
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	24 March 2020
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	PR/08/20/MM
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	01475 714246
Subject:	COVID-19 (Coronavirus)		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on actions taken to mitigate the risks around the COVID-19 outbreak.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 At the time of writing the situation around the COVID-19 outbreak is developing rapidly. In order to ensure that the update given to Committee is as up to date as possible an Appendix will be circulated as a late paper prior to the Committee and a further verbal update will be provided.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members approve the actions taken to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in Inverclyde.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Members will be aware of the rapidly developing situation around COVID-19 both nationally and internationally. An update will be provided to committee on actions taken and proposed to mitigate the impact of the outbreak in Inverclyde.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Finance

The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted on this report.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/(savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With effect from	Annual net impact £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

5.2 Legal

The Head of Legal and Property has been consulted on the legal implications of the appendix.

5.3 Human Resources

The Head of Organisational Development, Policy and Communications has been consulted on the legal implications of the appendix.

5.4 Equalities

There are no equality implications arising from this report.

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES (see attached appendix)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO - This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

<input type="checkbox"/>	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
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X	NO
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(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

5.5 **Repopulation**

There are no impacts on repopulation arising from this report.

6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Corporate Management Team has been consulted on the actions detailed in the appendix.

7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None

Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	24 March 2020
Report By:	Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration and Resources	Report No:	PR/08/20/MM Appendix 1
Contact Officer:	Martin McNab	Contact No:	01475 714246
Subject:	COVID-19 (Coronavirus)		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on actions taken to mitigate the risks around the COVID-19 outbreak.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 This appendix details actions taken and in course to ensure that essential services can continue to be delivered to the public and that the core business of the Council is maintained. The service details are indicative of the position on Monday 23 March 2020 however Members will understand that this is a constantly evolving situation.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That Members note the actions taken to date to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak in Inverclyde.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council and HSCP have been working across the board to implement arrangements in the ongoing response to the Coronavirus Pandemic. These arrangements are founded upon an established corporate, and incident response structure, and staff who by virtue of their designation, are equipped with the knowledge and resources to respond to incidents of varying magnitude. It is recognised that the challenges posed by this incident is profound and will require a continuous process of planning and preparing until the incident is over which may be a number of months.

5.0 ORGANISATIONAL RESILIENCE

5.1 Internal and external communications, decision-making and response arrangements are firmly established through a strategic (CMT) and tactical (through our Council Resilience Management Team – CRMT incorporating Inverclyde HSCP) coordination and meeting structure. Additionally the HSCP has activated its Local Management Resilience Team (LMRT) on which the Council has a number of representatives ensuring that the Council & HSCP are entirely joined up on decision making.

5.2 From a multi –agency perspective the HSCP LMRT feeds into a GG & C Health Board wide gold command structure covering acute, primary & social care on which some multi-agency partners are represented. The Council (with HSCP representation) is now meeting weekly with multi-agency partners through the West Local Resilience Partnership (LRP). A strategic level LRP is also now operating at the level of the Health Board incorporating the six constituent councils and appropriate multi-agency partners.

5.3 Essential services business continuity arrangements are in place, and are being comprehensively augmented to account for the specific impacts that may be experienced by the Coronavirus Pandemic - principally a significant loss of staff to provide services. Both the Council and HSCP are continuously updating arrangements to ensure that business critical services are prioritised.

5.4 In order to increase resilience at this time Members are asked to note that the Chief Executive has extended the post of the Head of Environmental & Public Protection who chairs the Corporate Resilience Management Team for a period of 6 months.

6.0 SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYEES

6.1 Members will be aware that there has been outstanding Government advice for people to work from home where possible. The Council has had to take a pragmatic approach to this as there has been a need to upgrade the existing ICT infrastructure and to match the available equipment to those prioritised by services as key staff. This has meant that it has not always been possible to allow staff who are capable of home working to do so immediately as the focus has been on priority staff. ICT staff have updated a number of systems to allow maximum home working and will continue to roll this out this week.

6.2 Regular meetings have been held with the unions at both a national and local level to ensure that they are apprised of the actions that are being taken by the Council to maximise the safety of staff. Unfortunately it is not always possible to incorporate new and emerging advice immediately as the Council must also ensure that priority is given to keeping essential services running and supporting the most vulnerable in our communities.

6.3 Advice has been provided by HR and Health & Safety to Management and employees on measures to minimise risk to staff who remain at work including conducting risk assessments, relocating employees, changing duties and carrying out work from home or self-isolating where appropriate

6.4 Employee Assistance Advice will be provided by HR Advisers on measures of support including reassurance on maintenance of terms and conditions of employment, paid leave provisions, categorisation of key workers and general issues of concern relating to the situation. Occupational

Health provision will move to being provided on a remote basis, by phone consultation where possible.

7.0 HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

7.1 On Monday 23 March, the HSCP has moved to delivering essential services only through 6 hubs which covers COVID-19, Adult Services, Mental Health, Childrens Service, Homelessness and Alcohol/Drug Recovery. Each hub has a core staff team in buildings and virtual team working from home supporting them. Each hub has developed Standard Operating Procedures so staff are able to understand:-

- their role/responsibility
- prioritise workload
- keep themselves safe while providing critical services
- understand how to seek support/guidance

7.2 All other staff not involved in the hub delivery model have been asked to volunteer to work at Care at Home, Residential Child Care, Learning Disability, Mental Health Inpatient and Homelessness.

7.3 The HSCP is working with Inverclyde CVS to develop the role shield co-ordinator supporting vulnerable people in the community.

8.0 EDUCATION

8.1 Members will be aware of the closure of schools as of Monday and the cancellation of all examinations. Initially it had been expected that S4-6 pupils could attend to complete coursework however this will not now take place. Education staff are currently planning for the delivery of school places for the children of key workers with this expected to come into place in full by Wednesday this week. Any classes or early years provision delivered will aim to maximise social distancing in the schools.

