.** We have commenced weekly meetings of an internal recovery group which is tasked with looking at how various Council services can return to normality over the forthcoming weeks and months. It is recognised that there will also be a need for a multi-agency recovery group to look at what is needed to support businesses and the community on any return to normality and the make-up of this group is under consideration.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

The extra costs arising from COVID-19 are being identified and fortnightly returns are to be sent to Cosla from 24th April with weekly returns for extra HSCP costs being co-ordinated by the IJB Chief Financial Officer. The Council has received £749,000 as part of the £50million Hardship Fund from the Scottish Government but it is anticipated that extra costs/income reductions will exceed this sum.

An update will be provided to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

7.2 Legal

There are no Legal implications other than as noted within this report.

7.3 Human Resources

There are no Human Resources implications other than as noted within this report.

7.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES (see attached appendix)
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

7.5 Repopulation

All of the steps undertaken by Officers seek to support the long-term interests of the Inverclyde economy and to provide a secure and safe environment for its workforce.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The Corporate Management Team endorses this report.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee

Weekly Update on Operational Decision Log

From Thursday 2 April 2020 to Wednesday 8 April 2020

Head of Legal & Property Services

GM/KB

9 April 2020

Environment, Regeneration & Resources Directorate

Service Impact	Reason	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
<u>Legal & Property Services</u>					
25 Scheme of Establishment: Community Councils – (a) permit tele/videoconferencing;(b) reduce the required meetings from 6 to a proportionate no.; and, (c) disregard the membership nos. minimum and the cancellation of 3 consecutive meetings	To comply with social distancing and to meet the request for flexibility with the arrangements specified.	Yes	Yes	7/04/20	GM
<u>Finance</u>					
26 Death Registration Service operating 7 days per week	National instruction from NRS to cope with volume and improve accuracy of figures	No	Rota document	11.4.20	AML
<u>Regeneration & Planning</u>					
27 Extension to planning permission and planning permission in principle	Scottish Government	No	N/A	07.04.20	SJ
<u>Environmental & Public Protection</u>					
28. Agreement to reduce morning time slots at crematorium and to provide a service on Good Friday & Easter Monday.	To increase potential throughput in the crematorium.	06/04/20	Yes	Implementation of reduced time slots initially to be with immediate effect but delayed owing to issues with one of the two cremators.	MMcN

Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee
Weekly Update on Operational Decision Log
From Thursday 9 April 2020 to Wednesday 15 April 2020

Head of Legal & Property Services
GM/KB
16 April 2020

Service Impact	Reason	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
Education, Communities & Organisational Development					
29. Recruitment process for existing advertised posts and new adverts will be supported and progressed by HR and services as appropriate. Services should contact HR to progress any urgent new recruitment with oversight by CMT.	Ensure key posts are recruited effectively and to ensure the delivery of critical services across the Council.	10.04.20	Yes	Yes	SMcN
30. Arrangements for the management of employee Annual Leave over the next three months agreed with the support of the trade unions.	To ensure annual leave is managed effectively over the year.	09.04.20	Yes	Yes	SMcN
31. Advert for emergency support workers to be put on hold for two weeks to allow backlog to be trained and to move into frontline services.	Assuring the delivery of essential services and also avoiding delays between candidates expressing an interest and being recruited.	09.04.20	N/A	Yes	SMcN
Environment, Regeneration & Resources Directorate					
<u>Finance</u>					
32. ICT : videoconferencing for P&R Executive Sub Committee meetings etc.	To comply with social distancing and enhance Elected Member and officer remote accessibility to and participation in Committee meetings	10.04.20	Briefing note 16.04.20	Intended 21.4.20	AMcD

Health and Social Care Partnership

33. Supported Living Service: Confirming current payment levels whilst implementing alterations to working practices for necessary reduced contact time and appropriate adjustment to care packages.	To guarantee Providers with current funding levels whilst service delivery model is changed to reduce risk to service user by reducing contact time to minimum possible and to comply with social distancing	10.04.20	Yes	10.04.20	LL
34. Suspension of Significant Case Review	Unable to undertake effective investigation because of COVID-19 emergency.	Chief Officers' Group 15.04.20	N/A	15.04.20	AS