

PLACE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS SCRUTINY PANEL

Day: Tuesday
Date: 28 July 2020
Time: 6.00 pm
Place: Zoom meeting

Item No.	AGENDA	Page No
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	MINUTES	1 - 2
	To approve as a correct record, the Minutes of the proceedings of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 9 June 2020.	
3.	IMPACT OF COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN ON THE LOCAL ECONOMY	3-24
	The Panel to meet Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth; Councillor Ged Cooney, Executive Member, Housing, Planning and Employment; Jayne Traverse, Director of Growth; and David Berry, Head of Employment and Skills, to receive an overview of the challenges faced around economic recovery, business support, safety measures, to inform future activity.	
4.	FEEDBACK AND LEARNING FROM COMMUNITIES ON COVID-19	25-28
	The Chair to present a report informed by the feedback received from panel members regarding the impacts and learning from communities on Covid-19.	
5.	RESPONSE TO SAFE STREETS CONSULTATION	29-32
	The Chair to present a formal response to the Council's Safe Streets consultation.	
6.	GREATER MANCHESTER SCRUTINY	
	The Chair to discuss priorities and recent activity of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Scrutiny Committees.	
7.	CHAIR'S UPDATE	
	The Chair to provide a verbal update on recent activity and future priorities for the Panel.	

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8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 15 September 2020.

9. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any additional items the Chair is of the opinion shall be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

From: Democratic Services Unit – any further information may be obtained from the reporting officer or from Paul Radcliffe, Policy and Strategy lead, to whom any apologies for absence should be notified.

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

9 June 2020

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Glover (Chair), Mills (Deputy Chair), Alam, Billington, Bowden, Bowerman, Chadwick, Choksi, J Fitzpatrick, P Fitzpatrick, A Holland, Hollinshead, Jones, Lewis, Naylor, Pearce, Robinson, Shari, Sweeton.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 10 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

2. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair presented a work programme document that included an overview of national guidance on the role of scrutiny during Covid-19 and a list of topics for consideration. Panel members agreed that scrutiny must adapt accordingly to consider appropriate matters with a keen eye on recovery, as well as community and economic resilience.

The draft work programme presented a range of topics that Covid-19 has thought to have a direct or indirect impact on service delivery and outcomes for residents. The Chair confirmed that all planned activity would include:

- Service and performance updates
- Areas in need of more in-depth review
- Research and insight on a particular issue
- Review of decisions and recommendations
- Engagement and consultation – responding to pre-decision activity
- Consideration of decisions and reports of the Ombudsman

Scrutiny activity will continue to be undertaken outside of the formal meetings, with all findings and recommendations presented to the full panel for comment and approval. The improved flexibility allows speedier and timelier work to be undertaken, creating an enhanced opportunity to both influence and inform the impact of decisions made.

The Chair introduced topics listed within the draft work programme and provided all panel member with the opportunity to add individual comments and suggestions to inform the final document. Consensus was reached for the panel to receive an overview of the 'Impact of Covid-19 and Lockdown on the Economy', at the next meeting on 28 July 2020. Additional points for inclusion in the final work programme document included:

- Small business and employment support
- Covid-19 safety measures including workplaces
- The importance of long-term and sustainable networks and projects to will build on clean air initiatives
- Maximising the social, economic and environmental impact of future projects and developments
- Future impacts related to housing, domestic abuse and homelessness support
- Feedback and learning related to the impact and response to Covid-19
- Considering the role of scrutiny, in supporting the Executive, with regards to engagement and consultation for future projects and developments

The Annual Work Programme is to be presented at Overview Panel on 27 July 2020 and it was agreed that the final document will be shared outside of the meeting.

In addition, the Chair invited all members to take time outside of the meeting to consider any feedback and learning received from communities on Covid-19, with a deadline of 16 June for email responses. Feedback points will inform a future report that ensures learning is shared with the Executive.

Resolved: That the Annual Work Programme be circulated by email to all panel members outside of the meeting.

3. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair provided a verbal update that the scrutiny monthly update emails will start again from the end of June. They will continue to provide members with information and resources relevant to the role.

Work would continue outside of the formal meetings to review open consultations and to seek assurances against relevant decisions and recommendations of the Ombudsman.

4. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on 28 July 2020.

5. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR

Scrutiny

COVID 19 Economic Impact and Recovery Plan



Overview

This presentation covers:

- Economic data and background
- Economic Response
 - National
 - GM
 - Tameside



Economic Impact – No growth, in recession

Contribution to GDP growth based on GVA (Gross Value Added), 3-month-on-3month growth, by sector



Notes: Other services include: financial & insurance activities; real estate, professional & administrative services, public admin, arts & recreation, other services & activities of household's employers (SIC codes: K-O & R-T). Production industries includes SIC codes B-E.
Source: RF analysis of ONS, Monthly GDP based on Gross Value Added (GVA).

