

ELECTED MEMBER SOUNDING BOARD

Minute of Meeting of the Elected Member Sounding Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Monday 4 May 2020 at 11.00am.

Present: Councillors A Forbes, P Barrett, C Purves, A Bailey 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 24 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:

- KR advised that the Deputy First Minister had set up a national Education Recovery Group that was co-chaired with COSLA to examine the process and timescales for pupils and staff returning to schools.
- There had been approximately 7000 welfare calls made the previous week by staff to vulnerable people.
- 4340 Perth and Kinross citizens had been identified for shielding, with 2860 who had spoken to the Council so far. Work was continuing on contacting people regarding essential food and pharmacy items.
- The Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Gold Command were monitoring the situation regarding care homes on a daily basis.
- The approach taken by the Perth and Kinross HSCP in relation to the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) had been recognised as good practice on a national basis.
- KR advised that the Chief Officer Group (involving Council, Police Scotland and NHS Tayside senior staff) were now meeting every three weeks.
- KR informed members that the early release of some prisoners was expected to commence this week, with 13 expected to be released in Perth and Kinross within the next four or five weeks.
- KR advised that as of Friday 1 May, 2964 business grants had been received, 2788 had been processed and 2332 had been paid. An appeals process involving the Scottish Government and appropriate audit system was now in place.
- A session with all elected members would be arranged shortly on the revenue and capital budget. In response to a query from Councillor Laing on whether charging for day care services was still continuing, KR agreed to investigate this further.

- KR reported that the first virtual Planning and Development Management Committee the previous week had been a success, with a further meeting to be arranged at the end of May / beginning of June. It was agreed that a special Council should take place on 20 May with training for all members to take place in advance. The agenda for the meeting would include scrutiny of current operations, finance, question and answers for members, as well as the future of the Council. There may also be a need to consider some business in private. It was also agreed that a further business meeting of the Council would take place in June. Virtual meetings of the Licensing Board, Licensing Committee and Local Review Body were also being investigated. Councillor Laing suggested that there was not a need for a formal recess period over the summer due to the current situation. KR advised that the position could be determined at the June Council meeting. KR further advised that Sheena Devlin and Karen Donaldson would also now be joining the weekly sounding board meetings. In relation to previous discussions on either the re-establishment of weekly Convener meetings or sounding boards involving representatives from all political groups on a service basis, KR advised that there was not a unanimous view amongst all political groups so she would shortly be making a decision on this in consultation with Gold Command.
- BR reported that the V.E. day celebrations planned for 8 May had been cancelled. Pre-recorded online videos involving the Provost and Councillor Chris Ahern as Armed Forces Champion were being investigated.

3. EMERGENCY POWERS – RECORD OF DECISIONS

There was submitted and noted the record of decisions in relation to emergency powers as of 4 May 2020.

Councillor Laing requested more detailed information in relation to the contract with Stagecoach and the figures in relation to mileage and the transport of key workers, which BR agreed to investigate further with the Public Transport Unit.

4. GOVERNANCE PROCESS

It was noted that this had been discussed under Item 2.

5. LATEST GUIDANCE / LEGISLATION CONSIDERED BY GOLD COMMAND

There was submitted and noted the latest guidance and legislation considered by Gold Command as of 4 May 2020. Further work was taking place on creating a site for members to access the full range of documents.

6. FINANCIAL UPDATE

There was submitted and noted a report by the Head of Finance 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. The report also provided an update on the financial implications and consequences to date.

7. LATEST STATISTICS

There was submitted an noted the latest statistics as at 4 May 2020.

8. MEMBERS Q & A

- Councillor Laing raised the issue of fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour as a big issue within his ward at present. BR commented that further guidance from the Scottish and Government and COSLA was expected in due course, but that the Council was following the current Scottish Government guidance. KR confirmed that the subject of fly-tipping would be included in the next elected members briefing and that she would raise this with relevant Police contacts.
- Following a query by Councillor Bailey, BR confirmed that the issuing of a community leaflet by the Council had been paused last week following the circulation of the Scottish Government's leaflet of a similar nature the previous week.
- Following a query by Councillor Laing on the second homes Council tax discount, and whether for those who were finding it difficult to sell any second home in the current conditions should be entitled to an extension to the current six month holiday period, KR confirmed that she would investigate this further.
- In relation to a query from Councillor Forbes on end of life visiting in care homes at present, KR agreed to raise this with the Chief Officer/Director – Integrated Health and Social Care.