

To: Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board

On: 2 September 2020

Report by: Director of Environment & Infrastructure

Heading: Facilities Management Service Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board with a summary of the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the areas within the Board's remit since March 2020. It also outlines the key priorities and areas of risk through to autumn, highlighting any key areas of risk.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board notes the content of this report.
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3. Background

- 3.1 In March 2020, working closely with our partners, Renfrewshire Council moved quickly to respond to the emerging coronavirus pandemic, protecting and supporting our employees and communities, particularly vulnerable people across the area.
- 3.2 Colleagues across the Council have shown great commitment and resilience during the covid-19 delivering essential services, volunteering to support frontline services and helping others to remain safe at home.

- 3.3 In order to ensure effective decision-making and governance, the Emergencies Board was convened on 20 March 2020 and has received regular updates on the different workstreams established to support Renfrewshire throughout the crisis, highlighting the humanitarian response, reviewing the available data showing the impact on Renfrewshire's people and considering how we can restart services, recover and renew. Detailed reports were also presented to the Council on 25 June 2020.
- 3.4 This report is therefore not intended to provide granular detail of the response, it is to give a broad overview of the key areas impacted by the covid-19 crisis – the service areas paused and restarted, the particular areas of focus now and in the near future and any specific risks and priorities of relevance to this Policy Board.
- 3.5 Whilst this report is a high-level update for Elected Members, we are acutely aware of the impact on our communities of the pandemic - of those who have sadly been bereaved, who have struggled through isolation, have lost their income or have had their health impacted through this crisis. Across services, and with our partners, the Council continues to support our communities and develop our operational and policy response both now and as we continue to move through the recovery route map.

4. Update for Finance, Resources and Customer Services Policy Board - Facilities Management

- 4.1 This section of the report sets out the key changes for Facilities Management during the pandemic, critical service areas that continued and any services or projects that were required to be paused.

Building Services

- 4.2 Building Services has been operating a reduced service during the covid-19 pandemic as all routine and non-emergency repairs were suspended at the beginning of lockdown, therefore only emergency repairs have been carried out and a focus on critical and compliance work.
- 4.3 The service has continued the gas servicing compliance program throughout the lockdown period, as this was an essential service, with provision being made for vulnerable tenants and those with covid-19 related illnesses. In addition, testing and inspection of electrics in public buildings, testing and inspection of emergency lighting and gas soundness testing have also continued throughout the lockdown.
- 4.4 Building Services also continued to provide emergency void houses back to housing and full compliance checks for House Persons Units. This allowed people presenting as homeless to be housed during the lockdown period. Operatives were also made available to complete the compliance checks for a local Housing Association as their contractor was not operating through the lockdown period. The service also had significant involvement with the support hubs during the pandemic, such as helping with the provision of support packages to vulnerable residents, delivering meals on wheels; meals to care homes; and delivering pack lunches for the support hubs staff.

- 4.5 Building Services worked in partnership with Renfrewshire HSCP to provide an operational distribution hub for PPE at Unit 5 in Underwood Road. Building Services staff are now managing and running this service on behalf of the HSCP.
- 4.6 Water management has also been a key focus for the service during the pandemic. A decision was taken in the early stages of lockdown to ensure that there was an appropriate flushing regime in place to allow buildings to be available as required. This has ensured that the Council is able to follow the Scottish Government phasing plan for the reopening of its buildings.
- 4.7 Throughout lockdown the street lighting maintenance service has continued to provide a 24-hour emergency service to Renfrewshire residents by following Scottish Government guidance which allowed for single operative working.
- 4.8 The delivery of several projects has however been impacted by the covid-19 pandemic and had to be suspended during lockdown, these are as follows:
- Conversion of the Hollybush annex into new nursery provision in line with the 1140 hours Education programme
 - Refurbishment of recovery café in Whitehaugh Paisley
 - Refurbishment of shop units at George Street for Property Services
 - Continuation of work to provide targeted upgrades to Paisley Grammar
 - Continuing upgrade of the smoke detector systems across the Renfrewshire Council Housing stock

However, some of these projects have now started or are planned to start in the near future ensuring that Scottish Government guidelines are being adhered to by staff.

Soft FM (Facilities Management)

- 4.9 When Coronavirus restrictions were introduced in mid-March, Renfrewshire Council took the decision to deliver a humanitarian response to the situation. Soft FM were tasked with creating a process which would provide assistance to vulnerable households to ensure they had sufficient resources to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner, seven days per week for all family members. This included providing supplies to allow people to make breakfast and lunch every day and providing evening meals, which were freshly prepared by catering staff in school kitchens to be reheated at home.
- 4.10 Soft FM brought together colleagues from across the Council to create a team which would ensure that the following tasks were aligned to ensure the successful delivery of the operation. This included:
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| • Catering | • Bag packers |
| • Cleaning | • Procurement staff |
| • Janitorial | • Database Management |
| • Drivers | • GIS routing |

- 4.11 A large number of staff were redeployed from different service areas to ensure the smooth running of the operation, with volunteers playing an important role in the process.
- 4.12 This service was initially set up in Castlehead High School, but it soon became apparent that additional locations would be required to sustain service delivery. Therefore, further hubs were set up at Park Mains High School and Gleniffer High School, where colleagues from Amey participated in the service delivery.
- 4.13 At its peak, the service was delivering weekly packages to more than 2,200 households across Renfrewshire and delivered almost 500,000 meals to vulnerable families. The operations at Gleniffer and Park Mains were wound down in June due to a reduction in demand, leaving only the Castlehead operation in place until the service delivery finished at the end of July.

