

Notice of Meeting and Agenda Emergencies Board

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday, 07 May 2020	15:00	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):

Recording of Meeting

This meeting will be recorded for subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site. If you have any queries regarding this please contact Committee Services on 07534 058160. To find the recording please follow the link which will be attached to this agenda once the meeting has concluded. Please note that only meetings of the Emergencies Board from 17 April 2020 onward have been recorded for broadcast.

Recording of meeting of Emergencies Board: 7 May 2020

<https://youtu.be/e5ZCiLdSfE4>

Items of business

Apologies

Apologies from members.

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.

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|-------------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Minute of Previous Meeting | 3 - 6 |
| | Minute of meeting of the Emergencies Board held on 1 May 2020 | |
| 2 | Update on COVID 19 | 7 - 28 |
| | Report by Chief Executive | |
| 3 | Items for Decision by the Board | |
| 3(a) | Education Placing Requests- Procedure During the Covid-19 Emergency | 29 - 34 |
| | 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 exempt information as defined in the Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1973. | |
| 4 | Confidential Updates | |
| | Reports from services | |

Minute of Meeting Emergencies Board

Date	Time	Venue
Friday, 01 May 2020	15:00	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, L Mahon, Head of Communications & Marketing and P Fara, Web & Multi-media Editor (all Chief Executive's); J Trainer, Head of Childcare & Criminal Justice and Chief Social Work Officer (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, P Murray, Head of ICT; L Neary, Head of Transformation, HR & OD, M Conaghan, Legal & Democratic Services Manager and L Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager (all Finance & Resources); D Leese, Chief Officer (Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership); V Hollows, Chief Executive (Renfrewshire Leisure); and D Mair, Civil Contingencies Officer, Civil Contingencies Service.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Campbell declared an interest in item 2 on the agenda as she was an employee of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde but not in the Council's area and intimated that she would remain in the meeting during consideration of the item.

Recording of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be recorded and that the recording would be available to watch on the Council's website.

1 Minute of Previous Meeting

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 24 April 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 to reflect changes in the National situation, an update was provided on the numbers of cases and deaths at both Scottish and UK levels, which noted amendments now being made to the recording of deaths at a UK level to include those deaths that occurred in care homes and the wider community as well as in hospitals. The recent publication of updated figures and analysis from the National Records of Scotland was also included. It was noted that at the date of this report there were 165,221 confirmed cases of COVID – 19 in hospitals in the UK up from 138,078 reported to the Board on 24 April 2020. In Scotland there were now 11,353 confirmed hospital cases, up from 9409 on 24 April 2020. Of these, 2,759 cases were within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board (GGCHB) area, up from 2,250 on 24 April 2020. In the GGCHB area there were 548 people in hospital and 43 in intensive care (down from 564 and 49 respectively on 24 April 2020) as either confirmed or suspected cases.

The report highlighted support for communities, mental health and well-being; provided information in relation to care homes; and up to date figures on the numbers and types of support being provided to some of the most vulnerable residents in Renfrewshire including arrangements being made locally to establish neighbourhood hubs and volunteering.

The report also provided an update on the current position in relation to availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the additional guidance recently provided by the Government in this regard. Information was also included on the extension of employee testing procedures. The report also highlighted the current position in relation to the impact of shielding procedures and absence on the availability of employees. The report outlined employee redeployments into priority front-line roles.

The report referred to the statement by the Prime Minister on 30 April 2020 which had reinforced the five tests that would need to be complied with before the lockdown would be eased, being: that the NHS was able to cope; that a sustained fall in deaths was observed; that new infections were decreasing to manageable levels; that there was adequate testing and that PPE was in place to meet operational requirements and that there was no risk of a second peak. It was noted that further information on the plan for easing restrictions of the lockdown was also expected to be set out on 7 May 2020.

The Board then heard from the Chief Executive in relation to the report generally; from the Chief Officer, Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership in relation to care home cases, on sourcing and stocks of PPE, and mental health and well-being support; from the Head of Policy & Commissioning in relation to volunteering and the recruitment of volunteers to support the neighbourhood hubs; from the Head of Child Care & Criminal Justice (Chief Social Work Officer) on child and adult protection and gender based-based violence; from the Director of Finance & Resources on the expansion of testing to a broader range of workers in essential services; and from the Director of Environment & Infrastructure on the national position in relation to civic amenity sites.

Officers responded to members' questions and it was proposed (i) that further information be provided to members in relation to the number of people living within their own homes with suspected or confirmed COVID 19 within the care at home services community; (ii) in relation to mental health and well-being support for shielded residents; and (iii) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board on the emerging financial position of the Council as a result of the impact of COVID 19 on, among other things, the Council's income. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the current national and local situation with regards to COVID-19 and the impact on communities, businesses and the Council and its partners be noted; and
- (b) That the response measures being put in place by the Council and partners as set out in this report be noted;
- (c) That further information be provided to members in relation to the number of people, within the care at home services community, living within their own homes with suspected or confirmed COVID 19;
- (d) That further information be provided to members in relation to mental health and well-being support for shielded residents; and
- (e) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board on the emerging financial position of the Council as a result of the impact of COVID 19 on, among other things, the Council's income.

3 Items for Decision by the Board

It was noted that there were no items for decision by the Board.

4 Date of Next Meeting

The Convener proposed that as the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Board, Friday 8 May 2020, was a public holiday that the meeting be held at 3 pm on Thursday 7 May 2020. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That the next meeting of the Board be held at 3 pm on Thursday 7 May 2020.

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.

5 Confidential Updates

The Chief Executive provided a confidential update to members.

DECIDED: That the update be noted.



To: Emergencies Board

On: 7 May 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 COVID-19 pandemic.
 - 1.2 An update is provided on the national position including the numbers of cases and deaths at both Scottish and UK levels. The recent publication of updated figures and analysis from the National Records of Scotland is included and shows that the rate of increase in deaths from COVID-19 is beginning to slow. A summary is also provided of policy and guidance updates that have been released over the past week.
 - 1.3 Section 4 provides an update from Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue on protection issues and representatives from these services have been invited to attend the meeting to provide a verbal update to elected members on the impact on their operations arising from COVID-19.
 - 1.4 Section 5 of the report highlights the support being provided for communities and provides information in relation to Care Homes and safeguarding and supporting vulnerable residents being looked after in their own homes. This section also includes up to date figures on the numbers and types of support being provided to some of the most vulnerable residents in Renfrewshire, including arrangements being made locally to establish virtual neighbourhood hubs and volunteering.
 - 1.5 Section 6 provides an update on support to businesses and the distribution of business and self-employed grants.
 - 1.6 Section 7 provides a workforce planning update for the Council. It includes an update on the current position in relation to availability of PPE and on employee testing procedures; and the current position in relation to the impact of shielding procedures and absence on the availability of employees and redeployments.
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2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Emergencies Board:

