

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Emergencies Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 09 April 2020	11:00	Skype meeting,

KENNETH GRAHAM
Head of Corporate Governance

Membership

Councillor Eddie Devine: Councillor Alistair Mackay: Councillor Iain Nicolson:
Councillor Marie McGurk (Convener): Councillor Michelle Campbell (Depute Convener):

Apologies

Apologies from members.

Chair

In Attendance

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare an interest in any item(s) on the agenda and to provide a brief explanation of the nature of the interest.

Items of business

1	Minute of Previous Meeting	3 - 8
	Minute of Meeting of Emergencies Board held on 3 April 2020	
2	Update on COVID 19	9 - 22
	Report by Chief Executive	
3	Items for Decision by the Board	
3a	Licensing Contingency Measures	23 - 30
	Report by Director of Finance & Resources	
EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC		
The Board may by resolution exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the press and public are present, there could be disclosure to them of confidential information.		
4	Confidential Updates	
	Reports by Services	

Minute of Meeting Emergencies Board

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 03 April 2020	11:00	skype meeting,

Present

Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Eddie Devine, Councillor Alistair Mackay, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain Nicolson

Chair

Councillor McGurk, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

S Black, Chief Executive; S Quinn, Director of Children's Services; M Crearie, Director of Communities, Housing & Planning Services; G McNeil, Director of Environment & Infrastructure; A Russell, Director of Finance & Resources; L McIntyre, Head of Policy & Commissioning and L Mahon, Head of Communications & Marketing (both Chief Executive's); J Trainer, Head of Childcare & Criminal Justice (Children's Services); O Reid, Head of Communities & Public Protection and C Dalrymple, Communities & Regulatory Manager (both Communities, Housing & Planning Services); K Graham, Head of Corporate Governance, L Neary, Head of Transformation, HR & OD, P Murray, Head of ICT, M Conaghan, Legal & Democratic Services Manager and L Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager (all Finance & Resources); D Leese, Chief Officer and S Strachan, Acting Head of Health & Social Care (Paisley) (both Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership); V Hollows Chief Executive (Renfrewshire Leisure); and D Mair, Civil Contingencies Officer, Civil Contingencies Service.

Emergencies Board Procedural Rules

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener referred to the procedural rules for the operation of the Emergencies Board by Skype which had been issued to members. Members confirmed that they were happy with the rules for the operation of the Board, which are appended to this Minute.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Minute of Previous Meeting

Minute of meeting of the Emergencies Board held on 27 March 2020.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Update on COVID 19

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Council's current arrangements and response to the ongoing international Coronavirus, Covid-19 pandemic.

The report intimated that there were now 33,718 confirmed cases of COVID – 19 in the UK up from the 9529 reported to the Board at its meeting held on 27 March 2020. There were 2,921 deaths across the UK (up from 465 in the last report). In Scotland there were now 2,602 confirmed cases (up from 894) and 126 deaths (up from 25). Of these 682 cases were within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board Area (up from 258).

It was noted that in response to this rapidly developing position, the Government had continued the “lock down” for the population. The report highlighted that, as a key part of the Council and partners' response to the pandemic and to protect and support local residents, a number of nationally-driven legislative and operational issues had been the focus during the week following the last meeting of the Board, including the re-deployment of Council officers as appropriate, and these were outlined within the report. The Board then heard from the Chief Executive and the Head of Policy & Commissioning in relation to support for shielded residents; from the Director of Finance & Resources in relation to funding and the overall financial implications for the Council; and community and business financial support; from the Chief Officer, Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership in relation to testing arrangements for front line medical staff; and from the Head of Communities & Public Protection in relation to the community safety and wellbeing.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the current national and local situation with regards to Covid-19 and the current plans and guidance from both the UK and Scottish Governments be noted;
- (b) That the current position and response measures being put in place by the Council be noted;
- (c) That it be noted that that most of the provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 were now in force and further noted that the Scottish Parliament had approved two significant pieces of legislation (i) The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020; and (ii) The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, details of which were provided in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.9 of the report; and

(d) That the Council's Scheme of Delegated Functions be amended to include the authorisation of Environmental Health Officers and Trading Standards Officers and their managers as relevant persons under the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 as made under the Coronavirus Act 2020.

3 Licensing Contingency Matters

Under reference to item 1 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 20 March 2020, when it was agreed that in relation to regulatory and quasi-judicial matters the Head of Corporate Governance would develop a procedure involving the Conveners of the relevant Boards being consulted to enable the Board to consider whether it wished to decide the matter instead of officers, there was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to a revised process in relation to consideration of some licensing applications.

The report intimated that the Scottish Government had published the Coronavirus (Scotland) Bill on 31 March 2020. Whilst the Bill made a number of changes to licensing practice under the terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, a number of other emergency measures still remained to be implemented to ensure that the Council was able to meet its statutory obligations in relation to the determination of licence applications. The report outlined proposals to change policies and procedures to deal with some licensing applications in the absence of meetings of the Regulatory Functions Board.

It was proposed that consideration of the report be continued to the next meeting of the Board to allow for further discussion with the Convener and Depute Convener of the Regulatory Functions Board, other members and officers. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That consideration of the report be continued to the next meeting of the Board.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Board resolved to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the press and public were present, there could be disclosure to them of confidential information.

4 Confidential Updates

The Chief Executive gave the Board an update in relation to national issues arising from the Covid-19 emergency and the Board heard from the Head of Child Care & Criminal Justice.

DECIDED: That the update be noted.

5 Date of Next Meeting

The Convener intimated that the next scheduled meeting was due to be held on Friday 10 April 2020. However, as there was a public holiday on that day, the next meeting would instead be held at 11 am on Thursday 9 April 2020.

DECIDED: That it be noted that the next meeting would be held at 11 am on Thursday 9 April 2020.