8.2 There is no single definition of key workers however the current Government guidance is as follows:

There should be a particular focus on:

- Key workers in posts which ensure that essential services can be delivered and cover tasks within the local community which support the vulnerable and aid community resilience. This may be slightly different in each community to allow the country to address local priorities. Whilst decisions will be taken at the local level, we would expect this to include consideration of:
- **Category 1** – Health and Care workers directly supporting COVID response, and associated staff; Health and Care workers supporting life threatening emergency work, as well as critical primary and community care provision; Energy suppliers (small numbers identified as top priority already); staff providing childcare/learning for other category 1 staff.
- **Category 2** – All other Health and Care workers, and wider public sector workers providing emergency/critical welfare services (e.g. Fire, Police, Prisons, Social Workers, etc.), as well as those supporting our Critical National Infrastructure, without whom serious damage to the welfare of the people of Scotland could be caused.
- **Category 3** – All workers (private, public or third sector) without whom there could be a significant impact on Scotland (but where the response to COVID-19, or the ability to perform essential tasks to keep the country running, would not be severely compromised).

The definition of key workers and the understanding that staff in local government may move into

key roles as we progress is critical to possible future developments including what will happen in a “lock down” scenario. From a local authority perspective key roles will include frontline staff in category 1 but will also include significant numbers of staff in category 3.

8.3 Officers from the Education & Communities Directorate have also been planning over the last week for the delivery of meals to those in receipt of free school meals. These will be delivered through the network of community centres and staff have been identified to participate in the preparation and delivery of these.

9.0 SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES

9.1 The overall financial implications for the Council together with how the parts of the package of support for businesses announced on 19 March will be covered by a separate report from the Chief Financial Officer.

10.0 LEGAL ISSUES

- 10.1 It is noted that Members have been approached by a number of businesses requesting that the Council initiate the closure of their operations. This may have arisen from a belief that, if they are instructed to close, they may be able to claim for loss of business on their insurance cover. The Council can only prevent businesses from trading in a very limited set of circumstances and requires to have both good cause and legislative backing to do so.
- 10.2 Both the Council and the Health Board currently have powers under the Public Health (Etc.) Scotland Act 2008, the former generally over premises and the latter generally over people. These are only useable in defined circumstances, for example where premises have been identified as the seat of an outbreak, and are not generally useful in a pandemic situation of this type. Both the Council and the Health Board also have powers with respect to vessels and passengers through port health legislation.
- 10.3 Members will be aware of widely reported issues at a licenced premise in Greenock last weekend. The police used their licensing legislation powers on Sunday to close these premises and a report from the police on this matter would be expected in due course. Separately, new legislation was passed on 21 March for England and Wales giving Environmental Health and Trading Standards Officers powers to close such establishments. It is expected that equivalent Scottish regulations will have been forthcoming by the time of the Committee.
- 10.4 The UK Government has also published a bill enabling action in 5 areas. These are:
- Increasing the health and social care workforce by removing barriers to staff returning to work
 - Reducing the administrative burdens on staff and giving powers to suspend port operations
 - Strengthening quarantine powers of police and immigration officers and giving powers over events and gatherings
 - Enabling the death management system to adapt to deal with increasing demands
 - Supporting the food industry to maintain essential supplies

There have been a number of additional announcements since the legislation was first mooted however including significant announcements on pay and funding for businesses.

11.0 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

- 11.1 In time of emergency or civil contingency the Council channels all communications activity through corporate communications with a key focus on ensuring that any service changes that affect Inverclyde will be included in one single trusted source. That source is the council website page www.inverclyde.gov.uk/coronavirus and all communications should flow from that.
- 11.2 Given the changing nature of the response to the virus it is not possible to keep detailed health advice current on the page, which is why the site has links to trusted sources of information and current advice including NHS Inform, Public Health Scotland and the World Health Organisation.

- 11.3 The Council's communications service is linked into the national 'public communications group' to ensure any emerging national messages are cascaded through the Council and HSCP communications mechanisms which includes social media, press and media updates, icon, the Council intranet, updates to customers services staff, councillors and the local MP, constituency MSPs and West of Scotland MSPs through daily briefings.
- 11.4 The council's communications service may, depending on the need to cascade essential health information, local messages and national guidance, take direct control of Council communications mechanisms such as service social media accounts.

12.0 HORIZON SCANNING

- 12.1 It is clear that this remains a rapidly developing situation. There are a number of things which can be clearly foreseen however. Firstly there is obviously a reasonable likelihood of greater "lock down" provisions. What will be absolutely vital in such a situation will be clarity and a shared understanding of what constitutes essential services which will continue. Council officers in each directorate have been working on what we consider to be essential services. There will obviously be areas around the edges where staff from non-essential services are being drafted to support essential service delivery either directly or indirectly. This is likely to be a constantly evolving situation.
- 12.2 It is also clear that over a minimum of the next 12 weeks there will be a need to ensure that key staff are supported in delivering their roles and that the effort required, particularly in Health & Social Care, is sustainable.

13.0 IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Finance

Financial matters are the subject of a separate report from the Chief Financial Officer.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/(savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With effect from	Annual net impact £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

13.2 Legal

The Head of Legal and Property has been consulted on the legal implications of the appendix.

13.3 Human Resources

The Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources and Communications has been consulted on the legal implications of the appendix.

13.4 Equalities

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

X

YES (see attached appendix)

NO - This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

13.5 **Repopulation**

There are no impacts on repopulation arising from this report.

14.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

14.1 The Corporate Management Team has been consulted on the actions detailed in the appendix.

15.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

15.1 None