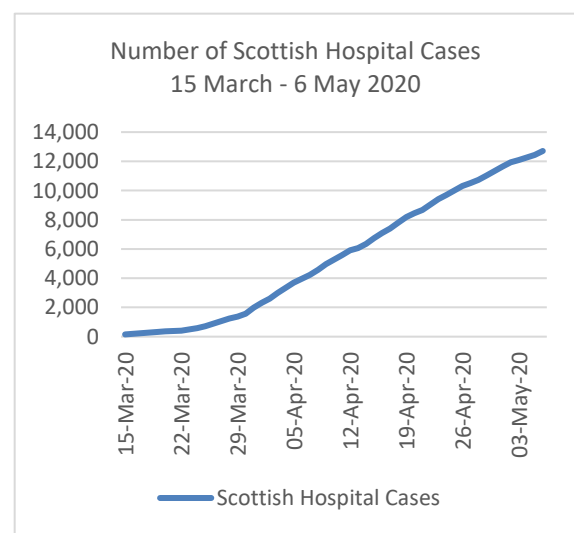
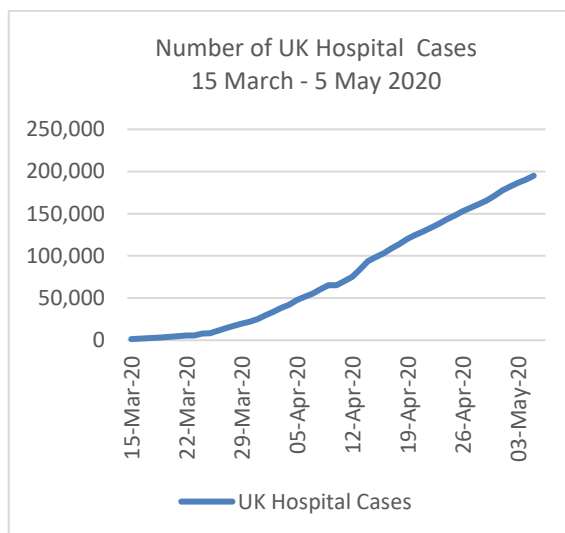
- (a) Note the current national and local situation with regards to COVID-19 and the impact on communities, businesses and the Council and its partners
 - (b) Note the response measures being put in place by the Council and partners as set out in this report
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3. National Situation

Numbers of Cases

3.1 Currently there are 194,990 confirmed cases of COVID – 19 in hospitals in the UK up from 165,221 reported on 1 May 2020. In Scotland there are now 12,709 confirmed hospital cases (up from 11,353). Of these, 3,203 cases are within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board area (up from 2,759). In GGCHB area there were 509 people in hospital (down from 548) (30 in intensive care – down from 43) as either confirmed or suspected cases.

3.2 The following graphs illustrate the significant increase in cases since 15 March 2020:

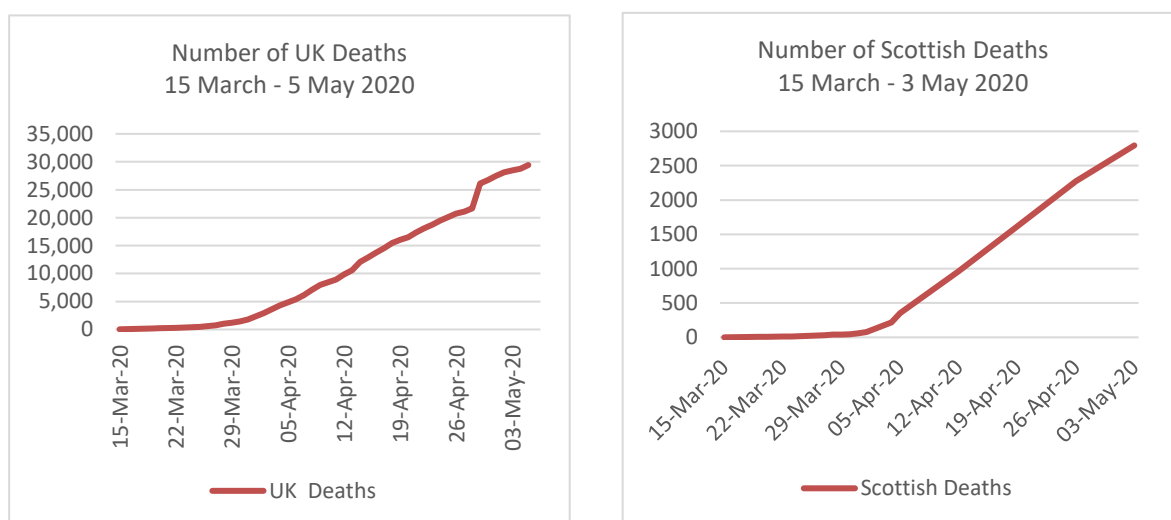


Numbers of Deaths

3.3 As reported on 1 May 2020, the UK figures compiled since 28 April 2020 for numbers of deaths, include all care home and wider community deaths and these figures are now being compared with the figures that have been compiled by National Records of Scotland since 5 April 2020 on the overall number of Scottish Deaths. At a UK level, reports are indicating that there have now been 29,427 deaths across the UK (up from the 26,097 deaths reported on 1 May 2020). This

means that the UK now sadly has suffered the greatest number of deaths of any country in Europe.

- 3.4 The National Records of Scotland has now published its 5th weekly report which indicates the numbers of deaths registered in Scotland that note COVID-19 as a factor in the death. As at 3 May 2020, there have been a total of 2,795 deaths registered in Scotland where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate – up from 2,272 deaths registered up to 26 April 2020.
- 3.5 The graphs below demonstrate the change in reporting and show the increase in the overall number of deaths recorded in terms of UK deaths on 28 April 2020 and in the case of Scottish deaths on 5 April 2020. (Prior to these dates the figures recorded in each graph reflect the hospital only deaths reported):



- 3.6 What the graphs above continue to demonstrate is that while the overall numbers reflect the population differences across the UK and Scotland and are therefore very different in magnitude in relation to recorded cases and deaths, the trend and escalation in numbers of cases and deaths in Scotland is very similar to the picture seen across the rest of the UK and reflects the proportion of the UK population that live within Scotland. There is also the first indication of a flattening in the rate of increase beginning to show in the graphs. The National Records of Scotland analysis also provides an additional level of detail on the outbreak so far in Scotland:

- Of the total number of deaths registered in the week from 27 April to 3 May 2020, there were 523 where COVID-19 was mentioned on the death certificate, a decrease of 135 from the previous week. This is the first weekly reduction since the first COVID-19 death was registered in March.
- The proportion of all deaths involving COVID-19 has also shown signs of decreasing for the first time this week:
 - 16% of all deaths in week to 5 April 2020
 - 31% of all deaths in week to 12 April 2020
 - 34% of all deaths in week to 19 April 2020
 - 36% of all deaths in week to 26 April 2020
 - 31% of all deaths in week to 3 May 2020

- So far the proportion of COVID-19 deaths which took place in care homes has risen each week and represented 59% of all COVID-19 deaths in the week to 3 May 2020. Although the proportion of care home deaths increased from 52% the previous week, the number of deaths in care homes reduced - to 310, down from 339 the previous week.
- When looking at all COVID-19 deaths registered to date:
 - 43% relate to deaths in care homes
 - 49% were in hospitals
 - 8% of deaths were at home or non-institutional settings
 - 75% were of people aged 75 or over

3.7 At both a Scottish and UK Government level, the policy context in relation to the response to COVID-19, continues to develop at a rapid pace. Changes to existing policy, the introduction of new processes and announcements on future developments, are being closely monitored. While fuller information is provided elsewhere in the report on key policy updates and their impact in Renfrewshire - since the last Emergencies Board meeting on 1 May 2020, the following policy changes have been announced:

- An expansion of the testing scheme for key workers, to include people who are aged over 65 and members of their household who have symptoms. It also now includes people who are not currently identified a key worker but are required to leave home to go to work. Additional mobile testing facilities are being developed across Scotland with the support of the Armed Forces.
- An enhanced programme for testing in care homes through surveillance testing, outbreak investigation and in relation to testing across care home groups with multiple establishments.
- Publication of the Scottish Government's – test, trace isolate and support strategy, which sets out plans to disrupt community transmission of the virus going forward, by testing people at scale in the community who have symptoms consistent with Coronavirus.
- Framework for Decision Making in Scotland published on 5 May which sets out further information on the challenges faced in Scotland in relation to COVID 19, and provides illustrative examples of the steps that might form part of the initial changes to the current lockdown, when it is safe to do so.
- The launch of the Scottish Government's Caring Communities Campaign to celebrate the help people are already giving each other, and to encourage safe and effective help like keeping in touch, shopping, picking up prescriptions and running errands for those who are unable to do this themselves.
- Regulations to allow a limited number (around 450) of short-term prisoners nearing the end of their time in custody to be released early have been laid before Parliament. The scheme is limited to those sentenced to 18 months or less and who on 4 May have 90 days or less left to serve in custody.

3.8 Scottish Government Funding announcements:

- As reported to the board last week, £155 million of additional Barnett consequential funding adjustments have been confirmed for the Scottish budget in 2020/21 following the UK Government announcement of an additional £1.6 billion of funding for local government in England and CoSLA have remained in ongoing discussion with the Scottish Government in respect to accessing this funding. The Cabinet Secretary for Finance has now confirmed in Parliament that Scottish Government will pass on the full £155 million to Local Government, bringing the total COVID-19 specific funding for local government to just over £330 million following previous funding announcements of £175.6 million outlined in earlier board reports. The details on distribution for this additional £155 million of funding and any targeted use have still to be agreed with CoSLA and engagement is continuing with the Scottish Government in this regard. If the funding is subject to a broadly standard distribution process, it would be expected that the Council will receive in the region of £4.5 million - £5 million. Further details in this respect will be provided to the board as full details emerge and are confirmed.
- Key mental health services which support families, young people and autistic people are to receive more than £1 million additional funding. 3 key national charities will share this funding.
- £2m of funding has been announced to support people who use drugs during the current crisis. This includes funding for residential rehabilitation, widening the availability of the overdose reversal drug Naloxone and supporting people in prison to switch to longer term opiate substitution treatments.
- Funding of more than £250 million to close the poverty-related attainment gap and aid learning during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has been allocated to schools. Pupil Equity Fund allocations have been confirmed for two years to provide more certainty for head teachers responding to the impact of school closures.
- A £5 million fund was announced on 5 May will offer interest-free loans to landlords whose tenants are having difficulty paying rent during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.
- The second phase of the Small Business Grant scheme – which extends grant support to all subsequent eligible properties - is now open for applications.

3.9 Guidance:

- The publication of updated State Aid Guidance to allow EU Member states to flexibly support economic recovery.
- Shielding Guidance for local authorities and local resilience partnerships has been updated with a particular focus on supporting people to sign up for the national Brakes delivery service, and to access priority delivery slots.
- Guidance on domestic abuse has been clarified to reiterate that rules on staying at home should not prevent anyone from leaving their home to escape or keep themselves safe from domestic abuse and that anyone experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse of any form, including coercive and controlling behaviours, can leave the home to escape or avoid a risk of harm.

- Guidance for the construction sector has been published to help determine what constitutes 'essential' work that may be able to continue. Projects designated as essential, include those which relate directly to the COVID-19 response and which support the provision of essential public services. Projects must comply with guidance on the safety and welfare of the workforce and the public to continue operations.

Contact Tracing – Test, Trace, Isolate and Support (TTIS)

- 3.10 As highlighted by the First Minister earlier this week, contact tracing is going to be a critical tool for the UK and Scotland to minimise transmission of COVID-19, alongside other measures such as physical distancing and good hand hygiene. To assist with a managed transition out of lockdown, the Scottish Government plan to introduce a contact tracing process including Test, Trace, Isolate and Support (TTIS). Led by NHS Scotland, the 5 steps to TTIS are:
- Effective disease surveillance
 - Early identification and isolation of possible cases.
 - Early and rapid testing of possible cases.
 - Early and effective tracing of close contacts of a confirmed case.
 - Early, effective and supported isolation of close contacts.
- 3.11 To deliver the Contact Tracing model, approximately 2000 staff will be required across Scotland to work on identifying, contacting and assisting members of the public who may be unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 or who may have come into contact with those that are unwell.
- 3.12 Within the Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board, there will be a requirement for around 450 employees to support this activity and Renfrewshire Council will assist NHS Scotland by providing experienced staff to work alongside the Public Health team to trace people who have been in contact with a known case. This will be led by experienced Environmental Health officers within Renfrewshire Council with support from other trained Officers with an appropriate skillset – from within the Council and from partner agencies including Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue.
- 3.13 Where someone has been in close contact with a COVID-19 case, they will be required to self-isolate for 14 days and get tested to assess if they have contracted COVID-19. If someone has been in contact, but is not classed as a close contact, they will be asked to monitor their symptoms, however, to go about their daily routine.
- 3.14 Where individuals are required to isolate and they need practical support this will be provided through the established shielding and vulnerabilities processes co-ordinated by the Local Assistance Team, the virtual neighbourhood hubs and mainstream Council and HSCP services as appropriate.
- 3.15 NHS Scotland is currently working on digital tools to assist in the collection and storage of data as well as making it easier for contacts to get in touch and advise of their current symptoms and health concerns.