Appendix

Emergencies Board Procedural Rules

Anyone attending a meeting of the Emergencies Board where access to the meeting is through skype must follow some basic rules to allow the meeting to proceed efficiently:

- Could you all begin by turning your microphones to mute.
- Only have your microphone unmuted if you have been invited to speak or you wish to attract my attention.
- Because not everyone will be immediately visible to the Chair, if you wish to speak could you either indicate by typing the letter “Q” in the instant messaging facility or by stating your name clearly through the microphone. Your wish to speak will be noted and you should wait to be invited to speak by the Chair.
- In respect of the Minute, each member of the Board will be asked individually whether they can agree the minute or raise any issue they may have. If they have any matter they wish to raise, the Head of Corporate Governance will be invited to respond.
- In respect of each other item the chief executive will be invited by the Chair to identify which officer is to speak to the item and the Chair will invite that officer to introduce the item. Each member will be asked individually to indicate whether they can approve the item or if they wish to make a comment or ask a question. If another member or an officer is able to deal with the query, they will be asked to speak.
- If a vote is necessary, the Chair will ask each member to indicate how they wish to vote.



To: **Emergencies Board**

On: **9 April 2020**

Report by: **Chief Executive**

Heading: **Update on COVID-19**

1. Background

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Council's current arrangements and response to the ongoing international Coronavirus, COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Emergencies Board:

- (a) Notes the current national and local situation with regards to COVID-19 and the current plans and guidance from both the UK and Scottish Governments.
- (b) Notes the current position and response measures being put in place by the Council and partners.

3. National Situation

3.1 Currently there are 55,242 confirmed cases of COVID – 19 in the UK up from 33,718 reported on 3 April 2020. There have been 6,159 deaths across the UK (up from 2,921 in the last report). In Scotland there are now 4,565 confirmed cases (up from 2,602) and 366 deaths (up from 126). Of these, 1,166 cases are within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board Area (up from 682). In GGCHB area there were 555 people in hospital at midnight on Tuesday night (62 in intensive care) as either confirmed or suspected cases.

3.2 In response to this rapidly developing position, the Government has continued the “lock down” for the population. A number of nationally driven operational issues have been focused on over the past week as a key part of the Council and partners response to the pandemic and to protect and support local residents.

Supporting Additional Deaths

3.3 The First Minister has announced her intention to improve the way in which information on the number of COVID-19 related deaths is recovered. This involves information being available seven days per week on the numbers of deaths registered. At present, the registration service is provided in Renfrewshire during normal business hours with no weekend working. The Registration Deaths service will now be available over the weekend including forthcoming bank holidays.

Support for Shielded Residents – Humanitarian Response

3.4 Support continues to be developed for local people identified by the Scottish Government as being in the “Shielded Group” of residents who have a medical condition that puts them at high risk if infected by COVID-19. So far, around 3,600 letters have been issued to Renfrewshire residents identified by the Chief Medical Officer as having one or more of an initial tranche of medical conditions. It is understood that further work is ongoing to bring together data on several other categories of medical condition, whilst GPs have also been asked to review locally held data and to provide any additional names of people that they feel should be included on this list. It is therefore expected that the numbers in the shielded group will increase further.

3.5 As previously reported, a Local Assistance Team has been established in order to coordinate requests for support from those people who have been asked to remain shielded. The core support available is access to food and also support to access prescriptions. Calls are initially triaged by staff in the Customer Contact Centre, and requests for support are then handled by the Local Assistance Team. This is a 7 day per week service, operating 8.45am to 4.45pm. The service will continue to operate over the Easter public holidays. Training has been ongoing throughout the week to increase the numbers of employees that are available to support this work and ensure a flexible and resilient team is in place.

3.6 To date, 404 calls have been received through the Shielding Helpline, of which 202 translated into a referral for support with food and/or prescriptions. The numbers of calls received has been increasing day on day. 50% of calls so far have been general enquiries, or from individuals who have called to query why they have not received a letter from the Chief Medical Officer, or asking how to get the letter in order that they can provide this to their employer as proof of having been asked to shield. As further letters are issued however, it is expected that the numbers of calls requiring practical assistance will also increase.

3.7 15 additional Local Assessment Team officers have been trained this week including 3 team leaders and 2 co-ordinators to support the operation of the team. This additional resource is required to ensure efficient handling of enquiries and also to support the team to undertake outward bound calls to people on the shielded list, undertaking welfare checks on a proactive basis.

Food Fund and Assistance

3.8 On 18 March, the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government announced a £350 million package to support communities. This includes a £70 million Food Fund comprising:

- £30m initially being made available to local authorities to support local people experiencing food access issues due to for example income or health
- up to £30m for a nationally procured programme to deliver food for those who are shielded.
- £10 million for investment in third sector organisations (at a national and local level)

3.9 Approximately £1.060m of the initial £30m of funding for local authorities has been allocated to Renfrewshire. Local authorities are being asked to work with partners to reach those households experiencing the greatest barriers in terms of accessing food. Plans for further options for support are currently being developed and the work is closely aligned to the work of the Local Assistance Team.

3.10 In order to provide further support to vulnerable children and families, fortnightly payments are being made to eligible families where children would ordinarily have received free school meals. Staff working with vulnerable children and families are also able to request the delivery of a food pack to provide further support for families that require assistance.

Volunteering

3.11 Last week the Scottish Government launched its national volunteering campaign branded - Get Ready Scotland. The Council is continuing to work with organisations at a national level to link to this campaign and to align volunteer offers to local groups and services. 841 Renfrewshire residents have signed up to this national campaign.

3.12 To support this activity a local volunteering campaign was launched last week in partnership with Engage Renfrewshire. The Renfrewshire Volunteer Reserve Bank is now open for enquiries and applications which are being co-ordinated and checked by Engage Renfrewshire, before being matched to local organisations. To date 60 volunteers have been registered and inducted and are available for matching to organisations, with a further 38 in the process of registration.

3.13 Strong partnership working continues to be undertaken with local community organisations that provide food and wider support to local people. A community food network has been established, and the Council is working collaboratively with these organisations to request and coordinate food produce from Fare Share at a national level, which is being delivered to a newly established community distribution hub. Volunteers are also being directed to these groups through the local volunteering campaign being led by Engage Renfrewshire.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

3.14 On 2 April 2020, the Scottish Government issued updated guidance on the type of personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn in various settings to meet safety levels.