Community Meals Service

- 4.14 At the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, the Community Meals' service at Baltic Park experienced severe staff shortages and were unable to sustain the service. Staff from Soft FM stepped in to establish a plan which allowed the service to continue, this involved bringing together colleagues from the wider Facilities Management service as well as other areas of the Council. Staff had to quickly learn how the service operated and ensure service delivery was maintained to more than 500 vulnerable residents across Renfrewshire who rely on the service for the provision of hot meals.

Key Workers' Hubs

- 4.15 In line with national guidance at the start of the pandemic Renfrewshire Council set up hubs to provide child-care facilities for key workers across Renfrewshire. Soft FM staff ensured the cleanliness and security of these premises and provided lunches for both the staff and children on a daily basis, throughout the crisis. This service also continued throughout the school summer holidays.

School reopening

- 4.16 Throughout the summer in preparation for the reopening of schools and Council buildings for the return of pupils and staff, enhanced cleaning regimes were established and deep cleaning carried out, critical to supporting the successful reopening from the 12th of August across Renfrewshire. In order to deliver the additional daily cleaning requirements, the service has already recruited over 80 additional cleaning staff; this will allow a day cleaner in every establishment in addition to current staff levels.

5. Key priorities and risks until next board cycle

- 5.1 The service-specific key priorities relating to our recovery work and immediate concerns between now and the next cycle of Board meetings include:
- **Building Services** - to restart routine and non-emergency repairs service.
 - **Recommence the refurbishment projects** - that were paused during lockdown, such as the works at the recovery café at Whitehaugh and the shop units at

George Street. Staff are now all back on site with all social distancing measures in place for safe working.

- **Contingency Planning** – in common with our colleagues across the Council, we are currently planning for a number of scenarios and local case management to provide public and staff reassurance where required.
- **Provision of school catering** – the provision of school catering has been amended to ensure that numbers within the dining halls are limited. This will continue to be monitored between Facilities Management and Children's Services staff to determine the best means of providing hot food safely within their school or centre.
- **Cleaning and enhanced hygiene measures** – continuing to support schools and other Council buildings for the safe return of pupils and staff and to deliver the additional daily cleaning requirements needed to minimise risk of transmission. Hygiene measures remain critical to minimise the spread of covid-19 and as such this remains a key priority over the coming weeks.
- **Supporting the expansion** - of the 1140 hours of early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds. Completing any building work required and soft FM staffing arrangements are in place, to ensure the expansion will be rolled out throughout 2020/21.
- **Remodelling of the Soft FM Service** – and recruitment has now recommenced. The service is continuing its consultation with Trade Unions whilst progressing with the next stage in the recruitment process. Training plans for the new posts are being developed and it is anticipated that the new model will be fully implemented by the end of the financial year.

5.2 In terms of risk, the Board should note that the Corporate Risk Management Group is undertaking a piece of work to review the Council's risk profile in light of the pandemic; many of the existing strategic and corporate risks will be impacted. These risks will be reported to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board in November. At this point in time however, the Board will wish to note that the service-specific risks relating to our recovery work and immediate concerns between now and the next cycle of Board meetings are:

- ensuring safety of our staff, pupils, users and households with social distancing;
- ongoing cleaning regime within schools and public buildings;
- balancing the need to operate 'normally' with a need to have robust and detailed contingency arrangements, regularly updated in line with current guidance, in place in the event of a second phase and restrictions being re-imposed; and
- supporting all service users and staff in relation to their emotional wellbeing and the potential impact of the pandemic on that wellbeing.

Implications of the Report

1. Financial – Any financial impact from COVID-19 referenced in this report will be progressed through the Council's financial & budget planning process.

2. HR & Organisational Development – Any staffing changes from COVID-19 referenced in this report will be progressed through the Council's HR policies, including home working and flexible working.

3. Community/Council Planning – the report details a range of activities which reflect local community and council planning themes.

4. Legal – None

5. Property/Assets - as facilities start to open in line with the Scottish Government Routemap, adjustment may have to be made to physical spaces to allow for physical distancing and to comply with relevant guidance.

6. Information Technology - None

7. Equality & Human Rights – 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. 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.

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 – The ongoing pandemic has and will continue to have a significant impact on existing contractual obligations and on the procurement of future goods and services required by the Council.

10. Risk – As noted in section 5, the CRMG are currently reviewing the Council's risk profile in light of the coronavirus pandemic and will report to board in November.

11. Privacy Impact – None

12. COSLA Policy Position – None

13. Climate Change – The installation of electric vehicle charging points will support the Council's climate change goals.

List of Background Papers – none

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