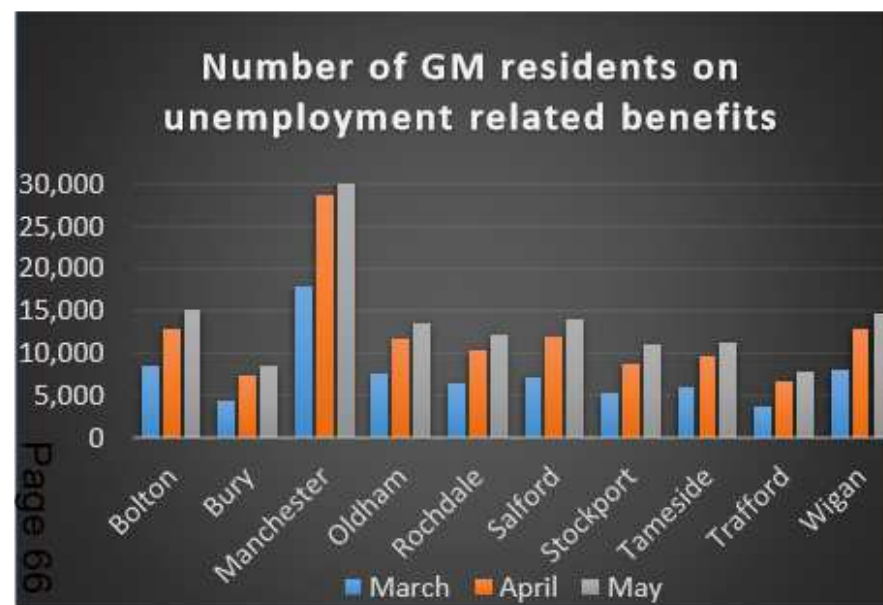
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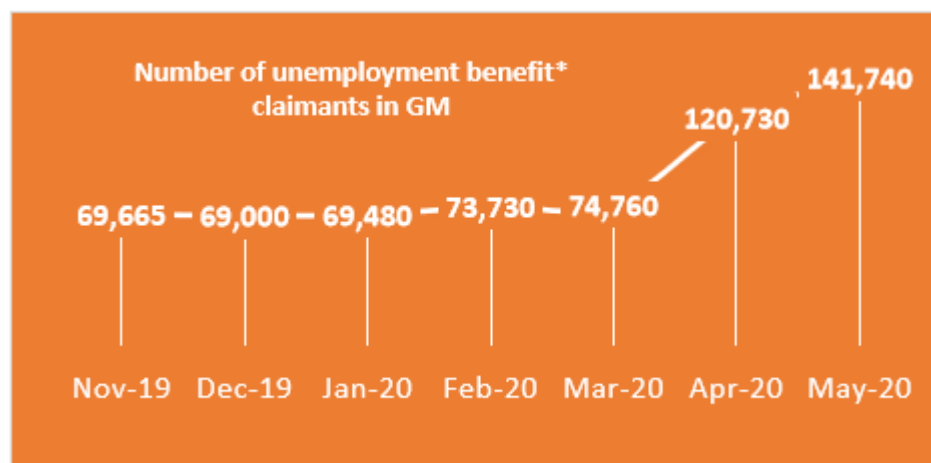
Employment Impact – Unemployment rising

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Area	16+ Workforce	Furloughed Staff	% Furloughed	Vs UK
Bolton	126,600	33,900	26.8%	+0.1%
Bury	87,200	23,000	26.4%	-0.3%
Manchester	262,300	62,200	23.7%	-3%
Oldham	105,000	25,800	24.6%	-2.1%
Rochdale	95,700	23,800	24.9%	-1.8%
Salford	129,400	33,500	25.9%	-0.8%
Stockport	142,100	33,700	23.7%	-3%
Tameside	107,700	27,700	25.7%	-1%
Trafford	117,900	26,100	22.1%	-4.6%
Wigan	160,400	37,100	23.1%	-3.6%
GM	1,334,400	326,800	24.5%	-2.2%
UK	32,551,900	8,696,000	26.7%	

