
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	11 August 2020
Report By:	Chief Executive	Report No:	LP/082/20
Contact Officer:	Aubrey Fawcett	Contact No:	01475 712701
Subject:	COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Scrutiny Report		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report updates the 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 by the previous meetings of the Policy and Resources Executive Sub-Committee, this report continues to ensure 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 the Executive Sub-Committee. Following its 28 July 2020 meeting, the Executive Sub-Committee has approved the resumption of the usual cycle of standing committee meetings by online remote access and has ceased its emergency functions at this time. This report continues to ensure that the Committee has clear oversight of all actions taken by relevant officers and with particular regard to service impact.
- 2.3 This report identifies key issues for Committee decision and scrutiny. The items identified in **Appendix 1** are updates of any actions taken since the previous meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee in response to the emergency. These items, if any, are identified to Members 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 5 August 2020 and reflects the changing circumstances and decreased need, at this point, for urgent business decisions.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 3.1 notes the actions taken to date to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 emergency in Inverclyde;
- 3.2 notes the recruitment of additional teachers for primary and secondary school provision from the Council's allocation of Additional Teachers funding; and
- 3.3 approves the time limits on street and in car parks and charges in car parks remain suspended until the New Year, at which point these will again be reviewed and agrees that the further estimated loss of £54,000 income be funded from the COVID-19 Budget allowance.

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 emergency. 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 Any 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. The log of actions is indicative of the position on Wednesday 5 August 2020 and reflects the changing circumstances and decreased need, at this point, for urgent business decisions.
- 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 The following issues are identified and summarised as ongoing items for the Committee's information and for future business-planning:

HSCP

- 5.4 **Older People and Adult Care Home Support:-** The Scottish Government issued new guidance around support and governance of care homes in May 2020. The letter emphasised the need to monitor and support care homes around 3 key areas:

- Ensure support around workforce to maintain safe staffing levels
- Infection control
- Supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

NHS Boards and Councils have direct oversight of care home standards of care with scheduled meetings to be led by the Nursing Director, Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Officer. IHSCP have in place:

- Daily Care Home Safety Huddle
- Representative from Care Homes on the LRMT
- Weekly meeting with Care Home Managers
- Series of governance meetings in place with Care Home Companies
- Weekly Multi-Disciplinary Public Health Meeting

Inverclyde HSCP has completed all assurance visits and has in place action plans for any Care Home not ascribed as Green in terms of risk. There is full involvement in the Care Home Assurance & Governance Group (Chaired by Chief Officer for IHSCP).

Inverclyde HSCP has developed a Care Home resource pack for all care homes across NHSGGC and a programme of webinars to share good practice.

IHSCP has agreed to a funding package to help sustain Care Homes through the current pandemic.

- 5.5 **Staff Testing:-** Due to declining numbers of symptomatic staff requesting tests, NHSGG&C has taken the decision to discontinue staff testing across all sites from Tuesday 14 July. Health and Social Care staff should now use NHS inform to request a test and will be directed via the UKGOV testing process to attend Glasgow Airport, Port Glasgow Health Centre or, if not able to travel, to request a home test kit. We will retain the ability to restart this service if required in future.

As staff testing is currently carried out within the Greenock HC Assessment Centre, this now means that the site will be completely closed each morning allowing the corridor to be re-opened for access to the podiatry area.

- 5.6 **Assessment Centre:-** A second review on the future of the assessment centres across NHSGG&C is underway to determine current and future capacity and demand. Usage of assessment centres is currently in single figures. A further update will be provided on the status of the Inverclyde Assessment Centre in due course.

- 5.7 **HSCP Recovery Planning:-** The HSCP Recovery Group has been meeting fortnightly since the beginning of June. Recovery planning is being done in conjunction with the other HSCPs with Greater Glasgow & Clyde to ensure plans are aligned. Service areas have developed initial, phased recovery action plans which detail step up and step down arrangements over the coming months. The HSCP is now preparing to enter into Phase 3 of the Recovery Plan which sees more face to face contact as we move from the hub to service model. Phase 3 is expected to run from August until February 2021. The overarching planning allows for flexibility to enable preparation and response to resurgence of waves of COVID-19 activity with little notice, this includes policy / processes in place to manage further outbreaks if they occur.

Education and Communities

- 5.8 **Opening of schools:-** The guidance for opening schools and early years centres was published on 30 July 2020. The full guidance can be accessed at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020/>

A letter was sent to all parents on Friday 31 July outlining the communication timeline for the return to school. Meetings were held with heads of establishments and Trade Unions on Monday 3 August.

