

**EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL**

**EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE**

**21 May 2020**

**Report by Chief Executive**

**COVID-19 – ACTIONS**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. To provide Elected Members with information on the actions taken by the Council and partners to date in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

2. That the committee note the report

**BACKGROUND**

3. At the meeting of the Council on 23 March, in response to the developing COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed to introduce temporary emergency decision making powers.

4. The Council agreed:-

- (a) to suspend on a temporary basis all delegations to committees with the exception of the Emergencies Committee referred to in (d) below;
- (b) that delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive all directors and heads of service, and the Chief Officer – Legal and Procurement to take operational decisions in respect of matters within their respective areas of operation that would normally require Council/committee approval;
- (c) that if the proposed decision would be contrary to existing Council policy, would be seeking an amendment to an existing policy, or for any other reason would require political approval, the matter be referred to the Emergencies Committee for a decision;
- (d) that an Emergencies Committee be established, the membership of which comprises the Leader and Depute Leader of the Administration and the Leader of the main Opposition Group or substitutes, with the terms of reference as set out in the report; and

5. On the evening of 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced what has become known as a lockdown. All but essential travel was banned and the Council moved into full emergency mode with the priorities being to keep residents and staff safe, continue to provide critical services and to support the work of the NHS.

6. The scale of change was unprecedented. All staff, unless they were essential and could not do their work from home, were asked to work at home. Many buildings were closed and those that are open have to operate to the highest standards of social distancing and hygiene. Significant numbers of staff were absent from work due to the impact of coronavirus leaving critical services understaffed. Some frontline critical services were particularly badly affected as they had a number of staff in the vulnerable category who could not work at all.

7. In addition the Scottish Government asked Local Government to take on a range of new duties at short notice. Support for people who are shielding is perhaps the most extensive new duty and has required significant numbers of staff to be allocated to that task as well as the use of volunteers. The Humanitarian Hub has been a major undertaking. The administration of new business grants has also been a significant task requiring 7 day working from a large team of staff volunteers.

8. The HSCP is very much on the frontline of the response to the pandemic and continue to support some of our most vulnerable residents. The work of those who provide Care at Home and work in our Care Home must be particularly commended.

9. Other services had to be delivered in a completely new way. Much new emergency legislation has been introduced. Death registration became an online process. Teaching of children is now substantially online. Free school meals are prepared and delivered to homes complete with recipe cards. Many staff who have never worked remotely are now working from home very successfully.

10. Whilst these have been very challenging times for the Council, our staff have been exceptional. Many have worked significant extended hours to make sure residents are safe and well. Others have volunteered to go wherever they are needed. Some staff have children to care for and are managing to juggle the various demands of home learning with carrying out their job.

11. The following report gives just a flavour of the work that has been undertaken over the 2 months. It also highlights the changes we have had to make to our operating structures as we operate in an emergency capacity.

## **REPORT**

### **Operating Structures**

12. East Renfrewshire Council is a Category 1 responder in terms of the Civil Contingencies legislation. Internal and external communications, officer decision making and response arrangements to emergencies are already firmly established through our existing strategic, tactical and operational meeting structures.

13. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) is responsible for the strategic response whilst the Council's Corporate Resilience Management Team (CRMT) discusses and proposes the tactical arrangements. Both groups include the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP), with the CRMT also including East Renfrewshire Culture & Leisure (ERCL). Both groups have been meeting consistently throughout the response, with issues being escalated and considered at the appropriate forum. To ensure issues are considered at an operational level, Departmental Management Teams (DMTs) have also been activated as well as the HSCP activating its Local Management Resilience Team (LRMT). These structures are commonly referred to as Gold command (strategic), Silver command (tactical) and Bronze command (operational) in emergency planning language.

14. The Council's emergency planning structures described above are part of a much wider regional and national structure. The Council is meeting regularly with multi-agency partners through the Greater Glasgow Local Resilience Partnership (LRP), which is currently operating primarily across Health Board boundaries; incorporating the six constituent councils (East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire) plus Argyll and Bute Council and appropriate multi-agency partners.

15. The HSCP LRMT contributes to a Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board Gold (strategic) command structure; covering acute, primary and social care

16. Elected Members have been provided with daily briefings to keep them up to date with ongoing activities. On a weekly basis statistical information on a range of data indicators has also been provided.

### **Cross Cutting issues**

17. Within the Council, a number of Sub Groups of the CRMT have been established. These Sub Groups are focussed on a unique facet of the response to COVID-19. Each Group is designed to be issue specific, and as such may be short life. The Sub Groups are led by a chair and have appropriate representation or points for contact for all Council Departments, the HSCP and ERCL – to mirror the cohesive approach of the CRMT. The Sub Groups report to the CRMT at each meeting, and have focussed deep dives at the CMT throughout the week. The following CRMT Sub Groups have been established as part of the response to COVID-19

Additional Deaths (Andy Corry)  
Critical Services (Gillian McCarney)  
Humanitarian Assistance/Shielding (Louise Pringle)  
PPE (Debbie Hill)  
Recovery & Renewal (Shona Fraser)  
Staff Volunteering (Kath McCormick)

Information on the work of each group is included in Appendix1

### **Departmental and Trust activities.**

18. The following paragraphs set out the actions that departments and the Culture and Leisure Trust have been taking to tackle the pandemic, both in respect of departmental specific actions, and those being directed through the CRMT and its sub-groups.

### **Health and Social Care Partnership**

19. The HSCP has been at the front line in the response to the coronavirus outbreak, supporting our most vulnerable residents at home and in residential settings. As with other service areas, we have seen significant staffing constraints due the virus. Nonetheless, our staff teams have established and adapted to new ways of working and have continued to maintain and deliver safe and effective services to our residents. Across services we have taken innovative approaches and adapted provision to focus on our most vulnerable clients during the emergency phase of the crisis.

### **Governance**

20. The current situation has required some changes in the governance arrangements for the HSCP and a delegated authority to the Chief Officer was agreed by the IJB at its meeting on 18 March 2020. Situation reports (sitreps) are submitted by all service areas daily and escalations responded to by DMT members, with escalation to CRMT or GGC tactical group as required. LRMT and DMT meet twice weekly to oversee the HSCP response. The HSCP also links to GGC and National Chief Officer meetings, and Chief Social Work Officer and Chief Financial Officer meetings.