3.15 As well as showing the recommended PPE to use in a variety of clinical and community care settings, the guidance also reinforces the importance of good hygiene practices. This includes regular hand washing upon entry and leaving premises, maintaining strict social distancing measures and following the correct procedures for use of PPE where it is required.

3.16 A key change in the guidance clarifies that secondary, primary and community care workers should wear a surgical mask when dealing with any individuals in the 'extremely vulnerable group' (shielded group).

3.17 The Council and HSCP are working together to ensure all frontline workers are clear on the current guidance and appropriately equipped. A group has been established to have oversight of guidance as it is updated to ensure it is consistently applied. This has representatives from relevant service areas and from Environmental Health and Council Health and Safety services. The COVID Working Group will ensure consistency in the application PPE guidance across all workforces and also ensure that a consistent standard is applied across businesses the Council is responsible for advising and regulating. A range of communications are planned to ensure staff are clear on the guidance, when to use PPE and trained in the correct procedures for donning and doffing of PPE. This is being developed in collaboration with the NHS GGC Public Health service.

Development of COVID-19 Community Assessment Centres (CAC)

3.18 NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde are developing a care co-ordination hub and a number of COVID-19 Community Assessment Centres. No testing is carried out at Assessment Centres – the assessment has two purposes:

- To maximise the numbers of symptomatic people who can be cared for in the community, reserving hospitals for those with the most serious illness
- To minimise the potential exposure of patients using GP practices to COVID-19, as these patients are most likely to be older and have multiple non-communicable diseases.

3.19 Renfrewshire Community Assessment Centre opened on 6 April 2020 in the Linwood Health Centre Community Wing. The Assessment Centre will operate on an appointment only basis and will assess patients: referred via NHS111, who have then been triaged by the NHSGGC telephone hub, or; referred directly from GPs following a remote consultation. The Clinical Lead for the centre is Dr Stuart Sutton (RHSCP Clinical Director) and Operational Lead is Jackie Dougall (RHSCP Head of Health and Social Care and Children's Services).

3.20 The Centre currently has capacity to assess around 100 patients per day and will initially operate from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. It has opened with 4 clinical rooms available. There is scope to increase the number of rooms available to 5 and to review operating times depending on demand and staffing availability.

COVID-19 Testing

3.21 The HSCP has now secured access to COVID-19 testing for key workers in the HSCP, or organisations from whom the HSCP commission services - e.g. nursing homes. Testing will be available for those employees who are currently isolating due to living with someone who is either symptomatic, or has been tested as COVID-19 positive - allowing the employee to potentially return to work earlier.

3.22 In addition, the Scottish Government, working with Boots Plc, has commissioned a testing facility at Glasgow Airport. This is part of a UK-wide expanded testing programme and is focussed on supporting key workers to enable an earlier return to work. Initial access to this facility has been prioritised primarily for the Scottish Ambulance Service and NHS24 employees however the HSCP Chief Officer is exploring access for health and social care staff working in the community if required.

Mobilisation Planning

3.23 Renfrewshire HSCP, alongside the five other HSCPs within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area, have continued to contribute to Board-wide mobilisation planning, including providing updates on work ongoing at a local level as part of NHSGGC's required reporting to Scottish Government.

3.24 HSCP updates are iterative and are provided on a weekly basis to NHSGGC covering a summary of work ongoing as a result of the HSCP's COVID-19 response. Examples of changes made to maintain service resilience which have been included in the reports are:

- The implementation of contingency plans across services to focus on delivering critical need and services to vulnerable individuals
- The closure of day centres for older people and adults with learning disabilities to support infection control
- Changes to services provided by GP surgeries in line with Level 1 of the NHS GGC wide Primary Care Escalation Plan
- Closing care homes to visitors in line with national guidance
- Investing in overtime to support continued frontline service delivery
- Deploying staff from Council and NHS services to support frontline service delivery (for example within Care at Home)
- Providing support to external providers and providing assurance that services will continue to be funded in line with contractual agreements, whilst enabling contract specifications to be flexed
- Working collaboratively with the Council to implement a humanitarian response for vulnerable and shielded individuals and with Engage Renfrewshire to coordinate community volunteering

Parking Enforcement of expired blue badges

3.25 Guidance produced by COSLA and relevant professional bodies and agreed by the Scottish Government has been issued to all local authorities. The guidance acknowledges that there may be a delay in processing new Blue Badge applications and reapplications and advises that Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) should not be issued to citizens displaying a Blue Badge with a badge expiry from 1 January 2020 onwards. Parking Attendants have been advised of this change in enforcement policy. The relaxation of enforcement against these expired Blue Badges is currently expected to continue until 30 September 2020, however, this will be kept under review. A communications message will be issued to provide reassurance to Blue Badge holders who may be affected. All other restrictions and enforcement currently remain in place.

4. Local Situation

4.1 Renfrewshire Council is currently following all guidance from both the UK and Scottish Governments in delivering priority services. Relevant service updates on specific issues that have not been reported before are included below:

Service Update – Health and Social Care Partnership

- Health and social care services are being delivered to people with the most critical levels of need only. All services continue to be stable however the HSCP continues to proactively manage capacity and demand pressures, on a daily basis, including deploying staff to critical services where appropriate.
- In addition to the continued focus on delivering critical services, additional areas of focus include mobilisation planning; ensuring adherence to the updated PPE guidance; and the establishment of a local COVID19 Assessment Centre.
- PPE supply and delivery issues are being experienced nationally. This is recognised as a key risk to the HSCP. Over the last week, the HSCP has been focussed on ensuring a regular supply of PPE to ensure it can continue to operate safe services and protect frontline staff line, service users and patients in line with national guidance.