A Frequently Asked Questions document was distributed to all parents on Tuesday 4 August and during that week all schools and establishments were in touch with families to explain the arrangements in place for their return.

All schools have a checklist linked to the guidance and are undertaking appropriate risk assessments and reviewing procedures.

Whilst out of school care will start as close to the beginning of term as possible, Breakfast Clubs will not start right away and many after school activities will not start right away.

After a phased start, all schools will be open to all pupils from Monday 17 August 2020.

- 5.9 **Additional teachers:-** The Scottish Government intends to provide additional funding of £50

million (c. £33 million in 2020-21 and c. £17 million in 2021-22) to ensure that local authorities are supported to provide sufficient teachers and support staff to cover any additionality that may be needed in the 2020-21 school year.

£45 million of this additional support from the Scottish Government will be conditional on the understanding that additional teachers are recruited. This should be in accordance with the workforce planning guidance in the school re-opening guide, and in accordance with normal local authority employment practices. It is anticipated that these additional teachers will provide a range of additional support to help with recovery work such as supporting young people who may have suffered a loss of learning during lockdown, supporting young people who are shielding, supporting small groups of learners who need more intense support and covering classes for teachers who are shielding. They will also be vital in responding to any local flare-ups of the virus, which could necessitate implementation of contingency plans for blended learning for a period.

A further £5m (£3 million in 2020-21 and £2 million in 2021-22) will be made available to local authorities to invest flexibly in either teachers or education support staff, depending on local need, to support the objectives set out above during the 2020/21 academic year.

Inverclyde's share of the above funding is £809,842 over the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 which covers the academic year 2020/21. This will mean that Inverclyde can recruit additional teachers. Teachers will be allocated to both primary and secondary schools.

- 5.10 **School crossing patrol service:-** Considerable work has been undertaken by the Community Safety & Resilience Team in recent weeks to assess Acceptable Walked Routes to School and prepare for the return of the School Crossing Patrol Service to ensure that children are able to walk to school and are supported at priority road crossing areas. We have worked with and liaised with colleagues in Education, Roads, Environmental Protection and Police Scotland to ensure continued service delivery and can confirm that the School Crossing Patrol Service will return on the basis of pre-COVID-19 levels, although there have been some changes to the location of individual patrollers and the operating procedures at some crossing points.

Individual schools have been advised directly of the minor changes within Service which affect their pupils and all schools were asked to convey a message to their school community which; reminds parents of the need for social distancing requirements to allow our Patrollers to operate safely; encourages parents to make use of walked routes and consider active travel; and, if they must use a car, to make use of 'Park and Stride' facilities and satellite car parks where available and to be careful and considerate when driving in and around the school area.

The Community Safety & Resilience Team will continue to work with all schools throughout the 2020/21 school year to deliver the Council's Road Safety Programme.

- 5.11 **SQA:-** COVID-19 has meant that the 2020 SQA exams did not take place. Instead, schools were asked to submit estimates informed by professional judgements to the SQA. The SQA then moderated the grades to announce the results on Tuesday 4th August. The moderation process used by the SQA is available through the following link:

https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/64717.html?mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiT1RNNU1tRXhNVGcxWVdKbSlslQIoiJxMFMzZIRFTktCbVhOMDZzNWZlbn5WMFRoSINiSWZRM0puZ200cjNTZzQrbVwvak1xc2g3S1JETGs5ektVQXUzWHkwbiJOMVdwUmJmdUJoennPNIBCSVBrVpOc0p5ZUpucWMzZURQVGhEUHd6Y2N6T3V2N3dEcZF5WIRRVlJzbnkifQ%3D%3D

Nationally the trend of the published results shows an improving trend and this is mirrored in Inverclyde, with the overall initial picture remaining very strong. In Inverclyde, as across the whole of Scotland, there is a difference between some of the estimated grades and those eventually awarded. The SQA are very clear that these grades can be appealed where appropriate and our schools are currently lodging appeals for those pupils who have been affected. Because this year we will expect to lodge more appeals than usual, less emphasis can be given to the initial figures on results day. National and virtual comparators that are traditionally used via the Insight dashboard to monitor performance will not be available until later in the academic year. These results will be reported through the Education and Communities

Committee when they are available.

Environment, Regeneration and Resources

- 5.12 **Car Parking charges:-** The current suspension of parking enforcement is due to be reviewed at this meeting. The current situation does not warrant any fundamental changes and it is recommended that the suspension of waiting time enforcement and car park charges is continued to the New Year. This will result in an increased loss of parking fee income of £54,000 in addition to the previously assumed reduced income for this period of £44,000 (total estimated loss of income £98,000 to be funded from the COVID-19 budget allowance).