### **Mobilisation Plan**

21. An HSCP COVID mobilisation plan has been developed and submitted to the Scottish Government via NHSGGC Health Board. The mobilisation plan summarises that actions that the HSCP will take to ensure that a system-wide approach is taken to addressing the challenges to the NHS caused by coronavirus. Funding of £0.886m has now been confirmed by the Scottish Government as East Renfrewshire's share of £50m funding.

22. The mobilisation plan covers the following

- Reducing the level of delayed discharges of patients in acute hospital provision through increased staffing of hospital discharge team and daily reporting on care home at care at home capacity
- Ensuring resilience and sustainability of care at home provision
- Purchasing additional care home bed capacity to prepare for expected increasing demand
- Recognising additional provider costs and potential sustainability concerns

### **Alleviating pressure on acute NHS services**

23. Minimising unnecessary use of hospital services is a strategic priority of the HSCP and this has become even more essential given the additional pressure coronavirus is putting on acute NHS services.

24. During the period we increased the staff capacity of our hospital discharge team. The team has been working to continually improve referral processes, conducting continuous monitoring of hospital discharges and gathering accurate daily intelligence on care home vacancies and homecare capacity. Delayed discharges have remained low despite significant challenges as a result of the crisis.

25. The HSCP has also been supporting the primary care sector during the crisis, facilitating remote working arrangements for GPs and support staff through equipment and training. We have also put in place collaborative working arrangements to mitigate staff absences and ensure the ongoing operation of GP practices.

### **Supporting vulnerable people in the community**

26. In order to prioritise those in greatest need, all HSCP services established vulnerable people lists at the start of the crisis. We planned for a significant reduction in the existing care and support staff workforce (for all providers) and redeployed staff across services. Day care staff, Occupational Therapists, pharmacy technicians and other Council staff including non-frontline social care staff were redeployed to support the ongoing provision of care to vulnerable residents. Our Learning and Development Team put in place a condensed induction programme for new care staff.

27. Care and support services have been reduced or suspended only where there has been agreement with people and/or families that it is safe to do so. Third/community sector or use of Technology Enabled Care (TEC) has been deployed as appropriate. To continue to support our residents we have maintained regular telephone contact with all clients and where appropriate their families, wherever services have been reduced or stepped down. Services are reinstated or increased should this be required. This involved putting in place additional call handling support and dedicated phone lines. We have been working closely with the third sector and community groups to coordinate the Council and community response to non-personal care requests and our wider support to isolated individuals. During the emergency phase, social work teams and staff from our Initial Contact Team have been visiting households to provide support as required.

28. We have enhanced our support to external providers of care and support services establishing a single point of contact and ensuring frequent communication with providers for information on capacity and facilitating collaborative working. To allow providers to focus on service delivery we moved to consistent 4-weekly payment for all planned activity during the period with reconciliation at recovery phase.

29. Our community pharmacy service has adapted provision to support people in the community giving priority access to medication for care staff and establishing new processes for volunteer drivers to deliver medications to vulnerable and self-isolating residents.

30. In partnership with Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire and the Council, the HSCP supports the Community Hub helpline which is a “one-stop shop” for residents needing help or those who cannot leave their house and with no means to organise their own essentials.

### **Supporting unpaid carers**

31. We have been working in close collaboration with the voluntary sector to provide enhanced support to unpaid carers during the coronavirus crisis. This has seen the establishment of new tailored support and a communication/information strategy for unpaid carers. Carers have been accessing support through the Community Hub and as mentioned, we have established a pathway for carers to access PPE in collaboration with the Carers Centre.

### **Supporting people in care homes**

32. The care home sector has been particularly affected by the coronavirus outbreak with a high volume of cases across Scotland. In East Renfrewshire we put in place enhanced support to our care homes from the start of the pandemic. As with Care at Home we anticipated the significant impact the outbreak would have on staff absence and undertook redeployment and recruitment of additional staff into care homes to ensure continuing high quality provision.

33. To ensure the adequate level of support we established frequent (daily) contact with care home management to discuss the issues they are facing, gather information on staffing, bed vacancies and COVID-19 cases, and to support collaborative working across the sector.

34. In order to meet anticipated demand and facilitate hospital discharges we purchased additional care home bed capacity.

35. Care homes have been given priority access to medication through our community pharmacies and we have established new procedures for the stocking of medication in care homes (e.g. specific palliative medication).

### **Testing and Assessment**

36. The HSCP has recently established a testing team in response to Scottish Government strategy to undertake enhanced outbreak investigation in all care homes where there are cases of COVID-19: This will involve testing, subject to individuals’ consent, all residents and staff, whether or not they have symptoms. This has been a significant operational task, with close working across NHS GGC to support the distribution and collection of test samples. HSCP staff visit homes and test where there are no nursing staff able to undertake this function.

37. A Community Assessment Centre for people concerned about their COVID-19 symptoms has been set up in Eastwood Health and Care Centre. This has involved some premises adaptations, staffing resourced currently from existing HSCP staff and additional equipment. The service currently operates Monday to Friday from 10am - 2pm and is seeing on average 10 patients per day.

## **PPE for Health and Social Care**

38. The HSCP implemented a centralised model of PPE stock control to ensure priority to front line services. The PPE store is located at Eastwood Health and Care Centre. PPE stock includes gloves, aprons, masks, eye protection and hand sanitiser. Week beginning 27 April, 7460 masks, 7200 gloves, and 1700 aprons were distributed to frontline HSCP staff. The HSCP also contributes to the Council and NHSGGC PPE working groups.

39. As part of the national HUB model the HSCP is now responsible for distributing PPE to external providers, this includes personal assistants and unpaid carers. The HSCP is working in partnership with the Carers Centre to ensure those with caring responsibilities receive appropriate PPE.

## **Supporting vulnerable children and families**

40. The HSCP has continued to support children throughout the crisis. Children's services moved to a 1 in 3 week work pattern to support social distancing in offices and an emergency duty team system was put in place.

41. The service has been operating on a priority basis with direct contact limited to only that which is essential. The service has been prioritising vulnerable families and individuals, those where there are public/child protection issues or an identified risk of harm. Staff have been maintaining contact with families and individuals through telephone, online and visits as appropriate.

42. The HSCP has been supporting children with disabilities in the absence of other support programmes that are not available during the crisis. This has seen deployment of resources to inclusive support services and children's social work.

43. Our health visiting team have prioritised direct contact only to households where there are new babies and for 6-8 week health checks. All other contact is by phone unless a particular issue has been highlighted.