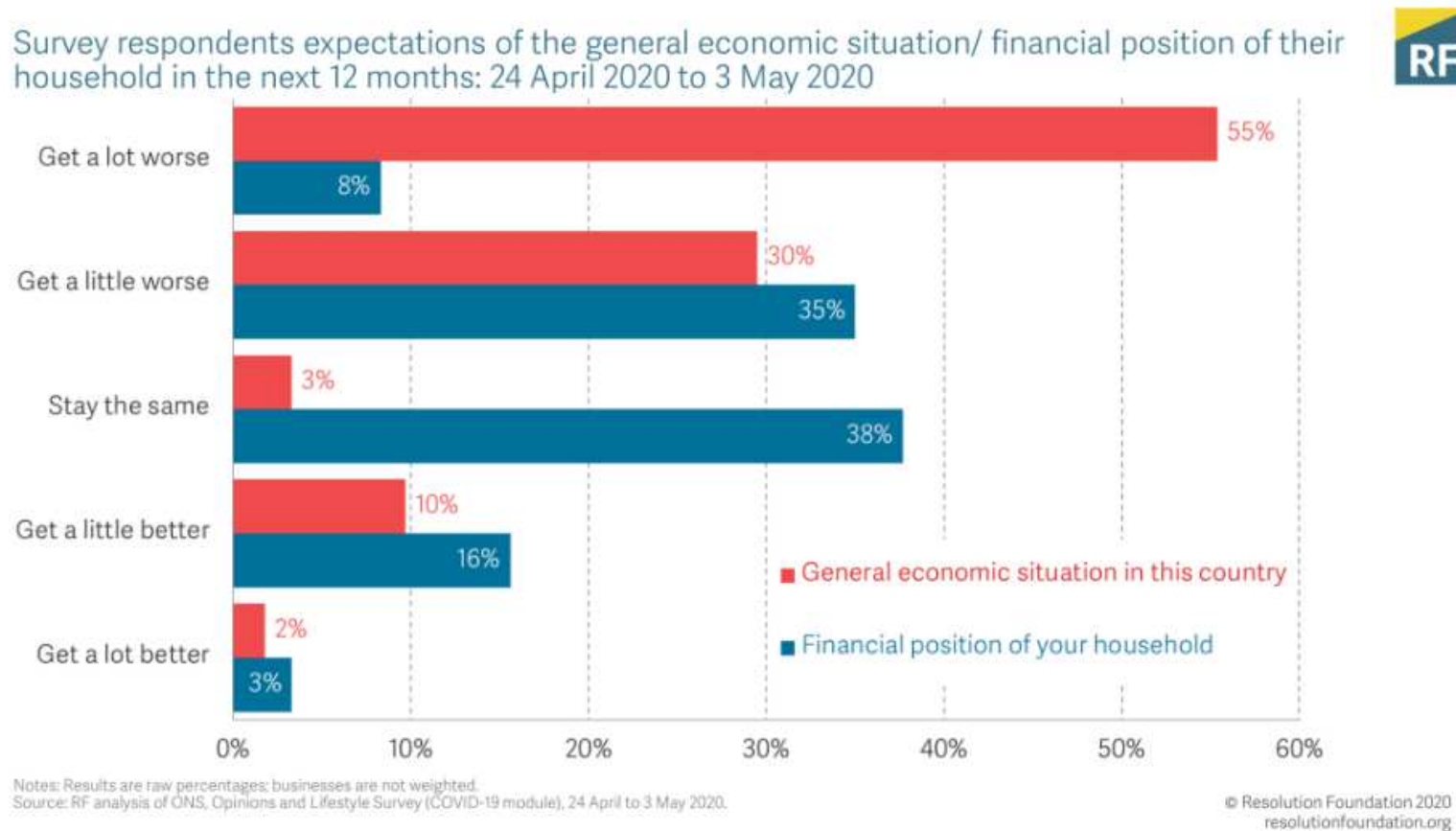


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Economic Impact – confidence low

Figure 4: Expectations of the general economic situation are low



Impact on Sectors - at Risk In GM

Hospitality, tourism and leisure

- **71% of businesses report reduction in sales**
- Clothing and footwear have seen biggest hit, whilst greengrocers /essential shops see increases
- **Challenges for social distancing**, especially in local district shopping

Accommodation and Food Services

- **Widespread closures and loss of conferences resulting in economic impact of £13m**
- 20.5% of businesses with a “high” credit rating risk compared against UK average of 19.6%

Education

- School and nursery closures estimated 478,000 children between nursery – KS5 had education impacted
- **GM universities face difficulties around student recruitment from overseas (UoM)**
- Major challenge for Universities with revenue loss

Arts & Entertainment

- All attractions and cultural venues have been closed
- When reopened there will be **reduction in footfall due to social distancing measures**
- **Knock on effects of no mass crowds at sporting events / gigs may impact on other parts of the economy**