The incidence of poor parking in areas with no-waiting restrictions in central Greenock has increased in recent weeks however as a result of the greater footfall in the town centre. There is ample free parking in the car parks and on street therefore it is likely that it will be necessary to resume enforcement of no-waiting restrictions in the very near future. Members should be assured that any resumption of enforcement will be preceded by a public communications campaign.

- 5.13 **Business Grants:-** The Business Grants scheme has now closed to fresh applications and officers are dealing with the remaining applications and any appeals. As at 4 August the Council had paid 1001 grants at a cost of £11.072million. Officers are applying to the Scottish Government for a further increase in grant.
- 5.14 **Council Tax:-** 5400 informal reminder letters were sent out to those Council Tax payers in arrears with their 2020/21 payments. The letters elicited a good response. The next stage is for the first formal reminders to be issued for 2020/21 in mid-August with a targeted Summary Warrant during September. In year Council Tax collection is currently approximately 1.4% behind the same period in 2019/20.

6.0 COVID-19 TESTING

- 6.1 **COVID-19 Testing:-** At the Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee meeting on 19 May it was requested that an update on key issues relating to testing be submitted to each future meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee.
- 6.2 **Mobile Testing Units:-** The Mobile Testing Unit will remain in operation at Port Glasgow Health Centre until the end of August 2020.
- 6.3 Testing is accessed via the government website:
- Citizen Portal <https://www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test>
 - Essential Workers self-referral <https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test-essential-workers>
 - Employers Portal <https://coronavirus-invite-testing.service.gov.uk/DaraTestDemand/Login>
- 6.4 **Health & Social Care Staff Testing:-** Health and Social Care staff are now tested as per 6.3 of this report.
- 6.5 **COVID-19 Care Home Testing for Residents & Staff:-** All care home testing for staff is via the Social Care Portal with test kits delivered to residential care homes directly and then returned via courier. A ten percent surveillance sample of residents is taken from each care home on a three week basis for review by the HSCP and Public Health. Any resident can receive a test if clinically appropriate.
- 6.6 **Testing for Council Employees and the Wider Community:-** The Council is continuing to publicise and promote testing amongst Inverclyde Council staff including HSCP and the community. Testing referrals can be made more than once daily and will be accepted between 8am and 6pm. This has assisted in speeding up the referral process. All that is required is the first and last names of the employee or household member being referred and their mobile number.

Since 1 May 2020 there have been sixteen referrals for Council staff and one for a household member for testing, all have been negative. Three of the referrals were self-referrals, two of which were inconclusive and resulted in another referral via the Council. Breakdown of tests by service are:

- Education – 7
- Regeneration and Planning – 6
- HSCP – 2
- Environmental and Protective Services – 1
- Legal and Property Services – 1

7.0 COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN PORT GLASGOW

- 7.1 Members will wish to be aware of the details of the recent COVID-19 outbreak centred around the Port Glasgow Pharmacy. This outbreak was dealt with in line with the Guidance on the Management of Public Health Incidents and the NHSGGC Incident Management Plan. The former was recently revised to take account of the COVID-19 pandemic and the latter was exercised as recently as 22 July 2020 in light of the expectation of localised COVID-19 outbreaks.
- 7.2 The incident was first brought to the Council's attention by NHSGGC Public Health Protection Unit (PHPU) on Friday 24 July. At that time however there was only a solitary case therefore the matter was dealt with by contact tracing with no need for any further co-ordinated response. Subsequently on 28 July two connected cases were identified and a Problem Assessment Group (PAG) was called. This meeting identified the cases as employees at a Port Glasgow Pharmacy and an outbreak was declared with subsequent Incident Management Team (IMT) meetings on a daily basis from Wednesday 29 July to Tuesday 4 August albeit it was not considered necessary to meet over the weekend.
- 7.3 Officers from both Public Protection and the HSCP attended all of the IMT meetings, the latter owing to the involvement of a community pharmacy in the outbreak. Environmental Health Officers from Public Protection visited the pharmacy on Wednesday 29 July and again on Monday 3 August. Advice was given to the pharmacy on a number of matters however it should be noted that these dealt exclusively with the protection of staff. No issues were raised in relation to risks to customers. The HSCP and NHSGGC are giving consideration to any lessons learned that can usefully inform other pharmacy settings.
- 7.4 At the time of writing a total of 14 cases of COVID-19 have been identified in the outbreak. These have been largely amongst pharmacy staff and close family contacts. A number of businesses in other Council areas were also investigated following visits by individuals prior to testing positive. Members will also be aware that officers visited Amazon where an affected individual had worked a shift prior to testing. No issues or concerns were noted. The IMT has currently been stood down however Members should note that this outbreak will not be declared officially over until 14 days have elapsed from the last case identified.