## **Education Department**

### **Hub Schools**

44. The Scottish Government announced that all schools should close on 20 March with the exception of those providing support to the children of key workers and or those children who are deemed vulnerable. The Council has therefore been operating a small number of 'hub schools' across the authority, as per the guidance issued by the Scottish Government. The hub schools are:-

Neilston Primary School/Madras Family Centre – Neilston/Uplawmoor  
Carlibar Primary School – Barrhead  
St Cadoc's Primary School – Newton Mearns North  
Joint Faith Campus – Newton Mearns South/Eaglesham  
Our Lady of the Missions/Glen Family Centre – Giffnock/Thornliebank  
Netherlee Primary School – Busby/Clarkston/Netherlee

45. The hub schools have become well established with staff from all of the primary schools and early years settings within each community working together on a rota basis to ensure appropriate levels of cover in each of the hubs. Small numbers of secondary school pupils and staff have been attending the hub schools.

46. Collectively around 250 – 300 children have been attending the hub schools on a daily basis. Approximately 20% of those attending do so because of vulnerability, with this number having risen significantly in recent weeks due to additional efforts being made by school staff and partners including Education Psychology and HSCP.

47. In addition, Isobel Mair School has remained open to continue to offer education and support to pupils and their families. The school has been staffed by both school staff and HSCP colleagues.

48. The Education Department continues to monitor the operation of each of the hub schools on a daily basis, submitting daily attendance and staffing figures to the Scottish Government to support planning.

49. While the hub schools closed over the spring holidays, provision was put in place to ensure that key worker groups and our most vulnerable pupils continued to be supported throughout this period. East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust delivered a programme during the two weeks in sites in the east and west of the authority (Eastwood High School, Crookfur Primary School and Carlibar Primary School and Nursery Class) with high numbers of attendees on each day.

### **Digital & Remote Learning**

50. In addition to the pupils attending each of the hub schools, teachers and support staff from across the authority have been supporting children and young people to engage with and participate in digital and remote learning opportunities to ensure continuing education provision. Across all of our schools, a minimum of 86% of pupils have been engaging with their learning on a weekly basis through a variety of different resources and tools being used in each school and early years setting.

51. Schools have been using existing learning resources through Google Classroom and GLOW to support pupils, offering direct online support from teachers and opportunities for pupils to continue to engage with one another through their learning.

52. Significant efforts continue to be made to ensure that schools are supporting those pupils who are not engaging on a regular basis with their learning. We recognise there are a range of factors which can affect the ability of some pupils to engage with digital and remote learning and head teachers continue to develop innovative, locally led solutions to these challenges.

53. Close working relationships with social work colleagues has ensured that all families in East Renfrewshire are in contact with a professional on a weekly basis.

### **SQA**

54. Following the cancellation of the 2020 exam diet, the SQA set out arrangements for an alternative certification model. This is based on teachers providing estimated grades for each learner entered for National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher.

55. It is crucial that the certification model maintains the integrity and credibility of the qualification system, ensuring that standards are maintained over time. To support this nationally, officers are liaising with authority colleagues across Scotland via the Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES).

56. Within East Renfrewshire, schools are being supported by the Quality Improvement Team to analyse their estimates in advance of submission to the SQA on 29 May 2020. The estimates are an active part of the awarding process and cannot be shared before SQA have made their final decisions in August.

### **Free School Meal Provision**

57. The Education Department continues to support children and young people across the authority through the provision of weekly food parcels for those who would normally qualify for free school meals. Approximately 1,350 parcels are distributed on a weekly basis, being delivered in partnership with Council transport colleagues.

58. Each food parcel contains a selection of foods and ingredients, with a recipe card to encourage families to prepare and cook meals together. This scheme continues to be monitored and works closely with the wider Humanitarian work being undertaken across the Council.

### **Admissions Procedures – 2020/21**

59. Emergency legislation from the Scottish Government has extended the deadline for parents/carers to receive a response to a placing request from 30 April to 31 May. This applies to those placing requests received by 15 March for a place in August 2020 giving councils additional time to consider requests during this unprecedented time. The time has also been extended for an appeal hearing against those decisions to be heard from 28 days to 3 months.

60. Given the requirement for social distancing, the regulations also make amendments to allow for placing request appeals to be heard by electronic means of video/voice conferencing and thereby avoid physical attendance at an appeal hearing.

61. The revised timescales and change in format of appeal hearings were published on 27 April via the Council's website and other social media channels and schools were asked to post the same message via their own social media.

62. Education and Customer First/Committee Services are working towards these new deadlines and trialling a number of innovative arrangements to support any subsequent appeals. By taking advantage of the opportunities presented by digital solutions, appellants will still have the opportunity to address the panel. Support and guidance will be offered to parents/carers to help them in the process.

63. The Education Department is intending to issue letters to parents/carers with the decision of their placing request application during the third week of May prior to the 31 May deadline. Whilst the timescales in relation to appeals have necessarily been extended, every effort will be made to process as many appeals as possible in advance of the new school session since this is beneficial for everyone not least families.

### **ELC Expansion**

64. The Scottish Government's decision to postpone the statutory duty to provide 1140 hours of early learning and childcare to all eligible 2, 3 and 4 year olds will impact on the offer given to East Renfrewshire families. Senior officers are considering viable options for families from August 2020 and in light of timescales, the Director will determine the best way forward after consultation with the Emergencies Committee. All families have been communicated with to advise them of the Scottish Government's decision and the timescales for further information to be provided.



## **Environment Department**

65. Like other departments, the Environment Department has faced an extremely challenging staffing situation due in one way or another to the implications of the coronavirus pandemic. For example at 30 March 2020 the Department had 155 staff (30.4% of the entire Department) unable to work mainly due to the pandemic. However, by 4 May 2020 this had reduced to 81 staff (16.1% of the whole Department).

### **Business Grants & Self-Employed Support**

66. A dedicated team within Economic Development, supported by volunteers within the Environment Department, are processing applications for the Scottish Government Business Grants Scheme. At 12 May, 787 applications have been received, with payments approved totalling £7.28m. From 22 April, approval was given for the expansion of the team to support administration and payments under the newly developed Self-Employed Hardship Fund. Further details and guidance from Scottish Government will shape the working of this team. The team is working 7 days a week and has recently been performing better, in terms of processing time, when compared to the Scottish average of all local authorities.

