
Report To:	Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee	Date:	5 May 2020
Report By:	Chief Executive	Report No:	LP/058/20
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 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 29 April 2020 and Members will appreciate this is a constantly evolving situation.
- 2.4 Reports in this format with relevant updates are being made to each meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Sub-Committee note:

- 3.1 the actions taken to date to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 emergency in Inverclyde; and
- 3.2 that further reports will be submitted regularly for Members' scrutiny and review.

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 **Personal Protective Equipment:** The continuous community transmission of COVID19 has resulted in a challenging position nationally in relation to the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Health & Social Care staff within the community as well as the provision of PPE to commissioned care services e.g. residential care homes, support providers and carers/personal assistants. Inverclyde HSCP has been in the fortunate position in maintaining a robust supply of fluid resistant masks, disposable gloves, disposable aprons and eye protection as advised by Public Health Scotland for managing COVID19 with community health & social care settings.

The HSCP has also been able to maintain a supply of hand sanitiser and soap to allow staff, carers and service users to adhere to the National hand washing guidance.

The HSCP sources PPE through two main supply chains, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS supplies for health care as well as National Services Scotland for social care provision. Where there has been pressure on deliveries on individual items of PPE, the HSCP has been proactive in sourcing this directly from the supplier/stores.

The HSCP in line with National guidance has established a PPE Supply Hub for social care providers, commissioned services, care homes, carers and personal assistants where they locally obtain a supply of PPE when their normal supply chain has been unable to deliver PPE to them. This allows services to maintain their support to service users whilst protecting care staff and services users as per Public Health Scotland infection control advice.

The community of Inverclyde has also responded with offers of PPE to the HSCP which mirrors community responses across the UK. All donated PPE is checked by Health & Safety teams in both Inverclyde Council and NHS GG&C for risk assessment and appropriateness for use. To date the HSCP has not required to utilise this PPE as nationally procured supplies have been maintained but rather it is held as a reserve stock.

- 5.6 **Inverclyde Care Homes:** The HSCP continues to work closely with the 14 Care Homes across Inverclyde during the current COVID19 outbreak. A representative of the Care homes attends the LRMT (Local Resilience Management Team) three times a week. This meeting keeps all the health and social care sector up to date on the latest updates nationally and locally.

We currently supply PPE to the Care Homes if their own stock runs low at any time. Our enhanced PPE Hub in central Greenock will become the supplier of PPE to Care Homes for the foreseeable future to deliver stock locally to Homes if and when they run low on stock. We have secured good levels of PPE and we distribute this if and when required.

The Care Home staff locally have dealt with the level of deaths very well during this outbreak and have offered kind and compassionate care to the residents and their families. There have been 27 COVID19 deaths in Care Homes in Inverclyde. It is a desperately sad time for all staff in Care Homes.

The HSCP will continue to offer advice guidance and support through our Adult Services management team and Commissioning team.

- 5.7 **Inverclyde Staff Testing Centre:** The drive through testing centre at Port Glasgow Health Centre opened on Thursday 9 April, is appointment based Monday to Friday 9.15am – 3.45pm, and staffed by 2 qualified nurses and 1 support worker. Testing is available in Glasgow at weekends. Referrals are made via an online form which has been circulated within the HSCP and also to providers including care at home, care homes and the hospice.

Testing is available for symptomatic staff or a symptomatic household member where this means the member of staff is required to self-isolate. Results are received within 24 - 48 hours, a negative result enables staff to return to work safely as long as otherwise well. Appointments are offered to those living in Inverclyde regardless of work setting and are also available to those in Renfrewshire area. Capacity can be increased to 44 appointments each per day if demand for testing increases.

An announcement was made by the Government this week that key workers working in other community settings can be tested at Glasgow Airport. The process for the Council is being developed by the Health and Safety Team.

Inverclyde HSCP Care Home Testing Proposal: The HSCP is currently following the direction of Scottish Government in establishing testing of symptomatic residents who have

been referred by their GP within a residential care home environment. The community care home liaison nursing service and qualified nursing staff within care homes who have had the appropriate training, will carry out testing of referred residents. The process is established by the HSCP to allow the appropriate testing and reporting of positive Covid-19 residents to allow the appropriate medical care and shielding to safeguard this vulnerable group of service users within the community.