Service Update – Children’s Services

- The SQA has confirmed the approach to be taken for the award of qualifications to pupils following the cancellation of the forthcoming exam diet. Head teachers are working collaboratively with class teachers and HQ colleagues in order to ensure these requirements are now being implemented effectively.
- Trinity High and St Mary’s Primary, West Primary, St James’ Primary (Renfrew), the West Johnstone campus (includes nursery provision), Hugh Smiley Nursery, Moorpark Nursery and Riverbrae school have remained open to provide childcare to support key workers through the school Easter holiday period. All other Schools and Pre 5 establishments have been closed. So far, over 300 families have been able to take up the offer of supported childcare with approximately 220 children across early years, primary and secondary being accommodated on any given day.

Service Update – Communities Housing and Planning

- Daily Tasking online meetings continue to be held to assess any incidents taking place. Overall numbers of incidents have reduced, but some incidences of noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour have been identified in relation to parties and groups of people coming together in contravention of the government guidance. These are being addressed as a priority in partnership with the Police. Information and guidance is being sent to tenants of the Council and RSL’s and will be included on social media to reinforce the need to comply with current restrictions on social distancing and on how to report instances of contraventions or other concerns, to the Police and Community Safety partnership.
- Street Stuff have been running a programme of online activities for young people – with Quizzes using online meetings and online sports championships using X-Box and Playstation being programmed at times when face to face activities would normally take place. These are proving

popular with around 20 attendees each evening and growing numbers signing up as word spreads. The new method of delivery builds on the success of the Street Stuff bus activities.

- Youth Services are working with Renfrewshire Youth Voice to ask young people to record their experience of the lock down using blogs, surveys, video blogs, writing pieces and drawings. Anonymous surveys will ask young people how they are connecting with other people digitally and what the impact of self-isolation is on them - with a particular focus on the impact on their mental health. It is recognised that young carers are facing increased responsibilities and they will be asked to record these challenges. A final survey will ask young people to focus on positives and whether their experience has made them change their behaviours or outlook – for example: becoming more mindful; supportive; appreciative; or speaking to their family more. The data gathered will be used to design interventions that promote a sense of normality following the period of self-isolation.

Service Update - RLL

- All RLL properties and services are closed in line with government guidance, a significant number of staff continue to work from home.
- Online services continue to be developed and added to, enhanced by a new remote working Community Engagement Team.
- RLL staff continue to actively support the call out for volunteers to deliver essential Council services. In addition to staff supporting the School Camps, RLL are also providing staff as drivers and food packers.
- In terms of welfare, Paisley Museum is developing a response to existing and newly vulnerable communities as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.
 - The PMR team are scheduled to begin work on the Activity Plan as part of the reporting and grant obligations to NLHF. The Activity Plan sets out how the project will engage with audiences over the next two years and beyond the reopening of the Museum itself.
 - Priorities and plans for individuals and organisations will change as a result of COVID-19 and the Activity Plan will be reshaped to take account of this.
 - RLL are looking to support those most vulnerable in our communities – individuals and organisations who as a result of the COVID-19 impact find themselves isolated, at risk, facing mental health and financial challenges.
 - The team leading the Activity Plan will begin by mapping out potential organisations to link with and will work with colleagues across the Council to best understand where this need lies in order to help prioritise work.

5. Renfrewshire Council Staffing Update

5.1 Amongst Renfrewshire Council employees there are currently 603 employees self-isolating either because they have symptoms; or because they have other people in their household experiencing symptoms; or because they have recently returned from a Category 1 country and are following government and health guidance. (This is a reduction from 726 reported on 3 April 2020 and reflects that fact that a number of employees who were previously included have now returned to work or

moved to different categories such as “at risk, or shielding from social contact”). Of the 603, 214 are currently working from home.

5.2 The 603 are split across Services as follows:

Service	Number of employees
Chief Executive Services	5
Children's Services	270
Communities, Housing and Planning	34
Environment and Infrastructure	175
Finance and Resources	65
Health and Social Care Partnership	54
Council Total	603

5.3 The number of employees now being “shielded from social contact” in line with government and health guidance is 1022, up from the figure of 993 reported on 3 April 2020. Of these 427 are currently working from home. Where employees are not able to carry out their normal duties from home, options for redeployment on a home working basis are being actively considered and put in place.

5.4 Guidance on annual leave and public holidays, health and well-being and working from home has been issued across the workforce.

6. Renfrewshire Council Communications Update

6.1 Public information continues to be planned and communicated across council, partner and community channels on a daily basis, in line with national guidance and new/emerging policies. At all times, links are being made to local partners; the business community; 3rd sector; NHS and emergency services. This helps maintain simple and consistent messages, without overloading, and ensures communication aims are met:

- keep people informed, safe and well
- maintain public confidence in the council's ability to respond to the crisis
- maintain staff and community support and morale.

6.2 The council website is a main channel of communication and is updated each day to provide the latest information on Coronavirus. A new section dedicated to public information relating to the outbreak has been created, to make it as easy as possible for people to find service updates, access advice and support, do things online and find the latest health guidance. The site has been optimised for mobile phone access and there is a separate section for Council staff who can access information remotely and on the move.

6.3 Analysis of usage of the new pages has been undertaken and an overview of site performance has been attached as Appendix 1. The report shows the increase in new users to the website and spikes in usage – particularly in the days following the national lockdown announcement and at the point of publishing Shielding information. The report includes:

- Basic statistics – which show the increased number of users (and their page views), compared with the same period last year, and the split between new

and returning visitors. This shows success in encouraging new people to visit the website for information

- Acquisition – which shows where traffic is coming from e.g. Google, or via Facebook or Twitter. This helps us understand what information people search for and also how they respond and interact with our social media
- Behaviour – this explains traffic spikes and why people visit the website. It helps us understand how people use the site (hour of day, internal searches and top pages)