### **Waste & Recycling**

67. Due to critical staffing issues the decision was taken to reduce recycling collections from the week commencing 6 April but at the same time to enhance residual collections of grey bins to a weekly schedule with recyclables accepted in the grey bin. As part of the restoration/recovery process, it was decided on 24 April that collections of green bins (Plastics, Cans and Glass) and brown bins (Garden and Food Waste) would recommence as of week commencing 4 May on a 3-weekly basis (weeks 2 and 3 grey bin only). This has been well received by the public. The recovering service will be supported with the redeployment of Roads Staff and as the service strengthens the potential restoration of blue bin collections will be addressed.

68. Following UK & Scottish Government announcements on 23 March 2020 on lockdown arrangements and the need to ensure social distancing, Household Waste & Recycling Centres (HWRC's) were closed as of 24 March 2020. In addition, the decision was taken to stop taking new special uplift bookings. The special uplift service was suspended following the honouring of existing bookings in an effort to minimise the risks faced by our staff from the virus. Similar decisions were taken by other councils.

69. On 20 March, charging for rat and pest control treatments was suspended. It is intended that this suspension will remain in place for the duration of the initial COVID-19 response. This was approved as a goodwill gesture recognising the necessary changes to the refuse collection service and the increased risk of pests linked to additional waste generated by our residents spending more time at home.

### **Roads**

70. On 18 March, the Winter Maintenance Team moved to a 12 hour shift pattern, rather than a 24 hour shift pattern; with gritting decisions based upon the lunchtime forecast. This decision was taken based on the limited number of staff available at that time with the shift change allowing a focus on critical support to main roads and key routes used by the emergency services. On 24 March, our Roads Contracting Unit rota was altered to a week on/week off rota with a view to maintaining some level of Winter Maintenance function during staff shortages.

71. The UK & Scottish Government announcements on 23 March relating to lockdown led to the closure of quarries and as such limited access to materials for road repairs. As a result of this the Roads Service moved to emergency repairs only whilst maintaining triage by an Inspector and public contact channels.

## **Environmental Health and Trading Standards**

72. Following the enactment of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, the Scottish Government authorised Trading Standards & Environmental Health Officers to have enforcement powers. These officers work to an agreed strategy with Police Scotland with respect to continued operation of businesses and social distancing where businesses remain open. This strategy is based on 4 pillars: Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce.

73. Trading Standards & Environmental Health Officers have therefore been monitoring the number of businesses open, types of business activity that is taking place and their compliance with the regulations. Officers have engaged with a number of our businesses and provided advice on business operation and social distancing.

74. Environmental Health Officers have also worked closely with other service departments that are leading on provision of the Humanitarian Hub and free school meal preparation to ensure food safety law compliance.

75. The lockdown has seen a rise in other public health complaints but Environmental Health has maintained a service for responding to issues such as pests (rats/mice/birds/insects), burning of waste in gardens, refuse accumulations, private water supplies and sewage leak complaints.

76. Many of the issues arising from the lockdown has seen fraud instances (scams) rise. Officers have been in close liaison with Police Scotland on national and local activity to ensure that all our residents, whether vulnerable or not, are protected from fraud.

## **Pitch Maintenance**

77. In light of a lack of pitch bookings caused by social distancing requirements and staffing shortages, maintenance of sports pitches was suspended on 19 March. As pitches were no longer being used this freed up resources to support other key functions.

## **Grass Cutting**

78. As part of our intended restoration of services, it was agreed on 24 April that essential grass cutting would be resumed. This will encompass key areas such as line of sight at road junctions ensuring safety for essential road users and keeping functional parks and publicly available space. The service is becoming more critical/essential because long grass will reach a point at which it seriously damages equipment and effectively cannot be cut. Similar to waste collection, the recovering service will be supported by the redeployment of Roads Staff.

## **Construction Projects**

79. Following the UK and Scottish Government announcements of lockdown on 23 March, a number of businesses suspended their operations including our construction partners. As a result all construction related projects were suspended with an impact upon Early Years, Council House building and major capital works.

## **PAT Testing**

80. On 19 March, the decision was taken to suspend compliance PAT testing and accept that some tests may ultimately slip by a couple of months. Following the Government closure of schools, it was determined that the risks were relatively low in delaying PAT testing. A number of officers providing this service were impacted by the virus. The decision allowed available staff to support emergency electrical work of greater priority.

## **Housing Repairs**

81. On 23 March, repairs were moved to emergency repairs only. This decision was taken to protect residents and our workforce from the spread of the virus while reflecting the decisions being taken in other Council areas and the availability of key Personal Protective Equipment at that time. From 27 April some void repairs were put in place to support the provision of emergency accommodation. This is not a full void repairs service as social distancing limits the number of trades in a property at any one time.

## **Housing Advice & Homelessness**

82. From 23 March, all homeless interview processes have been taking place by telephone with temporary accommodation provided when needed. Homeless presentations continue to be accepted but the allocation of permanent accommodation was suspended and this will remain the case until the current UK & Scottish Government restrictions are eased. The service is planning to reinstate permanent housing sign-ups and by doing so get some people moving on from temporary accommodation as soon as possible, as this is having a significant impact on the supply of temporary accommodation. An additional 15 temporary properties have had to be furnished to deal with the current situation.

## **Supported Accommodation (under 25's, Homelessness & Sheltered Housing)**

83. In order to ensure social distancing, protecting staff and vulnerable community members from the spread of the virus, onsite support provision has been reduced. However, support and welfare assistance is undertaken by telephone.

## **Corporate and Community Services Department**

### **Registration**

84. Remote death registration was introduced on 26 March 2020 with all Birth Registrations and Marriages paused. A request was made to provide a Registration service over 7 days and agreement was reached across the west of Scotland councils that this would be supported across the area but not as individual councils. Due to the fact there are no Birth Registrations or Marriages being arranged and the team are all present all deaths are being remotely registered timeously with no backlog despite the increased numbers being experienced. The team have also supported Glasgow City Council in registering a proportion of their deaths.

### **Customer First**

85. With the closure of face to face Customer Service Centres, the Customer Services team have had to adapt to delivering all support via phone, e-mail and livechat contact with customers. Over the first month work was undertaken to set up a remote call centre to maximise the number of employees able to work from home. As a result the team have been answering on average 15% more calls per week. The number of residents enquiring via e-mail has increased by 21% and livechat has significantly increased by 168%, based on volumes in April 2019. Residents are enquiring about Council Tax, rents, cleansing and recycling, benefits advice, along with general enquires support in relation to COVID-19.