8.0 WORKFORCE ISSUES

- 8.1 **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.
- 8.2 **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.
- 8.3 The table below provides approximate absence levels Council wide and within some of our key essential service areas, as at 5 August 2020:-

Council	
Historic average absence rate (%) (Pre Covid-19 to give a baseline comparator.)	4.3%
Absence rate on 5 August 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.	<p>Council Wide 7.5%</p> <p><u>Essential Services Breakdown (% of Service Area)</u></p> <p>Home Care 8%</p> <p>Other HSCP 6.1%</p> <p>Waste Management 8.9%</p> <p>Facilities 4.6%</p>

- 8.4 The table below provides a comparison of absence levels across the Council over the past few weeks which have been reported to this Committee (the breakdown of absence levels amongst essential services is not available for the 1 and 14 April dates):

	01.04.20	14.04.20	28.04.20	12.05.20	26.05.20	09.06.20	16.07.20	05.08.20
Council	19.0%	19.3%	18.5%	17.5%	17.6%	16.9%	7.5%	7.5%
Home Care	N/A	N/A	27.3%	19.2%	20.2%	18.5%	7.8%	8%
Other HSCP	N/A	N/A	21.87%	14.2%	17.3%	11.22%	6.3%	6.1%
Waste Mgt	N/A	N/A	29.5%	24.3%	24.0%	23.9%	9%	8.9%
Facilities	N/A	N/A	23.0%	26.1%	22.2%	14.6%	4.5%	4.6%

- 8.5 There has been a significant reduction in absence levels in some areas over the past month as Scottish Government advice has been updated and employees are supported back to work following periods of self-isolation.
- 8.6 From this, the 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.
- 8.7 **Recovery plans:** Recovery groups have been set up Council wide to plan how we resume services and support employees back into the workplace. A Checklist for Managers has been developed which will support recovery plans and will cover areas such as: communication and consultation, continuation of homeworking, returning employees to work on a phased basis, workforce planning, and health and wellbeing. The Health & Safety team continue to provide risk assessments, advice on appropriate PPE, are working in close liaison with property services to ensure buildings are ready so that employees and visitors can safely undertake the correct social distancing and hygiene behaviours, as well as developing guidance on 'social distancing in offices'. HR Policies around home and flexible working will be reviewed in light of the ongoing crisis and lessons learned. All work to date and in the future will involve full engagement with our trade union colleagues.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Finance

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
COVID Budget allowance	Car Parking	2020/21	£54, 000	N/A	Increase in provision to £98,000 total

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

9.2 Legal

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

9.3 Human Resources

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

9.4 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

9.5 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.

10.0 CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The Corporate Management Team endorses this report.

11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None

Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee

Weekly Update on Operational Decision Log

From Thursday 23 July 2020 to Wednesday 29 July 2020

Head of Legal & Property Services

GM/KB

29 July 2020

Service Impact	Reason	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
ALL DIRECTORATES					
<u>NIL REPORT</u>					

Policy & Resources Executive Sub-Committee

Weekly Update on Operational Decision Log

From Thursday 30 July 2020 to Wednesday 5 August 2020

Head of Legal & Property Services

GM/KB

5 August 2020

Service Impact	Reason	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
Education, Communities & Organisational Development					
<u>Education Services</u>					
76. Resume all secondary school pitch hire outdoor lets after 6pm as from 24 August 2020	To promote use by the community of school premises and subject to procedures in place through the Inverclyde Leisure booking system.	Yes	Yes	30.07.20	RB
<u>Library Services</u>					
77. Following the successful outcome of the pilot scheme, extend the opening hours of and the services available from Greenock, Gourock and Port Glasgow Libraries and Watt Institution and continue to review and phase any future incremental increases, all subject to the provisions of Government guidance	To restore public services to the community at the Council's Libraries and Watt Institution.	Yes	Yes	04.08.20	RB
Environment, Regeneration & Resources					
<u>Registration Services</u>					
78. Reinstate Citizenship Ceremonies as from 26 August at Port Glasgow Town Hall	To restore services to the community in partnership with Inverclyde Leisure.	Yes	Yes	30.07.20	AP