

## **ELECTED MEMBER SOUNDING BOARD**

Minute of Meeting of the Elected Member Sounding Board held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Monday 20 July 2020 at 11.00am.

Present: Councillors A Bailey, G Laing, M Lyle, C Purves and W Wilson; B Renton, Gold Commander; S Devlin, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services); K Donaldson, Acting Chief Operating Officer; and D Fraser, Integrated Health and Social Care.

In Attendance: D Williams, Corporate and Democratic Services.

IT WAS AGREED TO VARY THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AT THIS POINT

### **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 regard to the report, DF summarised the position across the care homes.

DF advised those present that four care homes in Perth and Kinross had temporarily closed due to respiratory outbreaks, noting that three of those Care Homes had safely re-opened, with the remaining one care home due to re-open on 25 July. DF advised that a small number of care home staff had tested positive for COVID-19.

DF advised that a number of staff in one care home group had declined to be tested for COVID-19. However, DF informed those present that this was due to a misunderstanding with the operational management of the group in question and work was now being done to rectify the situation. In response to a query from Councillor Wilson regarding enforcement of testing for care home staff, DF advised that, whilst not enforceable, work was being undertaken with public health colleagues to encourage care home staff to undertake testing.

In response to a further query from Councillor Wilson regarding the effectiveness of Track and Trace, DF advised that, whilst numbers were small, this had been found to be effective with regards to care homes.

In response to a query from Councillor Laing regarding staffing numbers for both care homes and Care at Home, DF advised that there had actually been an increase in the number of Care at Home staff. With regards to care homes, DF advised that staff numbers were not decreasing and that care homes were coping, adding care homes were confident that numbers would be sufficient to cope for the next three months.

DF provided an update on the Community Mental Health Review, advising that it had been found that there were inequities in delivery across the three localities within the NHS Tayside Region, but advised that there were some examples of good practice highlighted and with regards to Perth and Kinross an action plan was in place to take forward.

In response to a query from Councillor Wilson, DF advised that it was now a key priority of NHS Tayside to engage with stakeholders and service users, and work in this regard was being undertaken already.

BR advised that the issue raised in relation to the communications for schools re-opening and parking charges had been picked up with the team.

## **1. NOTE FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

The note from the previous meeting of 13 July 2020 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

In response to a query from Councillor Laing regarding information security scams, KD advised those present of the procedures in dealing with such occurrences, advising that a large number of such scams are prevented a month by the system, also advising that there were different incident levels depending upon severity. KD informed those present that there were already arrangements in place for training in this regard for staff and that this would also be offered to Elected Members.

Councillor Laing raised a query regarding illicit parking in Stanley. BR clarified that the road in question had not previously been on the Council's system, but thought this had now been rectified.

## **2. OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

- BR advised that claimant figures had risen again in June, but informed those present that the rise was slowing. BR advised that it was anticipated that there would be a further rise as the UK Government's Furlough Scheme came to an end.
- BR informed members that claimant figures in Perth and Kinross were up to 4,415 in the March-June 2020 period, a rise of 137%.
- BR advised those present that there would be a slight refocusing of the overall approach for the Recovery and Renewal Member/Officer Working Group (MOWG), reflecting the MOWG's views that the Perth and Kinross Offer should underpin for recovery and renewal.
- BR advised members that staffing capacity issues meant that papers for the MOWG were likely to be issued on the Friday preceding the Monday meetings of the MOWG, but informed those present that these will be issued earlier if and where possible.
- BR advised those present that there was a view to changing the name of the Recovery and Renewal MOWG in order to tie-in with the amalgamation with the Perth and Kinross Offer.

- BR advised that, with the forthcoming resumption of Service Committees, it had been agreed that the Service Sounding Boards will end. BR requested feedback by email following the meeting as to whether Elected Members felt it was suitable to continue with meetings of the Elected Member Sounding Board, or whether to revert back to previous practice of Leaders Meetings, following the scheduled end of Emergency Powers on 17 August.
- BR informed members that it was intended that the meeting of the Council on 30 September would deal solely with Revenue and Capital Budget matters, with the proposal for a further meeting of the Council on 7 October for all other business. BR advised that this date was during recess and would await approval on this date.
- Following on from a query from Councillor Stewart at the last meeting of the Sounding Board, BR advised that the joint chairs of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Board were being written to regarding the accessibility of papers for these meetings. BR further advised that the possibility of CPP Board meetings being held in public was also being explored.
- BR advised that with Perth College UHI looking at resuming activity in September, the regional COVID-19 Assessment Centre would be relocating to Dudhope Castle, Dundee. In response to a query from Councillor Laing regarding any potential alternative site in Perth for relocation, BR advised that this was the regional centre and therefore a Tayside-wide approach had been taken to finding a suitable site. The potential sitings for the mobile testing units across Perth and Kinross were still under discussion
- With regards to illicit camping, BR advised that the communications team were working on approach targeted at those whose behaviour was irresponsible, adding that work was continuing to be done with Police Scotland and other partners around this issue. Councillor Laing praised the accessibility of colleagues in Community Safety and wished for this to be passed on to the team leader.
- SD advised that on 15 July two documents were released by the advisory sub-group to the Scottish Government in relation to schools, one on transport and one on physical distancing. SD advised that the reports stated that there was no requirement for physical distancing on school transport, as this is considered an extension of the school estate. SD also advised that there was no requirement for pupils at either primary or secondary level to physically distance within schools, but there was a requirement for adults to do so. SD advised that all these measures were caveated on a number of factors including the continued suppression of the virus, testing and tracing, and hygiene of individuals and buildings.
- KD advised that there would a £50m fund available to assist with youth unemployment.
- KD advised that a protocol for virtual meetings had been drafted, and would be circulated to members for comment following the meeting.

#### **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, and made specific reference to the following:

- A £10m fund had been made available for Performing Arts Venues across Scotland, which will be distributed by Creative Scotland.
- Active revenue budget meetings are presently taking place throughout Council Services.
- The Business Grant Scheme closed to new applications on 10 July, with outstanding applications presently being worked on.

In response to a query from Councillor Wilson regarding a timeline for the performing arts funding, KD advised that she would speak to Fiona Robertson regarding this and provide an update.

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

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

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

There was submitted and noted the latest guidance / legislation considered by Gold Command as of 20 July 2020.

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

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

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

Councillor Laing commented that there needed to be clarity in communications regarding the authorisation of the increase in parking charges, to which BR advised there had been some miscommunication with the press.

Councillor Laing raised a query regarding the resumption of pre-agenda meetings to go along with the resumption of Committees. KD advised that this would be dependent on capacity and staff resources.

Councillor Wilson requested that thought be given to the role of Elected Members in supporting the Active Travel team.

Councillor Wilson requested clarification regarding the redirection of phones at 2 High Street through to the Service Centre or a messaging service. KD advised that she believed this was already the case, but would look to clarify.

Councillor Wilson raised a query regarding the phased reopening of Pullar House and 2 House Street due to difficulties some members of the public may have utilising Council Services online. BR replied that a phased return was being looked at, however advised that Scottish Government advice remained to work from home where possible. BR further advised that a number of areas regarding this were being looked at, including the Service Centre.