86. Money Advice and Rights Team (MART) diverted resources to assist with the Humanitarian relief work, and established free supply of food in partnership with FareShare to support vulnerable residents from the temporary food hub. They also assisted with the outbound calls to ERCs shielded residents and along with Customer Services took responsibility for any incoming COVID-19 support enquires and ongoing outbound calls on a weekly basis to residents who are being added to the shielding list by the NHS. MART continue

to offer Welfare Rights and Debt advice via email and telephone seeing an increase in enquiries from its mainstream services of 45% for April 2020 compared to the previous year.

## **Community Safety**

87. Telecare alarm call-handling, CCTV monitoring, out of hours homelessness and housing repairs response, as well as building security services (including on-site security alarm responses for all ERC and Trust properties) have all continued to operate as normal throughout this period. The Ring and Report Line for anti-social behaviour and other community concerns has also continued to operate, but with reduced operating hours (4pm to 10pm, 7 days per week). The warden team also continues to operate a dog warden service for stray dogs and the investigation of potentially dangerous dogs. The GRIP (Greater Results in Partnership) group of officers from the Council, Police and Housing Associations has continued to operate, meeting weekly via conference call.

88. The Community Safety control room is now co-ordinating medication delivery requests from local pharmacies and handling the Council's support line for shielding residents outside of standard office hours. The control room has also increased its support for ERC sheltered housing complexes and is now providing 24/7 alarm-receiving services for each of the 300 residents of these complexes, who can request assistance via the alarm cords in individual flats.

89. Alongside continuing its usual building security, intruder alarm response and key-holding services for ERC and Trust properties, the community warden team has been providing practical support for services across the Council and HSCP including transporting non-driving home carers to their clients, delivering emergency food parcels to vulnerable residents, delivering cleaning materials and PPE to local care providers and collecting medication for shielding residents.

90. Parking enforcement was suspended in late March, when Glasgow City Council, who provide the back office functions for parking, advised that, due to building closures, they were no longer able to operate fully. Guidance has since been issued by COSLA and the British Parking Association advising that parking enforcement should be restricted for the time being. While complaints of noise and anti-social behaviour are still being recorded and investigated (including through the GRIP), face-to-face meetings and home visits are no longer taking place – complainants and persons being complained about are being contacted by phone, email or letter.

## **Workforce**

91. With the introduction of lockdown, measures were put in place for as many employees as possible to work from home and with Safe Systems of Working put in place for all others. Manager and employee guidance has been updated during this time to support these new ways of working and regular weekly meetings with the Trade Unions have been taking place.

92. The issues in terms of workforce availability and confidence are crucial. The HR Case Management team worked with members of the Environment Business Intelligence team to create an Absence Dashboard which allows managers to access information on who in their team is affected due to illness, self-isolating and underlying health conditions. Managers are being asked to review and update this data on a daily basis to allow them to assess implications for delivering essential services and also to maintain contact and support for those unable to attend work. Absence information is being collated at a national level and is helping to inform discussions between senior leaders in SOLACE, COSLA and the Scottish Government regarding the impact of COVID-19 on service provision, and the key staffing issues that require some form of national consideration.

93. The absence rate as a result of COVID-19 including all those employees reporting sick, those isolating, those absent with caring responsibilities and those non-essential employees at home unable to work from home has been sitting at 9.5%.

94. During this period the Council and HSCP have appointed Wellbeing Champions to ensure that communications on how to manage different ways of working and how to look after your physical and mental health are shared widely.

## **Communications**

95. The work of the Council's communications team has focussed on two main elements; external updates for residents and internal communications for staff.

96. External communication has mainly been via social media channels as well as website news items and press releases. A coronavirus section was created on the website carrying more detailed messages on council services which our social media posts linked to.

97. In the six-week period between lockdown measures being announced on 23 March and May 3, the new coronavirus section on the council website attracted 16,581 page views. On Facebook, the average daily reach of our posts increased by 79.1% to 14,453 compared to the six weeks immediately prior to lockdown. The number of messages we received on Facebook rose by 84.9% to 3149 and the number of replies made by communications officers to specific queries rose by 60.3% to 367.

98. On Twitter, the average daily reach of our posts increased by 18.7% to 204,284, the number of messages received rose 16.4% to 1571 and the number of replies made by communications officers to specific queries rose by 14.1% to 308.

99. The best-performing posts were on changes to domestic refuse collection; placing requests; mental health advice; hub schools for children of key workers; the Council's humanitarian food hub; business support grants and teachers making facemask for frontline NHS staff.

100. Our number of Facebook followers rose by 5.3% to 13,044 and our number of followers on Twitter rose by 2.4% to 25,789 over the same six-week period.

101. Our internal communications to staff included a designated Coronavirus section on the Council's Intranet, a series of personal thank you messages to groups of staff by the chief executive and advice and support on mental and physical health.

## **ICT**

102. In general, all ICT services have continued to be delivered where possible. The Service Desk moved rapidly to a remote support model with minimal onsite presence in parallel to the wider Council move to home working. This was done while continuing to support the dispersal of all corporate and education staff. The support process has been modified to ensure the continuing safety of ICT and Council staff and a safe system of work is now in place and working well. This allows staff with an appointment to come to the Barrhead Office with their devices, and get issues resolved where it has not been possible to do so remotely. It has also allowed the team to deploy over 250 new devices and phones to the Critical Services involved in the response to the crisis in a very short space of time.

103. The Operations teams continue to monitor the core technology supporting almost 2000 remote corporate and education staff. This team is fully operational from home.

104. Where projects in the business have continued, the solutions team have been supporting those projects. Where staff have seen lower levels of work, they have been deployed to support the Service Desk and Operations teams where required. A good example of where the solutions team have supported critical services is in the rapid evaluation, procurement and deployment of a virtual call centre system to support the Customer First and MART response to the shielding challenge.

## **Democratic Services**

105. Democratic Services continues to support the Children's Hearings Service by providing local online support to the Area Support Team. Members of the team have been providing additional support for the Registration Service and will be providing additional support for the forthcoming Education Placing Request Appeal Hearings. Support for community councils and Elected Members continues to be provided.

## **Chief Executive's Department**

### **Accountancy**

106. All accountancy staff are working from home and continuing with scheduled tasks in addition to monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's finances and supporting the various new payments required in the response to the current crisis.

### **Annual Accounts**

107. Work continues in line with normal timescales and we plan to submit our unaudited accounts for consideration by the Audit & Scrutiny Committee on 25 June. There has been no official relaxation of technical requirements or completion dates for this exercise. Whilst an extension of time has been granted to English authorities, Scottish regulations instead allow local flexibility to be agreed with external auditors.