6.4 Combined, this analysis helps the communications team to plan and refine future public communications – making sure content continues to meet the information needs of local people, and that time is focused on using the communication channels that have the greatest reach and impact.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – although at this stage not quantified, the Council will experience a wide range of significant financial pressures arising from the impact of the pandemic on the population as well as the economic and social disruption caused by the associated restrictions being deployed by national governments. Significant financial pressures will emerge in a wide range of forms from loss of income, exceptional service costs, significant increase in demand for services, the need for additional and new interventions, urgent and immediate support arrangements and services from the Council to help individuals, families and businesses across Renfrewshire as well as the Council's workforce. The Scottish Government has provided a range of immediate funding announcements to provide specific support via local authorities to both individuals and businesses as well as a degree of general funding to assist local authorities in managing immediate financial pressures. Engagement will continue between COSLA and the Scottish Government regarding further funding as the period of emergency extends, however notwithstanding, the Council will experience significant financial impact and disruption that will require it to draw heavily on all its financial reserves and which is likely to take some time to recover
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – the Council's workforce represents a major part of the local population and as such is being impacted directly by the spread of confirmed cases, but much more significantly by the public health directions for self-isolation given to those displaying symptoms and those with family members displaying symptoms as well as those in the at risk groups instructed to pro-actively implement strict social distancing arrangements. Full support and communication are being provided to all staff members to ensure they remain fully informed of the developing situation and where appropriate and practical, are being supported to work safely at home and or safely return to active work once recovered or free of recommended self-isolation periods. The impact of these factors will increase exponentially over coming days and weeks and therefore the scale of availability across the Council's workforce will come under unprecedented pressures. Working closely with national government, partners and trade unions the Council will by necessity be required to actively manage and redeploy staffing resources to meet the most critical services over this exception emergency period.
3. **Community/Council Planning –**
Covid-19 will impact on the operations of Council partners and on services to the community. This paper highlights the work being undertaken to mitigate this impact as far as possible and maintain essential services for the safety and wellbeing of the community.
4. **Legal – N/A**

5. **Property/Assets** – N/A
6. **Information Technology** – ICT are working to ensure staff have the capability to work from home wherever possible to reduce social contact in line with government and health guidance
7. **Equality & Human Rights**
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report.
8. **Health & Safety** – Advice and guidance is being given to protect the health and safety of employees and service users when carrying out priority services for the Council in line with government and health guidance
9. **Procurement** – N/A
10. **Risk** – Due to the severity of the global pandemic and Covid-19, there is a risk to the delivery of the services with staff levels being reduced. This is being closely monitored by the Emergency Management Team. Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed and the risk has been added to the Corporate Risk Register.
11. **Privacy Impact** - None.
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – Not Applicable
13. **Climate Risk** – Not Applicable

List of Background Papers

None

Author: Oliver Reid, Head of Communities and Public Protection.
Email: oliver.reid@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Public website summary report

General stats

Users

"Unique visitor" or a person who has come to our website

293.1K

↑ 123.0K from previous year

Sessions

"Visits", or different times that person came to our site.

535.1K

↑ 198.2K from previous year

Pageviews

Total number of times our pages on the website has been viewed.

2.3M

↑ 599.4K from previous year

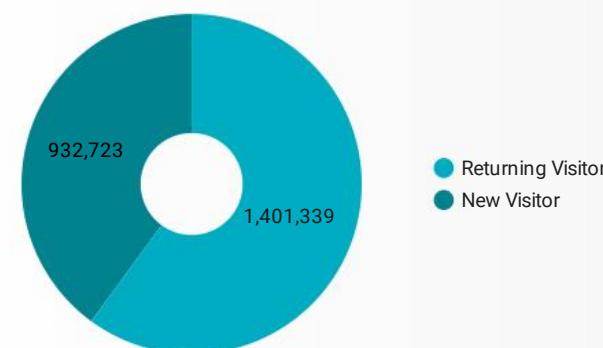
There's been a general website traffic increase over the past year and it's been more significant since Covid-19 outbreak and release of information



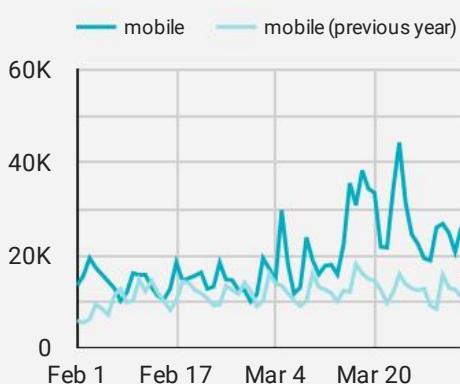
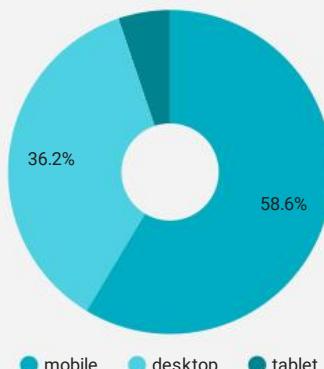
Difference between new and returning visitors

New visitors are people who are coming to your site for the first time on a device.

Returning visitors have come back to your site before.



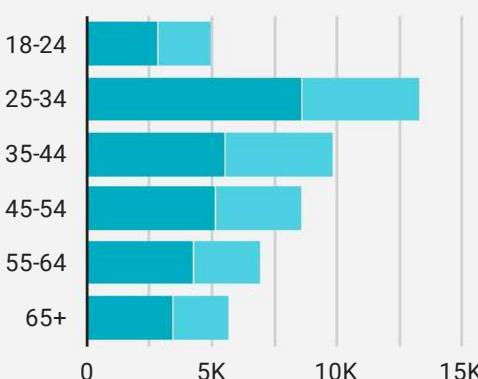
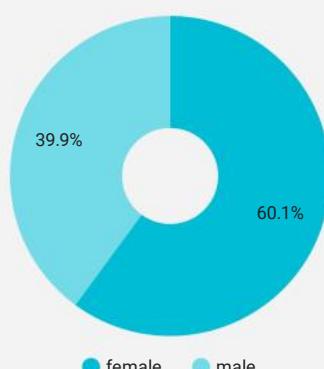
What devices are people using?