COVID-19: Framework for Decision Making

- 3.16 On 5 May 2020 the First Minister outlined an updated “COVID-19: Framework for Decision Making” document which sets out further information on the decision-making process to be used to lift any restrictions. The First Minister made it clear that it is unlikely there will be any material change to current restrictions immediately after the scheduled review on 7 May 2020 but did provide a sense of what may be prioritised when restrictions begin to be eased:

- More time outdoors to exercise
- Slight relaxation to meet people outwith the immediate household – a small ‘family/friend bubble’. This might be outdoors rather than indoors. This would not extend to those who are Shielded
- Look to tentatively restart NHS and community health services
- Gradually allow businesses to reopen with social distancing in place – working with business and Trade Unions, including the operation of public transport. Particular focus on construction, manufacturing, outdoor/rural and retail.
- Continued insistence on home working wherever possible
- Schools return may not be possible before summer, but consideration might be given to how key groups such as transition years e.g. P7 to S1, and very vulnerable children might be prioritised. Initial return to schools is likely to require a mix of time at school and learning at home, with part-time attendance.

4. Public Protection

Anti-Social Behaviour and Noise Enforcement

- 4.1 During the lockdown period, as might be expected, there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of anti-social behaviour and noise enforcement incidents recorded through the Community Safety Partnership Hub compared to the same period in previous years. Overall there has been a reduction of over 40% in the numbers of incidents reported compared with 2019. Where incidents have occurred, enforcement has been carried out where there is evidence to act. Warnings are being given via email, letter or phone and in most cases the warnings and guidance offered have been accepted.

Social Distancing

- 4.2 On the other hand, new areas of enforcement have developed around the new Social Distancing regulations. A total of 55 reports of concerns with compliance with the social distancing regulations have been recorded through the Community Safety Partnership Hub. Further analysis of these incidents indicates that the majority (24 incidents) involved youths gathering (19 of which were disposed to the Youth Team for further action) or loud music/noise complaints including parties (9 incidents, 8 of which were either disposed to the Noise Team or the relevant Housing provider for further action). 6 incidents have involved individuals reporting their neighbours for non-compliance. This has also been a significant new area of activity for Police Scotland and recent Police Scotland returns in relation to social distancing compliance indicate that in K-Division (which includes Inverclyde as well as Renfrewshire) 250 people were dispersed after being provided with information and 238 were instructed to disperse. 165 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued, 3 people were returned home and 5 arrested.

Service Update – Police Scotland

- 4.3 As the figures above demonstrate, compliance with social distancing and new coronavirus legislation across Renfrewshire has been commendable with the majority of individuals understanding and contributing positively to the wider aim. A small minority of the community have not recognised the importance of the social distancing and requests to comply with lockdown regulations and as such to date over 300 warnings and 100 tickets have been issued over the 8-week period.
- 4.4 Complaints from elected members and members of the public in relation to issues of non-compliance are being used to guide operational response and proactive patrols are being carried out in partnership with the Council Community Safety Wardens. Particular hotspots such as Barshaw Park and Clyde View have been reported by the public and the assistance of the Mounted Branch and the Force Reserve has been enlisted to assist in communicating the guidelines to the public in these areas. The Division is continuing to focus on the four 'E's of Engage, Explain, Encourage, before Enforcing as a last resort when responding to non-compliance.
- 4.5 Support has been received in terms of redeploying additional police officers from central and back office functions to local frontline roles so as to maintain public service and operational response.
- 4.6 K-Division has a number of processes in place to keep staff and the public they are in contact with safe, such as strict decontamination and cleaning regimes. Officers have been provided with specialist PPE equipment to ensure a suitable and measured response. Testing is widely and promptly available for police officers in Renfrewshire and absence levels have continued to fall since the start of the outbreak. The Division is currently operating at healthy staffing levels.
- 4.7 A national command structure has been set up to progress the Recovery Phase of the pandemic for Police Scotland and in Renfrewshire local plans are being developed and evaluated in support of the Scottish Government and National strategy.

Service Update - Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

- 4.8 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are continuing to deliver all statutory obligations throughout Renfrewshire whilst following both organisational and Government guidance in relation to the COVID -19 pandemic. Robust COVID-19 contingency planning has been undertaken and the availability of operational assets and resources within Renfrewshire has so far remained well within expected confidence levels. From a governance perspective, SFRS has aligned it's daily COVID-19 communications strategy to align with the Scottish Government briefing and reporting schedule and officers are dialling into national and regional multi agency planning and management groups as appropriate.
- 4.9 All front-line staff within Renfrewshire have been provided with extensive contingency guidance including a suite of operational response documents to ensure all essential functions can continue. Presently, all non-critical training courses have been cancelled or postponed and where possible, non-operational staff have been instructed to undertake organisational distancing by working from home. In addition to fulfilling statutory responsibilities, an executive level appetite exists for SFRS to be innovative in supporting local communities, local Resilience

Partnerships and other stakeholders during the current COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, a Community Resilience Assistance Group (CRAG) has been formed within SFRS to capture and co-ordinate requests for assistance within local authority areas. SFRS is therefore receptive and keen to support any relevant requests that may arise in Renfrewshire going forward.

- 4.10 Operationally, SFRS experienced a small increase in the number of primary and secondary fires attended by local operational crews over the month of April. This included grass fires and also refuse fires in open areas. The recent dry weather is certainly a contributory factor. SFRS continues to work with Renfrewshire Council, Police Scotland and other partners through the Daily Tasking process to provide targeted interventions and reduction strategies. Moreover, the service remains fully committed to using national SFRS seasonal campaigns and its wider Prevention and Protection strategy to assist in the reduction of deliberate fire setting in the Renfrewshire area.

Early Release of Prisoners

- 4.11 Regulations to allow the early release of a small number of prisoners who were nearing the end of their sentence were laid before Parliament on 4 May 2020 meaning the early release programme can now commence. Certain categories of prisoners are excluded from the early release programme. The emergency legislation passed by Parliament automatically excludes those in prison for the most serious crimes, including sexual or terrorism offences. The regulations also exclude anyone who is serving a prison sentence for a COVID-19 related offence or is currently, or has recently been, imprisoned for domestic abuse. A final safeguard is in place with the prison governor having a veto over the release of any prisoner earlier than their due date, if the governor has a concern for the safety of an identified individual in the community.
- 4.12 Up to 10 prisoners from Renfrewshire have been identified as potentially being eligible for release under the regulations. Services from health and social care, housing and criminal justice social work have been working together to ensure that any prisoner returning to Renfrewshire is aware of the support available and contingency plans are in place to deliver this support if it is requested. Prisoners being released have a right to request support but given the short nature of the sentences being served would not be subject to supervision as they return to the community. This is consistent with normal practice.