### **Financial Monitoring**

108. As well as routine preparation of revenue and capital monitoring reports to Cabinet, staff are forecasting the financial impact of COVID-19 for fortnightly reporting via the COSLA template. Separate returns of HSCP costs are being coordinated by the IJB Chief Financial Officer. Normally our first monitoring reports are submitted to Cabinet in August, but given the current pressures and funding uncertainties, we aim to submit a high level financial report to the June Council meeting.

109. The Council has received £987,000 from the Scottish Government as part of the £50m Hardship Fund and expects £2.5m to £3m further support from the £155m Barnett consequential that are now to be allocated to Councils. It is expected, however, that the extra pressures faced by the Council will significantly exceed these funding allocations.

### **Budget Plans**

110. The impact of COVID-19 on the current year's budget is being assessed and will be reported to Council in June. In addition to extra cost pressures and the reduction in various income streams, the response to the pandemic will also prevent some of our planned 2020/21 savings from being implemented.

111. It had been planned to start work now on a 3-year budget for 2021-2024, based on anticipated multi-year settlements from the Scottish and UK Governments. However such clarity on future settlement figures is no longer expected. The approach to medium-term budget planning will be reconsidered.

## **Procurement**

112. As well as continuing to manage day to day tendering activity, the procurement team are in daily contact with key suppliers and partners in Scotland Excel and Scottish Government to do everything possible to ensure continuity of service and resilience at this critical time. The service is managing a high volume of requests for a variety of goods, services and works across the Council and are applying new Scottish Government procurement guidance which has been issued to support us in adjusting procedures to meet new demands. This allows the service to be responsive to urgent requests and to provide direct routes to market and modify contracts where appropriate. The service continues to source PPE for our front line services with just under 100,000 care and non-care items distributed.

## **Culture and Leisure Trust**

113. The Culture and Leisure Trust has been heavily involved in supporting the Council as well as continuing to provide its own services during the lockdown period. The Board considered an update report on 29 April and a copy of the report is attached (Appendix 2).

## **Delegated decisions using extended delegated powers**

114. One of the decisions taken by the Council at the meeting on 23 March was to extend the delegated powers to officers to empower them to take decisions within their areas of operation where a decision would in normal circumstances have been made by the relevant committee.

115. The Council already has an extensive Scheme of Delegation which means that compared to other authorities officers are already empowered to take a significant number of decisions without the need for approval by committee. As a consequence the number of such decisions that have been taken are low in number. Appendix 3 lists those decisions taken by officers that would normally have been reported to committee.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

116. Despite the severe challenges that have faced the Council, it has continued to deliver existing services as well as quickly adapting to providing a variety of new services and supports for the local community. The report provides information not only in respect of how existing services have continued to be delivered, but also these new additional services.

117. It has to be borne in mind that Council staff have not been immune to the effects of the virus. This has added to the challenge of continuing to provide services, and the efforts staff have been making to provide the services, particularly front line services where staff are most at risk of coming into contact with the virus, should not go unrecognised.

118. It has been necessary to review service provision based on immediate need. Whilst this has seen a reduction in some existing service provision it has now been possible for some of these services to be reintroduced, and this will continue to be the subject of review as the Council moves into recovery.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS/...**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

119. That the committee note the report.

Report author

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## THE WORK OF CRMT SUBGROUPS

### Additional Deaths

Burial capacity - In anticipation of escalating additional deaths brought about by the pandemic a decision was made on 26 March to purchase additional digging equipment – using COVID cost codes. This enabled Neighbourhood Services to facilitate additional burials to meet an increased demand. Additionally, training was provided to a number of staff to enhance resilience and capacity for this critical function.

Additional Death Facility - East Renfrewshire Council as one of the six Local Authorities within GG&C Health Board Area, and as part of a Short Life Working Group assessed the need to address their Public Health duty in relation to mortuary facilities. An additional body storage facility was identified and quickly set up in Hillington, led by Glasgow City Council with the intention that it would be shared across the six local authorities (East Renfrewshire, East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire) as a resource – rather than necessitating each Council to establish their own facility. This facility would be used should NHS mortuary capacity be exceeded. Responsibilities, resourcing and costing will need to be met across the six Council areas where costs are not met by the Scottish Government. In addition the Environment Department has explored the possibility and has the ability now to put in place a local body storage facility at short notice if it is required.

### Critical Services

The Council has the duty to operate a number of services which protect lives or are a legislative requirement. Examples of critical services are care at home, death registration, children and families social work, refuse collection, school hubs, emergency road repairs, and winter maintenance. Services falling into these categories were identified and assessed to ensure that adequate resources were available to operate the service. Resources considered were access to property, ICT equipment, PPE and adequate staffing. Access to resources was prioritised by the CRMT for critical services.

### PPE

The provision of PPE for a new virus such as COVID-19 is a complex area. Public health guidance must be followed with the Health and Safety team playing a key role in assessing the requirements for the various services. Procurement of PPE is complex as worldwide demand has increased. A specific team was set up to ensure that a sufficient long term supply is in place to meet the needs of all staff who require it.

### Staff Volunteering

To ensure that critical services can be delivered at a time of high staff absence due to COVID-19 it was necessary to move staff to new roles at short notice. With excellent support from Trades Unions, agreement was reached that staff could volunteer to change role to help with a critical function that is under pressure. Therefore to support critical services a volunteering scheme was set up where services impacted by staff shortages through absence or required additional staff to support increased workload could request assistance. Employees came forward to register interest and support for these opportunities and this has allowed us to continue to operate key services during this time.

### Humanitarian Assistance and Shielding

We have a strong Community Planning Partnership in East Renfrewshire and the voluntary sector, represented by Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire (VAER) plays a key role in delivering our shared priority outcomes. This strong relationship enabled the Council and the HSCP to work with and support VAER to establish a Community Hub connecting vulnerable

and isolated households to a range of community supports (e.g. shopping service; welfare calls; prescription deliveries; and digital support) many of which are delivered by volunteers.

The Council was also asked to establish support arrangements for vulnerable local people including a 'shielding' service to support those with the most high risk medical conditions who were advised by the Chief Medical Officer to stay at home for at least 12 weeks in letters sent from 24 March.

We established a local helpline, email address, web content and social media encouraging 'shielding' residents to get in touch with the Council. We also proactively made phone calls to each 'shielding' resident to discuss what support they had available from family and friends and assess any residual needs, including food, prescriptions and other support including befriending and digital support, with these needs triaged by our Money Advice and Rights Team and onward support arranged either via Council/HSCP services or via the Community Hub.