Since the beginning of the year we've seen more new visitors every week compared to last year, particularly from March and the Covid-19 outbreak



Engagement by Age & Gender



Number of returning visitors has been similar from last year but we observe more people coming back to the website since March



Public website summary report

Acquisition

Top channels

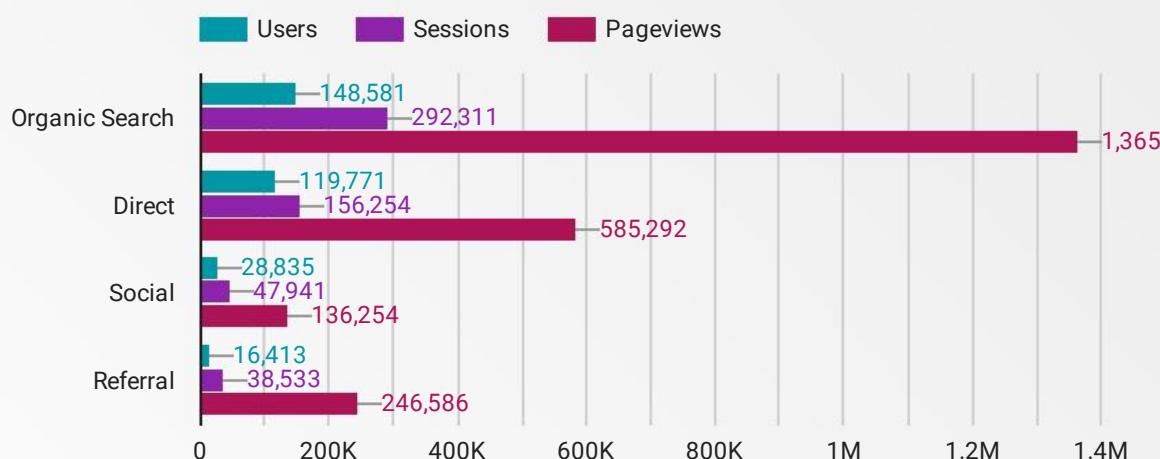
Showing from which channels our traffic is coming from.

Organic Search: Indicates visits from organic search results (Google)

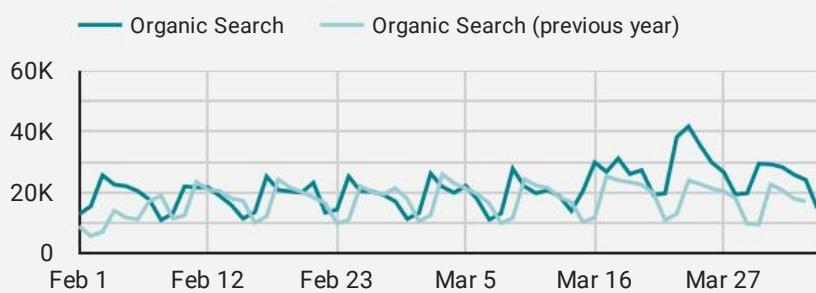
Direct: Indicates visits where users navigated directly to the URL or the source of the visit is unknown.

Social: Indicates visits from social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)

Referral: Indicates traffic where users clicked a link from another site or newsletter, excluding search engines



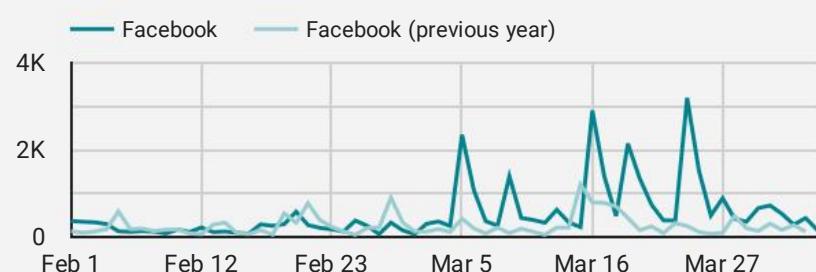
Visits from Google and other search engines have significantly increased since start of Covid-19



Traffic coming from Facebook has increased and spikes after each shared Covid-19 message

23.4K

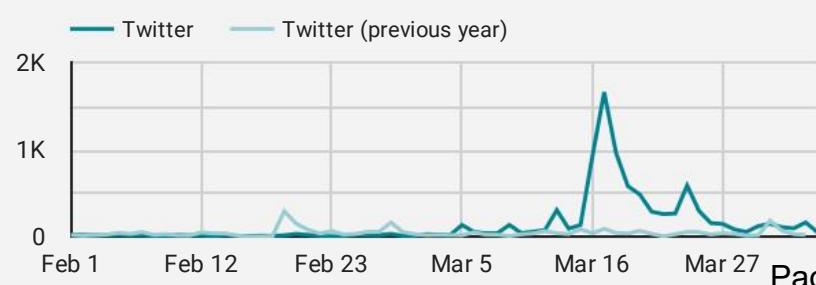
↑ 11.2K from previous year



Traffic coming from Twitter has increased and shows a different traffic pattern from Facebook

5.4K

↑ 3.3K from previous year



People are still making the same searches on Google as before Covid-19 but they make them more often to check changes to Council services

Query

38.1K

↑ 8.1K from Mar 1, 2019 - Apr 4, 2019

Query	Clicks
1. renfrewshire council	33,832
2. renfrewshire school holidays	9,665
3. renfrewshire school holidays 2020	3,404
4. renfrewshire council bins	2,650
5. renfrewshire council school holidays	2,087
6. renfrewshire bin collection	1,930
7. renfrewshire bins	1,580
8. renfrewshire council bin collection	1,249
9. renfrewshire	852
10. renfrewshire council coronavirus	761
11. renfrewshire council tax	685
12. renfrewshire council tax bands	674
13. renfrewshire council planning	644
14. school holidays renfrewshire	627
15. bin collection renfrewshire	570
16. renfrewshire school holidays 2020/21	517
17. renfrewshire school holidays 20/21	482
18. bin collection	454
19. renfrewshire school holidays 2021	418

Public website summary report

Behaviour

Traffic spikes from 1 March to today

Please note there is usually a spike of traffic on Mondays which is followed by a slow decrease throughout the week.

