

ELECTED MEMBER SOUNDING BOARD

Minute of Meeting of the Elected Member Sounding Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Monday 3 August 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); K Donaldson, Interim Chief Operating Officer and G Paterson, Chief Officer/Director – Integrated Health and Social Care.

In Attendance: C Irons, Corporate and Democratic Services.

1. NOTE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The note from the previous meeting of 27 July 2020 was submitted and approved.

2. OPERATIONAL UPDATE

- KR advised that the Council's programme of Health and Wellbeing for staff had been acknowledged as an example of good practice and there had been contact from other bodies, such as the Mental Welfare Commission and Dundee City Council, who wanted to emulate the programme. Also, the Health and Wellbeing information on the Domestic Abuse helpline has led to an increase in contact.
- KR referred to funding of £1.9 billion from the UK Government to respond to Covid-19 in Scotland, some of which had been accounted for but a loss of income scheme is being devised for the Scottish context
- £49m had been awarded for consequentials which would be allocated to Councils
- There was £4m available for a Museums Resilience and Recovery Fund
- COSLA had agreed their request to SG that there would be flexibility in how £30m allocated for additional teachers and support staff could be used
- KR advised an update was expected on funding for Health and Social Care
- There was no clarity yet on a Prosperity Fund but this was expected soon
- KR advised there had been a detailed submission made by the Council for the historical abuse enquiry and thanked staff for their work on this. KR added that there would be implications for a redress scheme, particularly if no insurance was available
- KR confirmed the Scottish Government had established an Outbreak Control Management Division for Test and Protect.
- BR advised the Local Resilience was undertaking a scenario planning exercise this Friday with the Council also arranging a similar exercise in the near future.
- BR confirmed the Regional Testing Centre had now moved from Perth College to Dudhope Castle in Dundee. A mobile unit would visit Perth every 2 weeks in rotation with Angus Council. The mobile unit would be

- located at either McDiarmid Park or Broxden but Broxden was the most likely location, while we await a response from St Johnstone.
- It was noted the Environmental Health Team had received 89 enquiries with 19 complaints. Of those complaints, 6 had been substantiated and 3 had been at 1 location where action had now been taken to address concerns. No written warnings or prohibitions had been issued. Since businesses had re-opened, 315 spot checks had been carried out & 19 of those had received a follow-up visit
 - BR advised with regard to wild camping there had been no major incidents at the weekend. Police Scotland had clarified they would deal with anti-social behaviour
 - BR advised Police Scotland had been informed of a planning application which had been submitted for change of use to a mosque as a result of a demonstration arising for the previous application
 - With regard to the Child Abuse Enquiry, SD stated a significant amount of work had been undertaken to submit the return which had been particularly challenging due to the lockdown and workforce restrictions and thanked all staff involved
 - Following approval of the Education Recovery Plan at the Council meeting last week, SD advised meetings were being arranged with Parent Councils and Public Health to provide information on arrangements for the return to schools and to answer parents questions
 - KD confirmed action was being taken following the decisions made at last week's Council meeting on 1-5 High Street and the Mill Quarter/Thimblerow Site Development

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 significant support was being provided to the Care Home sector and 89% of staff had been tested and there had been 100% return from homes on testing.

In response to a question from Councillor Stewart, GP advised that he was to receive an update from the Care Inspectorate on their inspectors visiting care homes while taking action to mitigate risk and reassure the providers.

Councillor Stewart asked about the sample testing of Care at Home staff and whether all had tested negative. GP advised he would have been advised if anyone had tested positive, however, information was not gathered on Care at Home staff as the level of contact they had was not considered to be of a level which would be of concern. Staff continued to have easy access to effective testing which provided a level of assurance.

KR advised that arrangements were being made for Public Health to attend a future meeting to advise members of the Test and Protect Scheme.

4. FINANCE 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.

KD summarised the report, highlighting the following points:

- £50m had been made available nationally for additional teachers and support staff
- £20m was available nationally for additional costs in schools such as cleaning and transport
- £100m nationally had been made available for employment support and training
- Of the £9.3m costs in relation to Health and Social Care, £7.1m relates to social care with the balance relating to health activity
- Applications for Business Grants had now closed with 68 pending
- There was an increase in funds available due to funds being returned from 95-day notice accounts which would be required later in the financial year
- Very fluid budget situation with many unknowns and briefings would be held with all Councillors ahead of the Council meeting on 30 September, a process for this would be shared with SB for comment.

5. EMERGENCY POWERS – RECORD OF DECISIONS

There was submitted and noted the record of decisions taken under emergency powers as of 3 August 2020.

In response to a query from Councillor Bailey, SD advised Abernyte Primary School decision would not be appealed with this decision being in line with the Scheme of Administration.

6. LATEST GUIDANCE / LEGISLATION CONSIDERED BY GOLD COMMAND

There was submitted and noted the latest guidance / legislation considered by Gold Command as of 28 July 2020.

KR highlighted there had been 260 different pieces of guidance/legislation to be dealt with since the pandemic began.

7. LG COVID -19 DASHBOARD SUMMARY

There was submitted and noted the latest statistics as of week ending 31 July 2020.

8. MEMBERS Q AND A

- (i) In response to a question from Councillor Stewart, KR confirmed the Community Planning Partnership meetings should be held in public and the minutes published online.
- (ii) In response to a question from Councillor Stewart, BR advised no redundancies had yet been confirmed at Live Active Leisure but this would depend on when their buildings would be able to open. KR added that recovery plans had been requested which may include proposals on redundancies but it was too early to know that.
- (iii) On the question of virtual meetings and the need for a protocol, KR advised it was likely there would continue to be virtual meetings until at least the end of this year. KD advised a revised version of the protocol had been circulated previously in the hope it could be agreed for the committees held last week, however, as feedback had not been received from all groups a decision had been made to delay the use of the document for agreement to be reached. Feedback received from Councillors Stewart and Laing had been taken into account and a further revised version had been issued to Sounding Board members today for comment. It was noted there was a need for the protocol to address the unusual circumstances and members had raised concerns on virtual meetings so the protocol would provide clarity for all and sit alongside the Standing Orders. KD asked that members take the latest version of the protocol to their groups for consideration and comment by the end of this week. It was agreed the document be issued to all Councillors.
Councillor Stewart expressed concern that having provided feedback last week as requested he should have been advised that the document was not to be used for the meetings held last week. He also stated the democratic process should be considered essential to enable a return to the Chambers and not considered non-essential work with a possible return on 14 September. KR confirmed that Scottish Government guidance would be followed.
Councillor Bailey requested the protocol be issued with the changes highlighted and advised his group would discuss that afternoon but still had concerns and suggested a public debate should be held on the matter, taking account of the possibility of a 2nd wave of the virus with the potential need to change Standing Orders.
KD apologised that members had not been updated on the protocol ahead of last week's committees and confirmed the latest version would be issued to all members with the changes highlighted.
- (iv) KR referred to the budget discussion with members which had been planned comprising 2 meetings on the Revenue Budget and 2 on the Capital budget and sought advice from the Sounding Board in terms of the process. Following a discussion, it was agreed that a timeline and explanation of the approach would be circulated by KD for comment by the end of the week. It was agreed that there was a need for more frequent meetings to consider the budget instead of quarterly at SP&R Committee, further thinking on this was to be brought to the Sounding Board.