The Council's first shielding list was received at the beginning of April and included 1216 residents at that time. The list grows each week due to GP referrals and those newly diagnosed. Our list currently stands at over 2600 local residents.

Further to the shielding requirements, all councils were asked to handle their area's calls from a national helpline. This was specifically targeted at other vulnerable people affected by the implications of COVID-19 – these were defined as 'Group 2' (e.g. over 70s; pregnant people; those with other affected conditions). In the first 5 weeks of the national helpline there were over 450 calls from East Renfrewshire residents, which were handled by our Customer First and MART.

The highest volume support needs arising have been for food provision or support with shopping/delivery slots; getting onto delivery lists for prescriptions and undertaking welfare calls to regularly check-in with people who say they would like this. The Community Hub at VAER have been key to this provision.

Temporary food provision had been established in the Barrhead Civic suite early in the COVID-19 response to fill a gap caused by closure of local foodbanks. When the extent of demand became clear, this hub was moved to Barrhead High School to better meet the Environmental Health, logistical and social distancing aspects of the food provision. This opened at the beginning of April. The hub uses food donated from FareShare, our Council's allocation from the Scottish Government's Food Fund, which also funds the Free School Meals, and is also benefitting from donations to Barrhead foodbank. Discussions are currently ongoing with the CRMT and its subgroups about a longer-term food provision, the associated costs and an alternative location which can be used when the school is needed back. The Scottish Government is also having discussions about longer-term funding for ongoing food provision needs caused by poverty and vulnerability as a result of COVID-19.

In addition to food, it was clear from the outset that prescription deliveries were in great demand and given the requirement for PVG, the Council worked in partnership with Strathclyde 4x4 volunteer responders, who have delivered around 400 prescriptions locally – working to a number of pharmacies directly and also on behalf of household requests via the Community Hub. Our Community Safety team also supports these deliveries and helps with organisation. The Council is meeting the mileage/administrative costs of this activity.

The Scottish Government launched its national Scotland Cares Campaign which attracted huge support from the public wishing to volunteer.

There were two routes linked to local volunteering - through Volunteer Scotland, VAER have been given the details of over 600 local residents interested and the Red Cross route has also generated over 500 contacts, although some may overlap. VAER are following up the Volunteer Scotland contacts now to assess skills and availability etc.

Given the high number of volunteers that came forward, it is very unlikely that all will be required, although we expect usage of volunteers to increase as many Council and Trust staff, who are currently providing these services, return to their day jobs. We can also predict a need for more volunteering to support vulnerable people with tasks such as gardening and basic repairs and maintenance once lockdown is over. In the meantime we have encouraged everyone to help out friends, family and neighbours where required.

### **Recovery & Renewal Sub Group**

A Recovery & Renewal Sub Group of the CRMT has been meeting weekly from 27 April 2020. This group will look to support departments in returning service provision over the forthcoming weeks and months. The Council is also represented in the newly established Local Resilience Partnership multi agency Recovery Group, with a view to having a shared understanding and support network across local partner agencies. Our working will also look to support and align with Recovery & Renewal work being established nationally; to ensure our services, our businesses and communities receive the best support available in the short, medium and long term

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# Board update

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29 April 2020

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# Operations: Service Delivery

## Online offer

- Since closing our services on Wednesday 18 March, our customer communication focus has been moving our services online, where possible.
- Online fitness has been the priority, as this is crucial to our future income.
- Developed online offer to include fitness & well being, customer services and fun children's activities.
- Social media is keeping us in touch with our customers, and the wider East Renfrewshire community. We are continuing to support their health and wellbeing.
- Our customers enjoy seeing the familiar faces of our staff and 'joining' a class with the friends they would normally see in person.
- Bookbug comments: "fantastic", "we enjoyed singing along", "my 3 year old loved it", "thank you keeping Bookbug going – lifesaver!"
- Fitness class comments: "thanks so much, great workout", "I miss Body Attack, thanks for doing this", "great class, thanks keeping them going online"

# Operations: Service Delivery

## Online offer - social media

- Popular posts
  - Our most engaging posts are pre-recorded videos & Facebook Live fitness classes and Bookbug sessions.
  - Our online fitness has included a range of classes to suit different customer groups, including classes for our Vitality and Live Active customers.
  - Fitness videos: Relaxation 3,100 views, Legs, Bums and Tums 6,200 views, Zumba 3,500 views, Body Balance and HIIT workout 3,100 views
  - Bookbug videos: from 2,800 to 14,000 views
  - We have had positive engagement and comments to other posts including:
    - sports challenges
    - Lego challenges
    - sharing online art exhibitions
    - sharing online theatre performances (e.g. National Theatre Live)
    - family history top tips
    - digital library resources
    - online reading group



# Operations: Service Delivery

## Online offer - social media

- Stats: 30 March – 26 April v 29 February -29 March
  - Facebook:
    - New page likes: up 50%
    - Post reach: up 67% (number of unique users who saw ERCL posts)
    - Post engagements: up 95% (number of times users liked, shared, commented on ERCL posts)
  - Twitter:
    - Followers: up 64
    - Mentions: up 70% (number of times ERCL twitter is mentioned in Tweets by others)
    - Impressions: up 28% (number Twitter users seeing ERCL Tweets)
  - Instagram:
    - Followers up 190% in last 4 weeks

# Operations: Service Delivery

## Online offer: digital library service

- New library membership requests: 112 (18 March – 23 Apr)
- eBooks and eAudio collection: BorrowBox
  - Number of loans March 2020: 732
  - Number of loans to 1 – 23 April 2020: 649
  - Total individual users for 2019/20: 2,543
  - Demand for titles is outstripping supply
- Digital Newspapers and Magazines: 18 March 2020 – 23 April
  - Issues read: 21, 711 (Issues in March 2019: 1069)
  - Articles read: 150, 547
- Book loans
  - We have extended all loans on books that were borrowed prior to lockdown. All fines are waived.
- Volunteering
  - Officers have been providing digital support to customers over the phone
  - Some library staff have taken part in Easter holiday programme

# Operations: Service Delivery

## Finance

### Customer Bookings

- Term-time classes which are booked in blocks (e.g. Community Sports, Arts classes) – all customers have received notification that we will carry forward their booking and payments until classes re-start.
- Holiday programme and one-off classes – customers have received a refund.
- Theatre bookings – refunds have been given to customers for cancelled / postponed performances. Where possible, we have rescheduled theatre performances and transferred customer bookings.