- 5 March: Coronavirus page launched
- 9 March: Budget 2020 released
- 16 March: Information for staff on /coronavirus-staff
- 19-20 March: Schools advice on Covid-19 released
- 24 March: Changes to Council services page created
- 3 April: SQA Awards information added to website

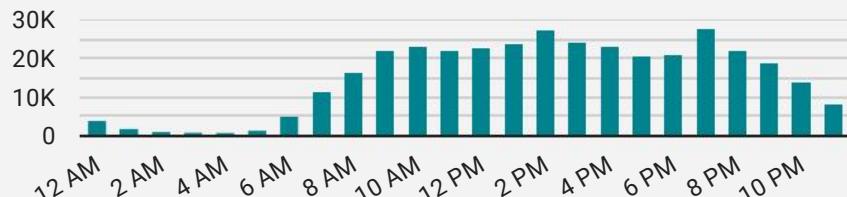


Compared to normal traffic, Covid-19 pages are used longer throughout the day with a peak at 7pm

Hour of day - pageviews (normal)



Hour of day - pageviews (Covid-19)



Total of internal searches (use of search bar) is almost identical to last year

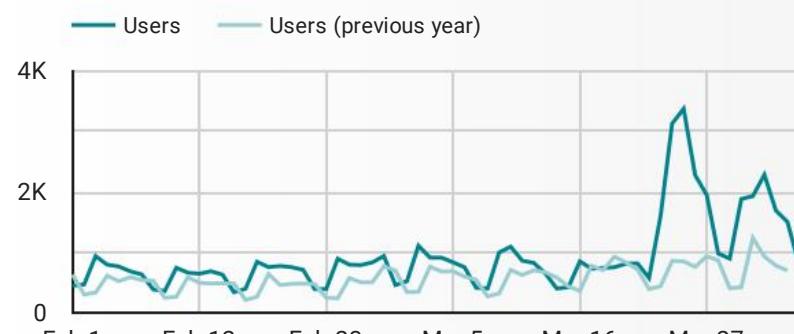
Signposting across the website directing to Covid-19 pages have helped people find the right content without using the search bar

17.9K

↑ 1.0K from previous year

Search Term	Total Unique Searches
1. council tax	94
2. Bus pass	86
3. bus pass	73
4. community care grant	72
5. business world	67
6. Coronavirus	66
7. Council tax	66
8. Covid 19	62
9. School holidays	57
10. planning	56

Proportional traffic increase seen for MyAccount in the last 2 weeks of March





To: **Emergencies Board**

On: **9 April 2020**

Report by: **Director of Finance and Resources**

Heading: **Licensing Contingency Measures**

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The situation with Coronavirus continues to develop by the day and the Council continues to follow the latest advice from the Scottish and UK Governments. This is an unprecedented time and services will be severely tested.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 20 March 2020, the Board agreed that in relation to regulatory and quasi-judicial matters the Head of Corporate Governance would develop a procedure involving the conveners of the relevant Board being consulted. This report sets out revised processes in relation to some quasi-judicial applications.
- 1.3 At its meeting on 3 April 2020, the Board considered the terms of a report on Licensing Contingency Measures. The Report was continued for further consideration of appropriate delegations to officers. Since that meeting the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 ("the 2020 Act") received Royal Assent on 6 April 2020 and the licensing provisions of that Act are now in force. The Act makes a number of changes to licensing practice under the terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. However, a number of other emergency measures still remain to be implemented to ensure that the Council is able to meet its statutory obligations in relation to the determination of licence applications. This report outlines

proposals to change policies and procedures for dealing with some licensing applications in the absence of meetings of the Regulatory Functions Board.

2. **Recommendations**

2.1 The Board is asked to:

2.1.1 Agree to delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Governance, Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Assistant Managing Solicitor (Licensing), in consultation with the Convener (or Depute Convener) of the Regulatory Functions Board and one member from each other political grouping represented on that Board, to grant applications for House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licences for a period of 6 months in limited circumstances where reports cannot be completed in relation to the suitability of the premises, provided no other adverse representations have been received.

2.1.2 Agree that powers be delegated to the officers specified at Paragraph 2.1.1 above to extend the duration of any licence falling within the remit of the Regulatory Functions Board, which would otherwise expire on or before 30 June 2020, for a period of three months.

2.1.3 Agree to introduce a temporary policy permitting the temporary cessation of Taxi and Private Hire Car Licences where requested by the vehicle operator.

2.1.4 Note that any other application that is contrary to an existing policy of the Council or subject to objections will continue to be referred to Board in line with existing practice.

3. **Background**

Applications under the remit of the Regulatory Functions Board

3.1 The Council acts as Licensing Authority for a range of legislation including the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 ('the 1982 Act') and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

3.2 Under the Council's Scheme of Delegated Functions, Council officers currently have authority to deal with non-contentious applications,

including where the application has attracted no objection and is in accordance with the policies of the Council. Otherwise, applications are determined by the Regulatory Functions Board.

3.3 The majority of licence applications under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 have a nine-month determination period, which the 2020 Act now increases to 12 months. However, House in Multiple Occupation ('HMO') licences have a one-year determination period under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 and the 2020 Act does not change the period for determining those licence applications. Therefore, there is no scope for continuation of these applications. If a determination date is passed, the outcome is that a licence is granted by operation of law (a "deemed grant"). For HMOs this would be a three-year licence. It is not recommended that these situations arise as this removes scrutiny of an applicant, and where appropriate, premises, by the Council.

3.4 The Council has ceased all committee meetings until, at least, 24 June 2020. Additionally, the staffing resource available to maintain normal services is expected to be limited as the Council will be focusing on maintaining critical services to vulnerable communities as a priority.

3.5 In the coming weeks and possibly months, a number of measures will be required to ensure that the Council's licensing service is able to maintain some level of normal operation. The current circumstances also pose significant challenges to licence holders/applicants in terms of their ability to trade, to submit, and make payment for, applications for renewals of licences.

3.6 The majority of licensing applications are already able to be determined by officers using delegated powers, as they have not resulted in any objection and seek a licence in accordance with the licensing policies of the Council.