5. Support for Communities

Care Homes

- 5.1 As reported in the media and highlighted in the analysis from the National Records of Scotland, there are a growing number of people nationally who are symptomatic or who have died with COVID-19 in care homes, and this is also reflected in Renfrewshire. The Care Inspectorate continues to closely monitor the situation and is engaged in work to ensure that everything possible is being done to protect the most frail and vulnerable residents across all care groups.
- 5.2 The greatest impact of COVID-19 is in the population of older people and people with underlying health conditions, and in particular within care homes. Renfrewshire has 22 care homes with an available bed capacity of 1,320 spaces. Last week it was reported that some residents in HSCP operated facilities were

awaiting test results. The test results were negative and at the time of writing there are no residents with COVID-19 related symptoms in the 3 Renfrewshire HSCP operated care homes and 4 extra care units. These are extra care or residential care homes where residents tend to be in better health than the resident group in the Nursing Home sector, who are often receiving end of life care and have complex needs including dementia.

- 5.3 The data available is based on self-reporting by care homes and discussions with the Care Inspectorate. At the time of writing, 10 care homes are affected by COVID-19 and 89 people have died, with the deaths reported as being related to COVID-19. As at 5 May 2020, a group of 41 residents in these care homes were being reported as having COVID-19 like symptoms. This information is subject to frequent change and it is hoped that there will be greater clarity as testing becomes more widespread.
- 5.4 There is a known variation between the figures being reported through the national data set published by National Records for Scotland and the figures collected locally. Local figures reported to this Board are submitted to the NHS Health Board and verified with the local Care Inspectorate team. Some of the context for this variation is:
- The local information presented to this Board contains the numbers of residents self-reported by care homes as having suspected COVID-19, in addition to residents with cases of COVID-19 confirmed through a test.
 - The group of older people resident in care homes often have a number of long term or underlying conditions and are at the final stage of their lives, this often makes it difficult to determine what is causing their symptoms.
 - The information now published weekly by the National Records for Scotland confirms people resident in Renfrewshire who have COVID-19 as the cause of death or as a contributing cause. This information can often take some time to come through.
 - Not all deaths in Renfrewshire care homes will be registered within Renfrewshire and appear in the National Records for Scotland figures for Renfrewshire. There are a number of national resources operating locally who admit older people from across the country and placements are often made by other local authority areas to bring older people closer to their family members.

Care Home Testing

- 5.5 Following the First Minister's statement on 1 May 2020, care homes testing has been extended. Where a home has a positive test, this will now trigger immediate testing for all residents and staff working in the care home. Where an employee works in more than one home, testing will also cover their other work locations. In Renfrewshire, to maximise the preventative aspects of this testing programme, if a Care Home has had a positive test in the last 14 days, testing of residents and staff is being carried out, starting in the home that has had the most recent confirmed case.
- 5.6 Once results are available to the care home, results for all residents and staff will be reported in daily calls with the Care Inspectorate and HSCP commissioning manager and also to the NHSGGC Public Health team.

- 5.7 The expansion of testing within care homes for both staff and residents will assist in monitoring the number of people affected by COVID-19. It will also improve the correlation between the local and national data sets reported. It is important to note that the care and support provided to residents is not changed by the results of the test – any resident who is symptomatic is cared for in isolation and with the use of full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in line with national guidance.

Support to Care Homes

- 5.8 The HSCP and partners are continuing to work together to offer a range of enhanced support and assurance to care homes as they look after their residents. This work has been previously reported to the Board and includes the assessment of requirements in each care home led by the Public Health Team; and the completion of risk assessments to inform the level of enhanced support required. This is supplemented by work across Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board area to clarify the offer of support for care homes across the 6 Health and Social Care Partnerships. A national data set is now in place to support the clinical overview.
- 5.9 Work is also in place to ensure people being discharged from a hospital-based setting to a care home have had two negative test results prior to their discharge. All new residents and returning residents are also cared for in isolation for a period of 14 days as part of enhanced infection control measures.
- 5.10 At a local level, as outlined previously, a number of steps have been taken to ensure that relevant assistance and support is offered to the care homes within Renfrewshire so that they can provide the best possible care to all residents. This includes:
- Daily contact with all care homes by the contracts team to ensure that they have full PPE supplies in place and to seek information on any COVID-19 related issues affecting residents.
 - Daily contact by the enhanced nurse led Care Home Liaison service to offer advice and support with a particular focus on the care homes who have the greatest level of need.
 - ‘Just in Case’ medication pack supplies in each care home to ensure end of life care and supporting medication can be offered immediately.
 - Sharing information on care homes with the local GP group following on from the discussion on registration of deaths.
 - Weekly meetings with the Care Inspectorate team and the Chief Social Work Officer to share information and ensure a consistent response.
 - Focused reviews led by the Care Inspectorate and supported by Public Health with care homes who have new infections or where there are high reported numbers of people affected by the virus.
 - Discussions with the care homes reporting the most COVID-19 related issues led by the Medical Director and involving pharmacy, enhanced nursing teams, and the hospices [to support palliative care] to offer additional tailored medical and practical support to each home.
 - Daily meetings [via Skype] of the Locality Management Team to actively monitor and respond to the changing situation for all providers.

Care at Home Services

- 5.11 At present, Renfrewshire HSCP is supporting approximately 1,600 service users through both internal and external Care at Home services. There are a small but growing number of these people, living within their own homes with suspected or confirmed COVID-19.
- 5.12 At the time of writing, sadly 13 Care at Home service users have died, with the deaths reported as being related to COVID-19. In addition, 8 service users have been confirmed as having COVID-19 and another 7 are currently being reported as having COVID-19 like symptoms. Similar to care homes, this information is subject to frequent change and it is hoped that there will be greater clarity as increased testing becomes more widespread.
- 5.13 Joint work is now also taking place between the HSCP, Housing Services and the range of sheltered housing providers to ensure support is in place for those teams and resident groups. Renfrewshire Council are the landlord for 310 older tenants in 10 sheltered housing complexes. These residents are supported by a team of Sheltered Housing Officers, who undertake daily welfare checks and provide a 7-day-a-week service as well as delivering initiatives led by our Activity Officers and Digital Participation Officer. Information is shared with the Health and Social Care Partnership about any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 in the Council's sheltered housing complexes. In addition, there are another 530 sheltered and very sheltered housing tenants in 21 complexes in Renfrewshire managed by Registered Social Landlords, who are also sharing information with the HSCP about any COVID-19 related issues. Two Registered Social Landlords have retirement housing complexes in Renfrewshire and arrangements are underway to collate information on a regular basis that can be shared with the Health and Social Care Partnership.