### Direct Debits

- Fitness memberships and swimming lesson DDs have been suspended.
- Initially there was a jump in DD cancellations but, since suspension, the numbers that are being cancelled are relatively small.

# Operations: Maintenance / Infrastructure

## **Venues and community facilities:**

- Full deep clean of all venues prior to lockdown.
- Swimming pool plant maintenance reduced to minimum circulation levels and background heating (required for asset protection).
- Legionella and compliance activities continuing.
- External Compliance & Insurance testing regime continuing to ensure re-opening can be undertaken without delay.
- Completing full and regular building checks of Libraries and Community Facilities to maintain operational capacity across the estate – minimum of 1 check per week.
- Providing access and support to external customers who required access to community facilities.
- Operational risk assessments COVID-19 compliance.

# Operations: People

- Furlough
  - 85% of ERCL staff now furloughed
- Volunteering
  - 70 registered for volunteering (13 currently active)
- Shielding
  - Business Support staff assisting with shielding calls
- Self isolation / sickness

# COVID-19 Response

## CRMT

- Humanitarian Centres

- Emergency food distribution, deliveries and dispatch of food parcels.
- ERCL Operations team led development of Barrhead High School site as Humanitarian Centre and operational plans.
- Operations and Community facilities staff volunteering - minimum of three ERCL staff per day, Monday to Friday.
- 12 - 14 individual staff involved to date. Committed to maintaining the volunteering once staff are furloughed.

# COVID-19 Response

## CRMT

### Shielding

- Business support, swimming development and arts teams supported delivery of calls to residents who are Shielding.

### HSCP Training Hub – Eastwood House

- Providing Eastwood House two days per week to facilitate/serve as a training hub for HSCP in training of new Home Carers.

# COVID-19 Response

## Education Support Hubs

(for the children of key workers and vulnerable children)

- Schools Hubs
  - ERCL is supporting all 6 East Renfrewshire School Hubs.
  - Active Schools and Sports Development teams providing 31 hours of sport and physical activity per week - minimum of 2 hours for each child each week.
- Spring Holiday Hubs
  - ERCL provided Spring Holiday Camps in Eastwood High School and Carlibar Primary School throughout the spring school holidays.
  - Activities included sports, fitness, art, drama, libraries and digital learning.
  - 584 attendees across the two week period.
  - 66 ERCL staff from across ERCL involved in this delivery: sports development, active schools, libraries, arts and drama tutors, gym & fitness instructors and venues teams.



**DECISIONS TAKEN BY OFFICERS USING EXTENDED DELEGATED POWERS  
FOLLOWING THE CANCELLATION OF MEETINGS**

|    | <b>SUBJECT/DECISION TAKEN</b>   | <b>DECISION TAKEN BY</b>            |
|----|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | <p><b>Suspension of Debt Collection – Parking Penalty Charge Notices</b></p> <p>Debt collection arrangements for the parking penalty charge notices have been suspended. No restart date been decided yet.</p>  | Director of Environment             |
| 2. | <p><b>Introduction of Remote Contact Centre functionality</b></p> <p>Agreed to incur COVID-19 expenditure for remote contact centre functionality for Customer First, SWF and communities/VAER as a priority. Head of Accountancy to be provided with solution/cost details when known.</p>   | Deputy Chief Executive              |
| 3. | <p><b>Taxi/Private Hire Licensing – Vehicle Testing</b></p> <p>Due to testing centre closing as a result of COVID 19 an automatic 3 month extension is granted for all taxi operators if their vehicle is due an inspection in the next 3 month period. Vehicle operators will be asked to have a valid MOT in place and keep their cars roadworthy during this extension period.</p>   | Chief Officer – Legal & Procurement |
| 4. | <p><b>Naming of Overlee Family Centre</b></p> <p>Centre named as Overlee Family Centre following consultation with Education Committee members.</p>   | Director of Education               |
| 5. | <p><b>Placing Requests</b></p> <p>In light of the guidance and suggested timeframe from the Scottish Government, a decision was taken to work to a deadline of 31 May 2020 to issue Placing Request outcomes.</p>   | Education Leadership Team           |
| 6. | <p><b>Delay in implementation of new HR/Payroll System</b></p> <p>Due to a number of outstanding issues the decision was taken to delay implementation of Core System – HR and Payroll system by the Core Systems Board.</p> <p>This meant that under the current emergency powers the Chief Officer – Legal approved the exemption to standing order to extend the current contract with Zellis for a further 14 months.</p> <p>The three leaders were informed.</p> | Core Systems Board                  |

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| 7.  | <p><b>Extension of existing HR/Payroll system contract</b></p> <p>Extension to existing Zellis contract for a further 14 months agreed due to delays in implementation of new payroll/ HR system.</p> <p>Liaison undertaken with members of emergency committee in advance</p>  | Chief Officer – Legal & Procurement             |
| 8.  | <p><b>Suspension of Debt Recovery – Council Tax/Sundry Debt/Housing Benefit Overpayment/Non-Domestic Rates</b></p> <p>Decision taken to suspend Council Tax debt recovery. The situation to be reviewed again at the end June as to next steps and reminders for recovery during 20/21</p> <p>Sundry debt and HBO recovery has also been suspended, and the Council’s agents have been instructed to take no recovery action on C/tax, HBO or sundry debt.</p> <p>Renfrewshire Council have been notified not to pursue NDR. We are adopting same approach as they are in this respect.</p> | Head of Communities, Revenues & Change          |
| 9.  | <p><b>Approval of Virements</b></p> <p>Following consultation with Cabinet members, virements set out in the budget monitoring report intended for the meeting on 2 April were approved.</p>  | Head of Accountancy                             |
| 10. | <p><b>Suspension of Telecare Billing</b></p> <p>Billing suspended initially for a 3 month period recognising that full service may not be provided, inequity in assessment to pay and work involved in maintain client base</p>   | Head of Finance & Resources                     |
| 11. | <p><b>Closure of Kirkton Day Centre</b></p> <p>The decision was taken to close the centre to minimise the risk to a vulnerable service user group, to allow redeployment of staff within Intensive Services; and to enable Kirkton base to be used for Care@Home</p>  | Head of Adult Health and Social Care Localities |
| 12. | <p><b>Closure of Thornliebank and Barrhead Resource Centres</b></p> <p>Centres closed based on government advice to cease social gatherings. An outreach service is being provided in 8 identified service users homes.</p>   | Head of Adult Health and Social Care Localities |