

ELECTED MEMBER SOUNDING BOARD

Minute of Meeting of the Elected Member Sounding Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Monday 22 June 2020 at 11.00am.

Present: Councillors A Bailey, P Barrett, G Laing, M Lyle and C Stewart; K Reid, Chief Executive; B Renton, Gold Commander; S Devlin, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services); and K Donaldson, Acting Chief Operating Officer.

Apology: 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 15 June 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

2. OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- KR advised that there had been a soft launch of the National Centre for Test and Trace. KR added that any Council staff who had been undertaking redeployment to support trace and protect functions in NHS Tayside were being moved back to their substantive roles.
- KR advised that the next Cities Deal to be considered by the Scottish and UK Governments would be the Tay Cities Deal.
- KR advised that PKC were still waiting on specific details regarding funding for free school meals.
- KR reported that the three ALEOs, Horsecross Arts Ltd., Live Active Leisure Ltd., and Culture Perth and Kinross, had been asked to submit recovery and renewal plans to PKC in August.
- KR advised that Council's had agreed to continue funding ALEOs at their current level until October 2020.
- KR advised that agreement had been reached with Angus Council and Dundee City Council to continue Tayside Contracts funding until the end of July.
- BR advised that colleagues from Tayside Contracts had begun some limited works of road surfaces, with a limited staff, as of 22 June. BR advised that this was primarily upkeep and repair work.
- Members were updated on a confidential matter relating to Horsecross Arts Ltd.

Councillor Barrett raised a query regarding scrutiny of the ALEO Recovery and Renewal plans. KR advised that this would start at an Officer level, and eventually go before Council.

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.

With GP having submitted apologies, KR advised members to put any specific queries in email form following the meeting for GP to answer.

4. FINANCE REPORT

There was submitted and noted a report by the Head of Finance providing updates on any significant financial issues arising from the Council's response to COVID 19, together with any financial actions taken under delegated authority. The report also provides an update in the financial implications and consequences to date.

With regards to paragraph 2.2 of the report, detailing the Scottish Government's additional funding of £26.5 million to help fund free school meals and general food funding KD advised that we had yet to receive the full details of this for Perth and Kinross.

KD updated on grants, advising that applications for Grants were being processed as they came in, also advising that the new Bed and Breakfast Grant had opened for applications. KD advised that the situation with funding and our financial position was still very fluid and fast moving, but it was planned that an Elected Member briefing would take place in August/early September.

KR advised there was still no information on routes to cover shortfalls in Council funding such as additional borrowing powers for SG or LAs. COSLA were continuing to work with SG on this matter.

In response to a query from Councillor Barrett, KD advised that guidance to determine the funding and awarding of Bed and Breakfast Grants was nationally determined.

5. EMERGENCY POWERS – RECORD OF DECISIONS

There was submitted and noted the record of decisions taken under emergency powers as of 15 June 2020.

Councillor Stewart raised a query regarding Community Investment Funds, and whether the timeline for spending these funds would be extended. KR confirmed that this funding had been extended to November 2020.

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.

In response to a request from Councillor Stewart, KR confirmed that guidance regarding Building Standards and Planning would be circulated following the meeting.

7. LG COVID-19 DASHBOARD SUMMARY

There was submitted and noted the latest statistics as of week ending 12 June 2020.

8. MEMBERS Q AND A

- (i) Councillor Laing raised a query regarding the availability and ability to contact officers at present. KR advised that many staff were still in redeployed roles and diversion of phones was difficult at present with 2 High Street remaining closed. KR advised that how to bring back non-essential services was still under consideration. KR also advised that there was a weekend rota of Senior Management, and were available for any queries.
- (ii) Councillor Laing raised a query with regards to the Tay Cities Deal, to which Councillor Lyle advised that he had written to both the UK and Scottish Governments seeking clarity on the situation. Councillor Lyle also advised that a Press Release from himself and the leaders of Dundee City, Angus and Fife Council's had been signed off on. In response to a further query from Councillor Laing regarding the Stone of Destiny bid, Councillor Lyle advised that no announcement had been made on any decision yet.
- (iii) In response to a query from Councillor Bailey regarding concessionary travel, SD advised that this had previously been offered due to spaces in existing provision. SD advised that work was ongoing between schools and the Council's Public Transport Unit to see what could be offered, but informed that plans are only as up to date as the latest scientific advice regarding Social Distancing
- (iv) Councillor Stewart raised a query regarding the potential merger between Horsecross Arts Ltd. and Culture Perth and Kinross, stating that the ongoing delay was causing issues with regards to the appointment of non-executive board members to Horsecross Arts Ltd. KR advised that the planned paper to Council regarding the potential merger had been delayed by COVID 19, and that a decision would need to be made on whether to recruit non-executive board members on a short term basis.

- (v) Councillor Barrett raised a query regarding work being undertaken with BAME communities in Perth and Kinross with regards to COVID 19. KR advised that PKAVS were undertaking work with BAME communities, with BR adding that D McPhee, Corporate Equalities Team Leader, was undertaking work both in communities and with PKAVS. SD advised that ECS have procedures in place with the relevant Trade Unions regarding bespoke risk assessments, with some work already done with ECS staff returning in August, and advised that a high level of support was in place for staff from BAME communities. SD further advised that all teaching staff risk assessments were expected to be completed by July. KD advised that work was being done within the Council to support staff from BAME communities.
- (vi) In response to a query from Councillor Barrett, KD advised that S Hendry, Committee Services Team Leader, was drafting a set of protocols for meetings of Full Council, which would be circulated to all members. This would include protocols regarding deputations.
- (vii) In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding an update from Gold Command, KR advised that Test and Protect had been discussed, with communications having gone out. KR advised that many private Care Homes had signed up, with work being done to encourage others. KR advised that specific questions should be sent to DW, who would in turn send them on to GP for answers.