

ELECTED MEMBER SOUNDING BOARD

Minute of Meeting of the Elected Member Sounding Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Monday 15 June 2020 at 11.00am.

Present: Councillors P Barrett, A Forbes, G Laing, X McDade and C Stewart; K Reid, Chief Executive; B Renton, Gold Commander; S Devlin, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services); K Donaldson, Acting Chief Operating Officer; and G Paterson, Chief Officer / Director – Integrated Health and Social Care.

In Attendance: D Williams, Corporate and Democratic Services.

1. NOTE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The note from the previous meeting of 8 June 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

2. OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- KR advised that the shielding arrangements presently in place would continue until 31 July
- KR reported that an amendment regarding a call for an extension to the Brexit transitional period had been agreed by COSLA Leaders.
- KR reported that payments for free school meals would be continuing, and further details on this would be provided under Item 5. KR reported that COSLA was negotiating with SG on funding for this.
- KR reported that an amendment had been passed by COSLA Leaders to publicise the extent of funding to support the sustainability of the private care sector and the extent in which funding ensures that all workers in private care receive the Living Wage and sick pay.
- KR advised those present that a Special Meeting of the Council was planned to take place virtually in July via Microsoft Teams.
- KR advised that virtual Committees were scheduled to begin from August via Microsoft Teams.
- KR advised that the Council's Business Grants Scheme would close on 11 July 2020, communications will promote the closure of the scheme. On the subject of Business Grants, KD advised that the scheme had resumed in Perth and Kinross on 10 June with additional security, with work being undertaken between Police Scotland and all Local Authorities in Scotland around security.
- KD advised regarding Grant applications that 4023 Phases 1&2 Grant applications had been received, and that 25 Phase Three Grants applications received. KD further advised that the Bed and Breakfast Grant would be launching today (15 June). In response to a query from Councillor Barrett regarding the Phase Three grants, KD informed those present that 3 of the seven completed applications had been processed, with 18 still in process.
- KD advised that, regarding the Council's Planning and Development Management Committee, the recommended procedure for deputations

would be that members of the public wishing to make deputations would continue to do so via telephone and that elected members could do so via Microsoft Teams, but without using the camera facility. KD advised that this was regarded as best practice at present and secure, but that alternative arrangements could be made under special circumstances. KD also advised that, with regards to members experiencing issues in connecting to the meeting, that the response would be two-fold entailing both technological support for members and also that provision during the meeting so that members can participate in full discussion. In response to a subsequent query from Councillor Stewart, KD confirmed that meetings would recess so that members who drop out of the meeting would, within reason, be given opportunity to reconnect before continuing with discussion. With regards to a query from Councillor Barrett regarding elected members with connection issues, KD advised that where it has not been possible to boost signal, access to Council premises has been limited to comply with lockdown requirements and public health advice. KD advised that arrangements for elected members to receive second screens would have to be first requested to C Flynn, Democratic Services Manager. Arrangements would be made to distribute those directly to elected members.

3. CARE HOMES UPDATE

There was submitted and noted a report by the Chief Officer / Director – Integrated Health and Social Care providing an update on activity within care homes and a summary of the key information and themes reported to the Scottish Government.

GP advised that a programme of visits to Care Homes was now in practice, advising that the visits had gone well and were welcomed by all Care Homes, including those that are privately owned.

With regard to the report, GP summarised the position across the care homes.

With regards to testing, GP advised that NHS Tayside was at the forefront of testing across Scotland, and that there was now both increased testing and also increased capacity for testing, with capacity for 6,000 tests per week, a number more than sufficient to cover all Care Homes in Perth and Kinross. GP advised that reporting to Scottish Government regarding number of tests would be undertaken every Monday. GP further advised that an additional 50 Care Home staff had received tests in the past week.

GP advised, per the report, that there were 7 Care Homes, spread across Perth and Kinross, who have had an outbreak of Covid-19, and 21 Care Homes had been closed at some point during the Covid-19 Pandemic. GP informed those present that 4 Care Homes in Perth and Kinross remain closed, representing 118 beds, and that, sadly, 2 Care Home residents had died from Covid-19 in the past week. GP advised that in the case of any outbreaks in Care Homes across Perth and Kinross that an assessment

would take place. In response to a subsequent query from Councillor Forbes, GP clarified that the 4 Care Homes that remain closed are closed to new admissions and are still operating to existing residents.