Support for HSPC Care at Home Staff

- 5.14 Appropriate PPE is worn by staff when supporting service users in their homes, with continued precautions to maintain safe and effective care delivery. Access to testing is available for eligible people and staff who are symptomatic or have household members who are symptomatic. This includes:
- all symptomatic key workers and symptomatic members of their household over 5 years of age.
 - all other symptomatic workers who cannot work from home and symptomatic members of their household over 5 years of age.
 - all symptomatic over 65s and symptomatic members of their household over 5 years of age.
- 5.15 These criteria have already been extended and may be extended further in future. Testing has been made available to all symptomatic staff throughout Care at Home services and a referral pathway is in place to arrange testing, where required.
- 5.16 Staff are working in challenging circumstances and their welfare is a priority. Access is provided to mental health and wellbeing services across Renfrewshire and online. Staff hubs have also been put in place to allow staff appropriate places to take rest periods whilst being able to access snacks and drinks when working within a community setting.

Shielded and Vulnerable Residents

- 5.17 As previously reported to the Board, the initial focus of work in Renfrewshire has been to ensure that support is provided on an emergency basis to those most vulnerable, with a strong focus on those that are shielding or who needed support to access medicine or food urgently.
- 5.18 The initial crisis response phase of assistance is now complete. The Local Assistance Team have now made contact with the majority of people on the local shielding list – around 93% and in the past week only a further 207 names were added to the list of people being asked to shield. The work undertaken to support this group of people and the other vulnerable residents in Group 2 has been combined with the information we have gathered through the local helplines, from our community partners and from service information and has given us a good level of understanding of the current level of need across Renfrewshire.
- 5.19 As the Council moves forward with establishing the virtual neighbourhood hubs, it is well placed to work with local people and in partnership with other organisations to identify longer term options for support. For example, support to access advice and welfare services, to access food at a local level, to offer activity that supports wellbeing and a sense of connection, or to support people to access food independently through some of the new service offerings being developed by supermarkets. This work will be taken forward in the next phase of support as vulnerable residents and shielded residents are provided with the assistance they require to live as independently as possible in coming weeks and months.
- 5.20 To date the local helpline has received 3,947 calls in relation to shielding enquires and the following support has been provided:

	Total	Previous	Change since last week
Total number of individuals on shielding list in Renfrewshire	5,643	5,436	207
Total number of individuals on shielding list contacted	4,677	4,548	129
Number of individuals requiring food delivery only	1,453	1,306	147
Number of individuals requiring pharmacy delivery only	112	82	30
Number of individuals requiring food and pharmacy	127	100	27
Number of individuals requiring other services	13	12	1
Number of individuals in need of no services	4,089	3,933	156

- 5.21 Group 2 vulnerable residents have also made 653 calls through the national helpline, with the current level of support provided through the Local Assistance Team to vulnerable people in this category, outlined in the table below:

	Group 1 Shielded	Group 2 Helpline	Other Vulnerable Groups	National Brakes Deliveries (Group 1 only)	Total Supported
Food	513	985	682	1067	Food – 3247
Medicine	239	362			Medicine – 601
Other	13	121			Other – 134

Neighbourhood hubs

- 5.22 All 7 virtual neighbourhood hubs are now operational with referrals being passed to the hubs from the Local Assistance Team. Hub Coordinators are getting in touch with people to understand their needs and then working flexibly to support people and develop the Hubs offer.
- 5.23 Working in partnership with Renfrewshire Leisure, Hubs are now offering a bespoke service that uses the skills of librarians to offer a mini library and toy lending service, befriending calls and also digital support.
- 5.24 Volunteer inductions have been carried out, with volunteers starting to support the Hubs this week. This process is being supported by Engage Renfrewshire. Hub Co-ordinators are also building on relationships with the network of voluntary and community organisations in the area to identify opportunities to connect and widen the offer being made to local communities.

Volunteering

- 5.25 From 1 May 2020, the Scottish Government “Scotland Cares” volunteering campaign has paused volunteer registrations. It is recognised nationally that the number of people who have signed up now far exceeds the number of opportunities available to them to volunteer. Engage Renfrewshire are continuing to match people to local volunteering opportunities as these become available and the Council website has been updated with the following message:

“With national and local partners, we would like to thank everyone who has signed up to volunteer and who are volunteering to support people at this time in neighbourhoods across Renfrewshire. The most important thing people can still do is stay at home and look out for neighbours. If you do feel you can help, the Engage Renfrewshire Covid 19 Volunteer Reserve Bank is still open. Volunteers are playing a key role in helping support people through this pandemic and will continue to play a critical role as communities begin to reconnect, renew and recover in the months ahead.”

- 5.26 A partnership with Renfrewshire Chamber of Commerce to support the development of digital capacity, organisational and financial resilience and leadership in the third sector will launch this month with a series of on-line sessions planned.

6. Support to Businesses

COVID-19 Business Grants Update

- 6.1 Local Authorities have been delivering 2 business grant programmes on behalf of the Scottish Government since 24 March 2020:
- The first is a £10,000 grant for businesses in receipt of the small business bonus scheme aimed at supporting those in premises with a rateable value of up to £18,000 annually.
 - The second is a £25,000 grant for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sector occupying premises with a rateable value of between £18,001 and £50,999 annually.

6.2 The most recent figures on progress are as follows:

	No of applications received	No of grants awarded to date	No of grants rejected to date	Value of grants awarded
Small Business Grant	1961	1476	230	£14,760,000
Retail Hospitality and Leisure Grant	283	161	109	£4,025,000
Total for both grants	2244	1637	339	£18,750,000

6.3 The approval figures represent around 63% of the total allocation for the Renfrewshire area. A further announcement from the Scottish Government relating to Multiple Property Grants (businesses with more than one property) outlined an additional offer of grant at 75% of the previous rates. This Phase 2 grant programme went live on 5 May 2020 and an update to board on applications to this programme will be made at a future date.

Announcement of Additional £100M Business Support Fund:

6.4 The Scottish Government made a further announcement of grant support to Businesses on the morning of 15 April 2020 making further funding available to specifically support those who were recently self-employed and businesses who didn't qualify for the existing supports on offer.

Newly Self-Employed Hardship Grants (£34M total budget):

6.5 The newly self-employed hardship grant programme launched on 30 April 2020 and provides grants of £2,000 for self-employed people unable to apply for other grant support. This is either due to not having business premises or being self-employed for too short a time to qualify for the wider self-employed Income Support Scheme.

6.6 The grants are processed by local authorities and the most recent figures on applications received and processed in Renfrewshire are:

	No of applications received	No of grants awarded to date	No of grants rejected to date	Value of grants awarded
Newly Self - Employed Hardship Fund	126	85	18	£170,000

Other Business Support Funding Available

6.7 The Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund (£45M total budget) provides bespoke, needs based, grant awards for Scottish SME firms that can demonstrate they are vulnerable but can present a strong business case for a viable future and can demonstrate that they are vital to the local, regional or national economy.