It has recently been announced that Covid-19 patients who are discharged from hospital to a care home should have negative tests before discharge. Further guidance on the implementation of this announcement is expected shortly and will be communicated in due course. In the meantime, care homes are advised to continue to liaise with hospital discharging teams about individual patient test results and isolation periods. The HSCP offers to support safe transfers, not on a case by case basis, but by promoting good communication and planning around discharge. The Public Health Protection Unit (PHPU) is also available to provide advice whenever this is needed

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITIES

- 5.8 **Childcare hubs**: the childcare hubs continue to be successful and well-staffed. Numbers have increased and there is an increase in the ratio of vulnerable children who are attending. A full overview of numbers is available in **Appendix 2**. Approximately 12/13 pupils from across Inverclyde who are in P1-4 but not entitled to free school meals attend the hubs to pick up a meal.
- 5.9 **Food insecurity**: the Council has received £565,000 through the food fund Funding has been allocated to support those entitled to free school meals, hot food to vulnerable adults through HSCP and to 2 partner agencies (Bellville Gardens and I58) to provide food for those experiencing food insecurity. The Council also works in partnership with CVS to provide support in kind to volunteers and to co-ordinate food deliveries from Fare Share. Where vulnerable adults are not able to access shielding boxes, these are yet to be delivered or they have food allergies then there is a small supply of food boxes made up to ensure emergency demand. The numbers to date are:
- 3,300 young people receiving £25 a fortnight into their bank accounts
 - 900 families received packed lunches in the weeks between 6 April and 17 April 2020
 - Over 300 additional food and baby bags delivered to families every fortnight
 - Over 40 food boxes are delivered 3 days per week from the I58 Project to people who are referred because they are financially vulnerable.
 - Over 1,470 food boxes including fresh fruit and veg made up by Belleville Community Gardens
 - Approximately 1000 hot meals per week have been delivered to the most vulnerable adults identified by HSCP

The above does not include the many local charities and community organisations working through CVS who have also received funding directly from the Scottish Government and other funding providers to meet local need. This has included approximately an additional 9000 hot meals and sandwiches from Branchton Community Centre. Barnardo's, Homestart, Inverclyde Community Trust, Parklea and Inverkip Community Hub are supporting approximately 268 individual families with food through their own organisations.

- 5.10 **School trips**: There were school trips that were due to take place after schools closed. The process of refunds is complex because each trip was at a different stage of planning and companies have different terms and conditions. Many insurance companies across Scotland will not pay out for COVID -19 this is the case for Inverclyde. Each school is now negotiating with the individual companies and arranging to make refunds to parents if they are able to. This will differ depending on the individual company and how much money has already been

paid to the company. Schools have been supported in this aspect and have been advised of a broad range of principles.

- No school trips will take place before the summer holidays.
- Schools should not make any additional payments if asked to do so.
- Schools should refund any money to parents that has not been paid to the company (this will differ depending on the trip)
- Schools should negotiate with the company the process of getting a refund. If a total refund is not possible, then can the trip be renegotiated to the next year and the money used as a deposit.

Early negotiations have proved to be mixed. Some companies have offered to refund the entire deposit, others have offered to defer the deposit to a trip next year (thus allowing parents to eventually receive their deposit back, albeit delayed), and other companies have intimated that they will not be returning deposits. If companies are willing to give full refunds, they are reporting that there will be a delay in this process as they need to claw back the money from various different operators e.g. coach companies, airline companies and hotels and are asking for forbearance on this. The schools are still negotiating with companies to achieve the best outcome for families.

ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION AND RESOURCES

- 5.11 A comprehensive financial update forms a separate report elsewhere on the agenda providing updates on the 2019/20 Revenue and Capital Budgets, extra costs associated with COVID-19 and updated positions regarding Government funding and payments to providers/suppliers. .
- 5.12 The current position with Businesses Grants is that as at 29 April, 481 Grants with a value of £5.41 million have been paid this represents 63% of all applications received. Crisis Grants applications and payments continue to run at over 100% greater than this time last year.
- 5.13 Officers have exercised their discretion within the approved Long Term Empty (LTE) Council Tax Levy Policy to not add any further properties onto the Levy list for a 3 month period commencing 17 March. In addition officers are considering any approaches from existing LTE levy property owners where it is clear that the current lock down has prevented them removing the property from the levy.
- 5.14 The Council and partners have a Humanitarian Assistance Centre working group meeting regularly. The Council is running a helpline for those who are “Shielding”, a number currently standing at 2,700. The majority of those in this group have now been contacted although this is an ongoing process as more are added. Support is available to those who are Shielding with central provision for food support together with services available locally in a number of other areas. In addition to the Shielding group the Council helpline also takes calls and refers individuals for assistance through the national helpline with is open to a wider group with health vulnerabilities. From 29 April a separate helpline has been operating to support people with other vulnerabilities and support needs access services across the community.

