

ELECTED MEMBER SOUNDING BOARD

Minute of Meeting of the Elected Member Sounding Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Friday 10 April 2020 at 10.30am.

Present: Councillors M Lyle, P Barrett, C Stewart, X McDade and G Laing; K Reid, Chief Executive; B Renton, Gold Commander.

In Attendance: S Hendry, Corporate and Democratic Services.

1. NOTE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The note from the previous meeting of 3 April 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

2. OPERATIONAL UPDATE BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND GOLD COMMANDER

KR / BR advised members of the following in relation to the latest position on the response to the Coronavirus situation:

- Testing – this was being expanded to both teaching and non-teaching staff in addition to those staff already being tested in Health and Social Care. Guidance would be coming out to all Council staff on testing. Gill Reeves from Learning and Development had been appointed as a Staff Wellbeing Champion for Council staff.
- Agreement had been reached at COSLA level on average pay rates for supply teachers until the end of June.
- The Re-tasking process of staff into critical service areas was on-going and increasing in pace.
- Business grants were continuing.
- The Registrars function would now be open to the public seven days a week from this weekend.
- Legislation coming forward next week to the Scottish Parliament to extend the timescales for both the submission of school placing requests for 2020/21 and the holding of any required appeal hearings.
- The Council was adhering to new guidelines published by the Scottish Government this week on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Additional cold storage had now been put in place to support Cremation and Burial Services.

3. CORONAVIRUS MODELLING

BR provided members with a slide based presentation on the latest Coronavirus modelling statistics.

The presentation looked at latest assumptions, as well as health impact data both locally and across Scotland.

In response to a query from Councillor McDade, KR agreed to provide further information and details on testing processes in Tayside.

In response to a query from Councillor Barrett on plans in place to do with the release of prisoners and the impact on homelessness services, KR confirmed that Nicola Rogerson and Clare Mailer were working on proposals in this area and part of national discussions on this matter.

In response to a query from Councillor McDade in relation to care and nursing home capacity, KR confirmed that extensive work was taking place with NHS Tayside on reducing delayed discharges, working with care home providers, as well as working with SSSC and NES.

Members noted the position.

4. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES – USER REFERENCE GROUP

There was submitted a briefing note by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) on proposals to continue, by virtual means, the progression of User Reference Group meetings for several capital projects, including the Blairgowrie Recreation Centre Replacement, Perth High School replacement, and North Muirton and Balhousie replacement.

Members endorsed the proposals and timescales as set out in the briefing note.

5. EMERGENCY POWERS – RECORD OF DECISIONS

There was submitted and noted the record of decisions in relation to emergency powers as of 10 April 2020.

It was agreed that any new additions would be clearly set out on a weekly basis.

Councillors Stewart and McDade highlighted the importance of linking with community groups and making sure that essential items were delivered to the most remote rural areas, and also the issue of fuel costs in achieving this.

Councillor Stewart also asked for an update of officer decision-making in relation Local Action Partnership funding, if this has taken place.

6. GOVERNANCE PROCESS

KR confirmed that it was intended to hold a virtual meeting of the Planning and Development Management Committee week commencing 27 April 2020. It was also proposed that during the current Coronavirus crisis, and due to a reduced level of both committee business from services and overall resources, that a new single committee be created for all urgent business to be scrutinised during the Coronavirus period. More detailed proposals would

be brought forward in due course with a view for this to commence from approximately May 2020.

Members generally endorsed this proposal, commenting that some level of scrutiny was required by members at this time, bearing in mind staff resources and priorities, and also stating that communication to the public on this proposal would be key. KR commented that the current arrangements for Council business and lessons learned would allow for a full review of the Council's Governance following the Coronavirus period.

In relation to the use of technology for a virtual meeting of the Planning and Development Management Committee, it was noted that this had recently been successfully undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council. Any good practice that could be used by PKC would be investigated.

7. LATEST GUIDANCE / LEGISLATION CONSIDERED BY GOLD COMMAND

There was submitted and noted the latest guidance and legislation considered by Gold Command as of 10 April 2020.

8. FINANCIAL UPDATE

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive updating members on any significant financial issues arising from the Scottish Government's, or Council's, response to COVID 19 since the last meeting of the Board, together with any financial actions taken under delegated authority

It was agreed that the rationale behind pausing or collecting invoicing for services.

Members noted the contents of the report. Following a query from Councillor McDade on cashflow, KR confirmed that there were no issues at present and any issues would be reported to this board in the future.

KR responded to a query from Councillor Laing in relation to the Tay Cities deal, confirming that the projects were continuing to progress.

KR confirmed that arrangements were being established to ensure the Council's early progress on an economic recovery plan following the Corona virus period. In addition, on a more wide basis, work would take place on using the recovery period to "build a better Council", learning from the experience of the current period, and linking in with the Perth and Kinross Offer.

9. LATEST STATISTICS

There was submitted and noted the latest statistics as at 10 April 2020.

10. GOLD COMMAND WEEKEND COVER ARRANGEMENTS

There was submitted and noted the rota for Gold Command weekend cover arrangements. It was noted that these were for urgent enquiries from elected members. The rota would be shared with all elected members.

11. MEMBERS Q & A

There was no further business raised.

12. THANK YOU FROM ELECTED MEMBERS

Members agreed the text that had been circulated to the board to be issued to all staff. Councillor Stewart agreed to feed in some minor suggested revisions.

It was agreed that the communication would be sent on behalf of all elected members, and that a similar communication to be sent to communities in Perth and Kinross would be circulated to board members for consideration the following week.