6.8 The Creative, Tourism and Hospitality Enterprises Hardship Fund (£20M total budget) provides support for creative, tourism and hospitality companies not in receipt of other COVID-19 business support and who require funding of up to £25,000 to contribute to a short-term cash flow gap.

6.9 Both funds are managed by Scottish Enterprise and partner agencies and the Council is signposting relevant potential applicants to these sources of funding for assistance

7. Support for Employees

Sourcing and Stocks of PPE

- 7.1 There are sufficient supplies for the next 7 days to support the current service profile in the HSCP and other frontline services. However, as stated previously, recent announcements from the Scottish Government are expected to lead to an increase in demand for PPE which is being factored into future stock projections:
- The new requirement for unpaid carers to wear PPE when providing personal care within the same household.
 - Recommended personal use of face coverings when you leave the house and enter enclosed spaces, especially where physical distancing is more difficult and where there is a risk of close contact with multiple people you do not usually meet.
 - The requirement for local hubs to extend their PPE provision to include unpaid / family carers and personal assistants. As previously reported to the Board, the Carers Centre is now acting as a single point of contact for these requests and distributing PPE to carers on behalf of the HSCP. The main PPE hub at Dykebar is delivering sufficient PPE supplies to the Carers Centre to fulfil this purpose.
- 7.2 On 1 May 2020, Health Protection Scotland issued updated general guidance for non-health care settings. The guidance introduced a section on tradespersons who are carrying out essential repairs and maintenance in people's homes. These circumstances relate to work that must be completed as there is a direct risk to the safety of the household. The guidance specifies that work can continue so long as workers follow guidance and risk assessments.
- 7.3 The guidance continues to stress that physical distancing, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, are the most important and effective measures to adopt to prevent the spread of coronavirus. Therefore, the wearing of facial coverings must not be used as an alternative to any of these other precautions.

Staff Testing

- 7.4 Testing arrangements have become an important element of maintaining resilience across the workforce supporting key workers who are displaying symptoms of Covid-19, or live with people who are, to get tested early. If the early testing proves negative, this facilitates an earlier return to work for the employee than would be experienced under existing self-isolation arrangements without testing. This in turn supports services to maintain higher levels of available staff resource to continue to meet the significant demand for services.
- 7.5 As previously reported, NHSGGC has already established its own system of testing which to date has facilitated 69 HSCP staff to be tested, with 29 testing positive for COVID-19. Of the 40 staff who did not test positive, this process has allowed 31 to return to work and 9 have moved to general absence.
- 7.6 At present, there are a total of 108 HSCP staff unavailable to work due to a COVID-19 diagnosis, family contact or actual symptoms. There has been a slight increase in these figures over the last week.

7.7 On 1 May 2020 the First Minister announced that access to testing was being further expanded to include a broader range of workers and circumstances and this includes:

- People who are not keyworkers but have to leave their house for work
- People with COVID-19 symptoms who are over the age of 65 and their households
- Where there is a confirmed COVID case in a care home, subject to consent, all residents and staff, whether or not they have symptoms can be tested
- Surveillance sample testing of residents and staff who are not symptomatic for care homes where there are no confirmed COVID cases
- Urgent testing should be carried out for care homes with an outbreak (and any linked homes as part of a group or chain where staff are moving between homes)

7.8 This broader testing arrangement is also being delivered through the UK testing programme operating locally at Glasgow Airport, as outlined to the Board in previous reports. Staff from all services who meet the expanded testing criteria are being encouraged to contact their manager or HR services (including through established weekend cover arrangements) as soon as they believe either they or someone within their household are displaying symptoms to allow the testing referral to be undertaken urgently.

7.9 To date, 10 Council staff have been tested for COVID-19. 3 staff have tested positive, 3 staff have tested negative, 3 staff are awaiting results and 1 test returned inconclusive. Of the 7 staff who have received test results, 4 have returned to work and 3 are recorded as sickness absence.

Staffing Update

7.10 Amongst Renfrewshire Council employees there are currently 580 employees self-isolating either because they have symptoms; or because they have other people in their household experiencing symptoms: or because they are following government and health guidance. (This is a decrease from 606 reported on 1 May 2020). Of the 580, 210 are currently working from home.

7.11 The 580 are split across Services as follows

Service	Number of employees
Chief Executive Services	4
Children's Services	264
Communities, Housing and Planning	37
Environment and Infrastructure	136
Finance and Resources	57
Health and Social Care Partnership	82
Council Total	580

7.12 The number of employees now being "shielded from social contact" in line with government and health guidance is 1,085, up from the figure of 1,078 reported on 1 May 2020. Of these 449 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.

7.13 Corporate redeployment requests continue to be received daily and employees are being matched into roles within 24 – 48 hours. So far, 111 employees have been redeployed into priority front line roles:

- 51 Drivers supporting food and pharmacy deliveries as well as social distancing arrangements within waste collection.
- 20 Call handlers supporting responses to shielded and other vulnerable citizens
- 40 Coordinators, team leads and managers supporting the local response hubs

7.14 Redeployments between Renfrewshire Leisure and Council Services continue to be coordinated via this process however, due to plans underway to furlough some of their staff, there are some roles being replaced by volunteer officers across the Council. The corporate redeployment process is also linking with the external volunteer process, as and when applicable.

8. Service Updates

8.1 Relevant service updates on specific issues that have not been reported before are included below:

Service Update - Events Programme

- 8.2 At the outset of the COVID-19 outbreak, a ban on mass gatherings was announced by UK and Scottish Governments that resulted in the cancellation of a number of large scale and major events across the UK. In response to the national guidance, Renfrewshire Council's 2020 spring events programme was cancelled and destination marketing activity to encourage visitors to attend events and local attractions was paused. This included the Food Festival and British Pipe Band Championships while Local gala events were also postponed. At this time, a commitment was given to continue to monitor national guidance and the impact this would have on the remainder of the Council events programme from Sma Shot day onwards.
- 8.3 Public safety and limiting the spread of the virus for local people, staff and suppliers has been the key consideration. The financial risk to the Council of late cancellation and the months of advance preparation work required to develop, market and deliver a safe events programme has also been carefully considered.
- 8.4 On Thursday 23 April, when the Scottish Government published the first version of "COVID-19 – A Framework for Decision Making" and outlined the planning principles for the lifting of lockdown measures, the First Minister addressed the issue of mass gatherings and events and stated that the current ban remains in place and large gatherings and events will not be permitted for some months to come. A key message was that physical distancing may be a fact of life until the end of the year.
- 8.5 The events team have continued to work with EventScotland to share information and examine the impact of all national guidance. Festivals and events across the UK and further afield have continued to be cancelled and/or postponed including;

The Edinburgh International and Fringe Festivals, TRSNMT, OctoberFest and The Royal National Mod, due to take place in Inverness in October at the same time as Renfrewshire's Spree Festival. (In relation to the Mod, An Comunn have since confirmed that the Inverness Mod will now run in 2021, with Perth hosting the event in 2022, and Paisley's Royal National Mod moving to 2023).