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.
- 6.4 The Executive Sub Committee, at its meeting on 21 April 2020, requested more detailed information on workforce attendance figures in relation to key workers and a breakdown of figures for essential and non-essential staff. The table below provides approximate absence levels council wide and within some of our key essential service areas, as at 28th April 2020:-

Council	
Historic average absence rate (%) (Pre Covid-19 to give a baseline comparator.)	4.3%
Absence rate on 28 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.	Council Wide 18.5% <u>Essential Services Breakdown (% of service area)</u> Home Care 27.3% Other HSCP 21.87% Waste Management 29.5% Facilities 23.0%

- 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.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Finance

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.
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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 16 April 2020 to Wednesday 22 April 2020

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

Service Impact	Reason	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
Education, Communities & Organisational Development					
35. Supply Teachers Job Retention Payment. The Corporate Management Team noted the national agreement in place and that arrangements were now being made to make the necessary payments to Supply Teachers.	To ensure supply teachers are not adversely affected as a result of Covid-19	16.04.20	Yes	Yes	SMcN
36. Proposal to treat SJC Casual / Sessional Workers in a similar manner to Supply Teachers and receive compensation payments based on an average pay. This was noted by CMT and has now been agreed at national level.	To ensure Casual / Sessional Workers are not adversely affected as a result of Covid-19	16.04.20	Yes	Yes. 17.04.20	SMcN
Environment, Regeneration & Resources Directorate					
<u>Environmental & Public Protection</u>					
37. Temporary Local Mortuary Facility: currently not required.	We had previously been advised by the LRP not to progress plans for additional body storage at a local level. The LRP now has a significant facility open at Hillington which should give sufficient capacity for GG & C as a whole. We will also have access to planned additional capacity in West Dunbartonshire in the unlikely circumstances that Hillington is insufficient.	22.04.20	N/A	22.04.20	MMcN

<u>Legal & Property Services</u>					
38. Changes to alcohol licensing legislation to allow Hearings by tele/video conferencing and grant powers to deal with altered procedures for Hearings and other provisions.	To comply with social distancing and to give flexibility to local arrangements for formal Hearings	Yes	Yes	16.04.20	GM
39. Former McPherson Centre: currently not required.	1. Extensive lead-in times for building conversion; 2. the level of costs and 3. existing less costly viable alternatives	Yes	Yes	17.04.20	GM
<u>Regeneration & Planning</u>					
40. Postponement of Regeneration Forum meetings for current cycle	To comply with the requirement to deliver on social distancing and to protect attendees.	Yes	Yes	20.04.20	SJ
Health and Social Care Partnership					
41. Safe System of Delivery of Medication (including controlled drugs) to HSCP Alcohol and Drug Recovery Service (ADRS) patients self-isolating due to COVID-19	To support ADRS patients who are self-isolating, to reduce visits to patients and staff and to note costs of one-off funding allocation.	16.04.20	Yes	16.04.20	LL

Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee

Weekly Update on Operational Decision Log

From Thursday 23 April 2020 to Wednesday 29 April 2020

Head of Legal & Property Services

GM/KB

30 April 2020

Service Impact	Reason	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
Education, Communities & Organisational Development					
42. Expansion programme for COVID 19 testing for key workers was noted and process agreed for referring essential Council staff for testing.	To allow key workers to be able to return to work sooner when isolating due to symptoms or living with someone with symptoms.	27.04.20	Yes	29.04.20	SMcN
Environment, Regeneration & Resources Directorate					
<u>Environmental & Public Protection</u>					
43. Separate Brown Bin collections and the sale of permits resumed on 27 April 2020.	To restore service provision for garden waste collection in line with Executive Sub Committee approval at the earliest feasible opportunity.	27.04.20	N/A	27.04.20	MMcN
<u>Finance</u>					
44. No further properties to be added to the Long Term Empty Property Levy list for 3 months to 16 June 2020 and review requests for this temporary exemption where it is clear current lock down has prevented removal from the levy.	To reflect impact on housing market and renovations and to be equitable in situations clearly outwith owners' control.	Yes	Yes	27.4.20	AP

<u>Legal & Property Services</u>					
45. Formal request for transfer of ownership interests in lease of multi-storey car park and shops at West Stewart Street/ Kilblain Street, Greenock	Recent marketing of building which is subject of 121 year lease (80 years unexpired) and compliance with original 1979 lease.	Yes	Yes	28.4.20	GM
<u>Regeneration & Planning</u>					
46. Amendment to General Permitted Development Order for local authorities and health boards	Scottish Government	No	N/A	24.04.20	SJ
Health and Social Care Partnership					
47. New fostering process agreed to allow register staff to become temporary foster carers	The need to recruit fostering carers quickly as COVID impact current availability of foster carers and reduction in external placements	Yes	Yes	28.04.20	LL

APPENDIX 2

Attendance at Childcare Hubs up until 28.4.20