3.7 The Licensing Service will continue to deal with and process those licensing applications already received. New licence applications will not be accepted.

3.8 The vast majority of applications for licences are typically non-contentious, particularly renewals. In the absence of objections or negative comments from consultees, under the current Scheme of Delegated Functions, applications can be granted by Council officers (provided that the terms of the application are within the terms of the licensing policies of the Council).

3.9 As the provisions of the 2020 Act are now in force, meaning that the Council has an additional three months to determine most applications made under the terms of the 1982 Act, officers have considered to what extent there is a legal requirement to determine applications, which cannot be granted by officers under delegated powers. Having investigated the position in light of the new legislation, officers have ascertained that most applications which cannot be granted by officers will be able to be considered by Board following the Council's summer recess, due to the additional period allowed by the 2020 Act. However, it is considered necessary to temporarily change the Scheme of Delegated Functions to authorise officers to grant HMO licences for a restricted period of 6 months in limited circumstances. It is proposed to do so on the terms below:

“During the period of time for which the Council’s Emergencies Board is in operation, the Head of Corporate Governance, Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Assistant Managing Solicitor (Licensing), in consultation with the Convener (or Depute Convener) of the Regulatory Functions Board and one member from each other political grouping represented on that Board, may grant applications for House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licences for a period of 6 months where reports cannot be completed in relation to the suitability of the premises, provided no other adverse representations have been received from third party objectors. Such decisions will be reported to the next meeting of the Regulatory Functions Board”.

3.10 HMO licences are granted for a variety of residential dwellings, including those designed for vulnerable persons. The Council requires to be satisfied in so granting a licence that an HMO is suitable for that purpose. Given current restrictions, officers from Communities, Housing and Planning Services are unable to carry out compliance visits due to social distancing rules to check that the premises now fully comply with their technical standards. Further, the Scottish Government have recently provided advice to private landlords to the effect that they should not seek to obtain any required gas safety and electrical installation condition certification until current restrictions are lifted. If such applications were referred to the Regulatory Functions Board, the Board’s options in determining these applications would be limited, given the absence of information as to the suitability of the premises. Failure to reach a decision within the statutory timescale would result in an application being deemed to be granted, without the normal licence conditions, for a three-year period. It is therefore proposed that such applications would be considered under the Scheme of Delegated Functions as proposed at paragraph 3.9 above and granted for a limited period of six months

being the shortest period for which the Council is empowered to grant an HMO licence under the 2006 Act.

3.11 The Council receives from time to time applications which result in objections from Police Scotland and other parties, as well as a relatively small number of licensing applications where the terms of the application fall outwith the terms of the licensing policies agreed by the Council. These include applications for both grant and renewal of licences. In the case of renewals, these are generally to seek renewal on similar terms as previously agreed at a meeting of the Regulatory Functions Board. While delegated authority is not sought at this time to determine applications other than HMO applications, a further report may require to be brought to Board to regulate how such matters will be determined. Under the terms of the 2020 Act, a hearing may be held remotely, including by electronic means, in relation to applications made under the 1982 Act, although not the 2006 Act which regulates HMO licensing. Any change to existing procedures will be discussed with the Convenor or Depute Convenor of the Regulatory Functions Board before a further report will be brought before this Board.

Extension of Duration of Licences

3.12 As stated at Paragraph 3.7, above, the Council is currently unable to receive new applications, including applications for renewal. Many licences falling under the remit of the Regulatory Functions Board expire after either a one, two or three-year period. In order to relieve pressure on both licence holders/applicants and the Licensing team, it is recommended that the Council's policy on the period of grant of licences be varied, and that the officers specified at Paragraph 3.9 also be given power to extend any licence which is otherwise to expire on or before 30 June 2020 for a period of three calendar months. This would mean that the duration of any licences due to expire during the coming months would be extended as follows:

Date of Expiry	Date of Extension
31 March 2020	30 June 2020
30 April 2020	31 July 2020
31 May 2020	31 August 2020
30 June 2020	30 September 2020

A number of other Councils have adopted a similar course of action.

The Scottish Government are supportive of a pragmatic and sensible approach being taken to licensing procedures to help minimise the disruption caused to licence holders by the ongoing medical emergency.

The proposed arrangement will require to be reviewed further by the Board should current restrictions continue beyond 30 June 2020.

- 3.13 A record of the above decisions will be retained and reported to the next meeting of the Regulatory Functions Board.
- 3.14 The Licensing Section have been approached by a number of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle operators who have advised that the current COVID-19 restrictions have resulted in a significant reduction in trade. This in turn has meant that they have ceased operating. A number of requests have been made seeking that they be allowed to reduce their current insurance cover to social, domestic and pleasure use on basis that they will, on a temporary basis, no longer undertake public or private hire. This is not permitted under current Council Policy and officers have been unable to agree to such requests. Accordingly, the Board is asked to agree recommendation 2.1.3. This would allow officers to authorise a temporary cessation of the licence upon receipt of a request in writing from the licence holder. They will be required to remove their plates upon granting of the cessation. This would then permit the licence holder to the use their vehicle for personal use only. Police Scotland will be notified of the temporary cessation. Operation of the Licence could only resume upon public or private hire insurance being exhibited. A similar approach has been adopted by neighbouring authorities.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – There will be a reduction in income from licensing renewal income as licences are extended for an additional three months without payment of an application fee.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – N/A
3. **Community/Council Planning** – it is unlikely that the recommendations will affect this directly, but the extension of licences will help sustain the livelihoods of licence holders

4. **Legal** – as detailed in the report.
5. **Property/Assets**- N/A
6. **Information Technology**- N/A
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -
 - (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report; only positive benefits are likely to result from the extension of duration of existing licences due to the ongoing medical emergency. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

The results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – nil.
9. **Procurement** – nil
10. **Risk**- nil.
11. **Privacy Impact** – n/a
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – n/a
13. **Climate Change** – neutral. The report concerns the operation of the statutory licensing system to ensure the Council can meet the statutory requirements.
14. **Fairer Scotland Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)** – n/a

List of Background Papers

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