- 8.6 Given the current restrictions, and in line with other national events, and national guidance, the summer and autumn 2020 events programme, through to and including the Halloween Festival, has now been cancelled. This includes Renfrew and Barshaw Gala Days, Johnstone Fire Engine Rally, Sma' Shot day and Doors Open Day. Sma' Shot day will be marked by a digital programme so that this date continues to mark and honour local workers.
- 8.7 The decision also means that the Spree Festival and Halloween Festival – which require considerable long-term planning, community participation and incur high cancellation charges – up to 80% will not go ahead.
- 8.8 This decision respects the importance of community participation, which is at the heart of the Council events programme, from parades and live theatre and dance performances, to the international street theatre at the Halloween Festival. The Council has established an events programme that relies on physical connection and the nature of the events created – at scale outdoors and/or within the confines of venues, does not enable physical distancing to be put in place. In particular, audience numbers are not controllable in an outdoors environment and within a town centre setting.
- 8.9 A final decision on the viability of the Fireworks and Paisley, Johnstone and Renfrew lights switch-on events will be taken later in the year and by 30 June 2020 to allow the impact of any relaxation of lockdown restrictions on mass gatherings to be assessed. A review of the likelihood of small local gatherings being permitted will also be undertaken at this time and a decision taken on whether to run the Festive Events Fund for a second year. National guidance will be sought on the marking of Remembrance Sunday.

Service Update – Children's Services

- 8.10 The Scottish Government has amended the regulations associated with placing requests for school admissions. As a result, decision letters have now been sent to all those families making a placing request with ongoing work being undertaken to finalise arrangements for appeals to be heard within the revised timescales.

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

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To: Emergencies Board

On: 7 May 2020

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

**Heading: Education Placing Requests - Procedure During the Covid-19
Emergency**

1. Summary

1.1 The report advises the Board of changes to the legislation dealing with placing requests for schools during the Covid-19 emergency to enable more flexibility in the way Councils are able to deal with the requests and any appeals that may be made where requests have been refused.

1.2 The report also seeks the Board's approval to reconvene the Placing Requests and Exclusions Appeals Panel and to changes in procedure for dealing with Placing Request Appeals.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Board is asked to:

2.1.1 Note the changes made to the timetable and procedure for dealing with Education Placing Requests by the Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (the 2020 Regulations), which came into force on 23 April 2020.

2.1.2 Note the procedure for dealing with Education Placing Requests and appeals during 2020;

- 2.1.3 Agree to reconvene the Placing Requests and Exclusions Appeals Panel for the purposes of determining appeals during 2020 on dates to be set by the Convener in consultation with the Head of Corporate Governance; and
 - 2.1.4 Agree that the Head of Corporate Governance make provision for appeals to be considered by the Placing Requests and Exclusions Appeals Panel to be dealt with remotely as outlined in paragraph 3.7 of the report.
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3. **Background**

- 3.1 Parents have a statutory right to apply for a place for their child at a school that is not their catchment area school. For parents who are unsuccessful in their placing request, they can appeal the decision and, if necessary, attend a hearing in front of a panel who will review the Council's decision and decide whether or not to overturn it. Appellants have the right to raise an action in the Sheriff Court to challenge the decision of the Appeals Panel if they are unhappy with the outcome of the appeal.
- 3.2 Prior to the Covid-19 emergency placing requests were dealt with as follows: Decisions by the education authority on placing requests received by 15 March 2020 had to be intimated to the parent by 30 April. Any requests received after 15 March required to be decided within two months. The decision was then intimated to the parent who would then to consider if they wished to appeal. Any appeal submitted had to be acknowledged by the Council within 5 working days and parents were entitled to be notified of the date when the appeal would be heard within 14 days of the appeal being received. The appeals would then be heard by the Placing Requests and Exclusions Appeals Panel within 28 days of the appeal being received.
- 3.3 The Scottish Government has recognised that in the present circumstances it may not be possible for councils to meet the existing timescales for dealing with requests or for arranging appeal hearings. It is also recognised that it will not be possible for appeal hearings to be held in the normal way and that arrangements are required to enable appeal hearings to be dealt with remotely.

3.4 The Council has ceased all committee meetings until, at least, 24 June 2020. Therefore, it is necessary to agree that the Placing Requests and Appeals Panel reconvenes to deal with any placing request appeals submitted by parents. Although it is not possible to accurately predict the number of appeals that are likely to take place, in 2018, the Panel dealt with 19 appeals involving three schools and in 2019, 8 appeals involving the same three schools.

3.5 The membership of the Appeals Panel is specified in legislation and comprises the Convener, Cllr Adam-McGregor together with one opposition member selected from the full membership of the Council and one lay member chosen from a pool of 10 lay members. There are no proposals to change those arrangements.

3.6 The 2020 Regulations have made significant changes to the process for making decisions on placing requests this year.

Councils have been given an additional month within which to make their initial decision. This means that for applications received by 15 March 2020 for children starting at the school in the August term, decisions must be made and intimated to parents by 31 May 2020 at the latest and in any other circumstances within 3 months. For Renfrewshire schools, the decision letters have been issued to parents this week.

Appeal hearings, which previously had to take place within 28 days must now be held as soon as reasonably practicable but within 3 months from the date the appeal is received. It is hoped that any appeals can be dealt with before the end of June although it may be necessary to hold some at a later date depending on the number of appeals received and the resources available to support the hearings.

There are other changes to time limits.

- The Council now has 28 days to acknowledge receipt of an appeal rather than 5 working days
- The period of notice to be given by the Council about the date of the hearing has been changed from 14 days to as soon as reasonably practicable.

3.7 The 2020 Regulations allow hearings to be held remotely in whole or in part by video link, telephone or other means of instantaneous multi-party communication. It is intended that the appeal hearings will be carried out by skype or other similar system that will allow appellants to make their case to the panel.

The Council will provide support to appellants to ensure that they are able to access the technology being used to hold the hearing. As an alternative, if the appellant agrees the appeal can take place by written submission rather than by way of a hearing.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – N/A
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – N/A
3. **Community/Council Planning** – it is unlikely that the recommendations will affect this directly,
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 procedure for dealing with schools placing requests and any subsequent appeals.
- 14 **Fairer Scotland Duty (Strategic Decisions Only)** – n/a
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List of Background Papers

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