

# **ELECTED MEMBER SOUNDING BOARD**

Minute of Meeting of the Elected Member Sounding Board held virtually on Monday 27 July 2020 at 11.00am.

Present: Councillors P Barrett, J Duff, G Laing, X McDade and C Stewart; 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 20 July 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

## **2. OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

- BR advised that there had been an update from Christina Flynn with regards to Pitlochry Festival Theatre.
- BR updated on wild camping, advising that the update from Police Scotland indicated no serious incident or calls out over the weekend. BR advised that there had been some issues with regards to parking on Friday, but that the Council's Parking Team had advised that the situation had improved on Saturday with no tickets issued. BR advised that engagement had been undertaken with Community Wardens regarding Loch Earn, and additional communications had been issued prior to the weekend.
- BR advised that approval to hold a meeting of the Council on 7 October 2020 was on the agenda for the meeting of the Council on 30 July 2020. In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding the cancellation of the scheduled meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September 2020, KD advised that all relevant business for this meeting (such as revenue monitoring) would be included as part of the review of the revenue budget scheduled for the meeting of the Council 30 September 2020.
- In response to a query from Councillor Stewart, KD advised that there was no scheduled Budget Review Group process for the forthcoming review of the 2020/21 revenue budget, due to this being a review rather than the full budget setting process. A series of elected member briefings had been scheduled and there would be opportunities for groups to speak to officers. In response to a further query from Councillor Laing, KD advised explained that the purpose of the review would be, on the basis of what is known in September, to take decisions to start to address the imbalance in the Revenue Budget previously agreed in March 2020 because of significant additional expenditure pressures, loss of income and savings which were now unable to be delivered. In response to a query from Councillor Barrett, KD advised that a full timeline for the process to the review would be shared with members.

- BR advised members that responded to communications regarding parking charges and the reopening of schools had been looked as a result of concerns raised at the Sounding Board. Councillor Stewart queried this and a further examination of the information is to be undertaken.
- SD advised that guidance regarding the reopening of schools was being considered by COSLA group leaders on 27 July, before being considered by the Scottish Cabinet on Wednesday 29 July, with an expected announcement by the First Minister on Thursday 30 July.
- KD advised that over £36.1m in Business Support Grants had been paid out to date. A request to draw down another £1m from the Scottish Government for the outstanding 100 business grant applications had been approved and was due to be received on 27 July 2020.

### **3. CARE HOMES UPDATE**

COUNCILLOR MCDADE ENTERED THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM.

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

GP advised that around 89% of Care Home staff had been tested for COVID-19 in the previous week. GP stressed the importance of the need for assurance that Care Homes were COVID-free prior to the resumption of indoor visiting.

GP advised of ongoing discussions with Scottish Government regarding the establishment of a mental health and wellbeing helpline for members of Health and Social Care Staff, advising that work was being undertaken to promote this resource to staff.

In response to a query from Councillor Stewart, GP confirmed that should a member of staff test positive for COVID-19 that member of staff would be sent home until retesting 24 hours later. GP also confirmed that, whilst ‘false positives’ were checked on a 24 hours after the positive test, ‘false negatives’ were assessed on a weekly basis.

### **4. VIRTUAL MEETINGS PROTOCOL**

KD delivered a verbal update on the Virtual Meetings Protocol, thanking all who had responded in this regard. KD advised that the protocol would sit alongside the Council’s Standing Orders to address concerns raised by members. KD added that the move to virtual meetings had brought the role of the Convener into focus, and that further training was being provided and this would include the Council’s Standing Orders.

The latest draft of the protocol was distributed by email during the meeting. KD requested that those present take the final draft to their Political groups and return a final response by 9am, Tuesday 28 July 2020 in the hope that the protocol could be operational for committees this week.

In response to a query from Councillor McDade about hybrid meetings, KD advised that the Council was continuing to follow the Scottish Government Roadmap, and therefore non-essential offices remained closed. A number of options were being explored, and an update would be given by mid August 2020.

## **5. EMERGENCY POWERS – RECORD OF DECISIONS**

There was submitted and noted the record of decisions taken under emergency powers as of 27 July 2020.

## **6. LATEST GUIDANCE/LEGISLATION CONSIDERED BY GOLD COMMAND**

There was submitted and noted the latest guidance / legislation considered by Gold Command as of 27 July 2020.

## **7. LG COVID -19 DASHBOARD SUMMARY**

There was submitted and noted the latest statistics as of week ending 29 May 2020.

Councillor Barrett raised a question regarding whether free school meal provision would only be ending for those without Benefits entitlement, which SD confirmed to be the case. SD added that a proactive approach had been taken, with specific regard to those who had or were experiencing a change in circumstances.

## **8. MEMBERS Q AND A**

Councillor Laing commented he felt further detail was required regarding the depth and remit of the review of the Council's Revenue Budget and also process with regards to the Council's Capital Budget.

In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding the availability of Spaces for People document to Community Councils, BR advised that she would pick this up and confirm at a later date.

Councillor Barrett raised a query regarding steps being taken with regards to Perth and Kinross Offer ward meetings. BR advised that this process had begun and she had chaired the initial ward meeting in Ward 2. BR advised that the invite and agenda had been made clearer in order to assist those attending the meetings. She advised that members of the community involved in COVID response had been invited, along with one member of the relevant Community Councils, but it was hoped to extend the invitation as widely as

possible. Councillor Barrett added the importance of the message on the Council's website in relation to the Offer

In response to a query from Councillor Duff regarding parents being advised of arrangements for the reopening of schools, SD advised that parents had previously been made aware of the Council's general principles in this regard, and that details of specific arrangements and notification as such were up to individual schools. In response to a further query from Councillor Duff regarding arrangements for Community Campus schools, SD confirmed that public facilities such libraries and sporting facilities would not be in operation initially and that consultation was ongoing with CPK and LAL for when this situation changes.