In response to a query from Councillor Stewart, GP advised that testing for Care Home staff was in the hands of the individual Care Home providers in line with Scottish Government guidance. KR asked for this guidance to be circulated to those present following the meeting for reference. In response to a further query from Councillor Stewart regarding staff providing care at home, GP advised that those staff were provided with PPE and that the same testing was available to them.

In response to a query from Councillor Barrett regarding sentinel testing of residents, GP advised that consent was needed from residents to undertake testing and reasonable sample would be two tests per Care Home per week. In response to queries regarding testing of staff, KR advised that numerous aspects had to be considered regarding testing of staff, including human and employment rights, and KD advised that the benefits of testing had been put forward to staff without testing being made enforceable.

KR advised those present that this matter had been arranged to go to Gold Command this week and would be returned to the next meeting of the Sounding Board.

4. SALES LEDGER INCOME

There was submitted and noted a report by the Head of Finance outlining Proposals Agreed by Gold Command up to 11 June 2020.

KD advised that much contained in the report was received last year, and this was the final stage of invoicing. In response to a query from Councillor Stewart, KD advised that financial reporting was an ongoing piece of work at present.

5. EMERGENCY POWERS – RECORD OF DECISIONS

There was submitted and noted the record of decisions taken under emergency powers as of 8 June 2020.

KR advised that the free school meals payments will continue.

KR advised that outstanding Council Tax payments would not be pursued at this time.

Councillor Forbes raised a query regarding how we know that payments made to families are spent on food. SD noted that we must trust families to do so. In response to an additional query from Councillor Forbes regarding the continuation of free school meals payments and whether they would continue during the planned return of children to school on a blended learning basis. SD confirmed that during the planned blended learning return, those eligible

would receive a free school meal when in school and a payment would be made for the time not in school.

Councillor McDade raised a query regarding outstanding Council Tax payments prior to the measures put in place in light of the Covid-19 Outbreak, and whether these would be pursued. KD advised that further information and more detail on the claims would need to be obtained from officers, and KR advised that there was a view to tie this in with Phases 3 and 4 of the Scottish Government's Coronavirus (Covid-19): framework for decision making. Councillor McDade stated that he would find numbers regarding cases useful.

K REID LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

6. LATEST GUIDANCE / LEGISLATION CONSIDERED BY GOLD COMMAND

There was submitted and noted the latest guidance / legislation considered by Gold Command as of 15 June 2020.

7. LG COVID-19 DASHBOARD SUMMARY

There was submitted and noted the latest statistics as of week ending 5 June 2020.

SD advised that some anomalies existed within the statistics due to the different ways different Local Authorities reported.

8. MEMBERS Q AND A

- (i) In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding the engagement with Community Council's on the Cross Tay Link Road, BR advised that a separate session would be held for Community Councils regarding the Cross Tay Link Road prior to the application being considered
- (ii) Councillor Stewart raised a query regarding the delay in the fly tipping fund, BR advised that the relevant team were hoping to have work completed in under the three weeks set out.
- (iii) In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding proposed school opening patterns, SD advised that consultation work had been undertaken with parents, Parent Council Chairs, and then work between schools and Parent Councils had been undertaken. SD advised that the indicative plan would be taken to the next Special Meeting of the Council.
- (iv) In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding Horsecross Arts Ltd., BR advised that KR would distribute further information on this matter to the Sounding Board following the meeting.

- (v) In response to a query from Councillor Laing, BR advised that discussions were ongoing with Stagecoach and other providers regarding rural bus services.
- (vi) Councillor Laing raised a query regarding whether the present situation where people who had moved property, but due to present restrictions were unable to market or sell their previous property at present, had their previous property treated as a second home with regards to Council Tax. KD advised Councillor Laing that she would look further into this matter.