Impact on Sectors – Tameside Manufacturing

- Tameside Engineering and Manufacturing Sector:
 - 11,320 jobs, Location Quotient (LQ) of 2, 5% growth between 2013 and 2018. LQ = Size of sector compared to UK above 1 shows larger than national.
 - £300m GVA (10% of borough's total GVA).
- National Manufacturing Monitor survey responses (March 2020) below



Impact on Sectors – Tameside Retail

- Retail Sector Tameside:
 - 10,475 jobs, Location Quotient of 1.3, 15% growth between 2013 and 2018
 - £249m GVA (9% of borough's total GVA).
- Centre for Retail Research national projection of 20,000+ store closures and 235,000 job losses

Retailing 2020 (to end June)	Administ- ration	CVAs	Rational- isation	Totals
specific redundancies & rationalisation	NA	NA	1,150	1,150
multiples: stores closed	1,202	?	1,512	3,635
multiples: jobs lost	22,261	–	14,410	36,671
self-employed/concessions in larger shops	4,128	?	3,860	7,988
independent store closures	484	–	409	893
independent job losses	2,066	?	1,915	3,981
Total Job losses	28,455		21,335	49,790
Total store closures	1,686	–	1,921	3,607



Impact on Tameside – Socio Economic

- Hatch Regeneris study found Tameside to be most exposed to socio economic impact of COVID19 across several areas based on existing factors

Table 1 Tameside COVID socio-economic impact exposure (source Hatch Regeneris)		
Economic Exposure		
Statistic	Statistic Value	Exposure Category
% of businesses impacted by COVID-19	27%	Exposed
% of employment impacted by COVID-19	21%	Least Exposed
% of self-employment	12%	Exposed
Societal Exposure		
% of premises without decent broadband	0%	Least Exposed
% percentage who do not use the internet	11%	Most Exposed
Income deprivation rank	47	Most Exposed
Avg. minutes to nearest food shop (PT/walk)	7	Exposed
Health Exposure		
% Aged 70+	13%	Exposed
% with respiratory-related health issues	25%	Most Exposed
Population density	476	Most Exposed



National Response

Initial steps

- Job Retention scheme (furlough)
- Self Employment Income Support Scheme
- Statutory Sick Pay Relief
- Coronavirus Business Impact Loan Scheme
- Business Rates Holidays
 - SBRR recipients, Retail, Leisure and Hospitality sector, Children's Nurseries.
- Small Business Grant Scheme - £10,000
- Retail Leisure and Hospitality Grant Scheme - £10,000 or £25,000

Followed by

- Bounce Back Loan Scheme
- Local Authority Discretionary Grant Scheme



National Response 'A Plan for Jobs' #1

- Job Retention Bonus – up to £9.4bn
- £2bn Kickstart Scheme (6 month work placements at nat. minimum wage)
- £32m over 2 years for National Careers Service
- £111m for Traineeships for 16 – 24 year olds
- Apprenticeship Grant Scheme - £2,000 per 16 - 24 y/o or £1,500 for 25+
- £101m for high value L2 and L3 courses for unemployed 18-19 y/os
- £895m to double number of work coaches in Jobcentre Plus
- £95m expansion of Work and Health Programme
- £40m for private sector job finding support service.
- £150m increase for Flexible Support Fund
- Extra £17m to triple number of sector based work academy placements



National Response 'A Plan for Jobs' #2

- Eat Out to Help Out meal discount scheme
- Temporary 5% VAT rate for food and non-alcoholic drinks from café's, bars etc.
- Temporary 5% VAT rate for accommodation and attractions
- Temporary Stamp Duty Land Tax cut
- £2bn Green Homes Grant
- Construction Talent Retention Scheme
- £40m Green Jobs Talent Fund
- £50m fund for Social Housing Decarbonisation demonstrator project.
- Public Sector Estate Carbon reduction funding.



GM Response – Economic Recovery



- General principles of GM Strategy and GM Local Industrial Strategy still stand.
- Independent Prosperity Review Board reconvened to re-visit baseline economic evidence.
- GMCA controlled budgets and contracts reviewed and re-purposed where possible.
- Adult Education Budget amended to respond to retraining need.



GM Response - 1 year “living with Covid” plan being developed:

- Tackle pre-existing or newly identified stresses / risks in the system which must be respond to as part of our future response to outbreaks or other emergencies;
- Build GM’s economic, social and environmental resilience to prevent / minimise loss from a future shock event (e.g. second wave of infection, no deal Brexit, wildfires);
- Enable us to live better with Covid;
- Provide multiple benefits which help address multiple stresses – rather than just tackling one issue (e.g. addressing climate change while achieving economic outcomes);
- Set GM on a stronger footing in order to achieve GMS ambitions;
- Support GM’s ambition to continue to be and develop as a global city-region.



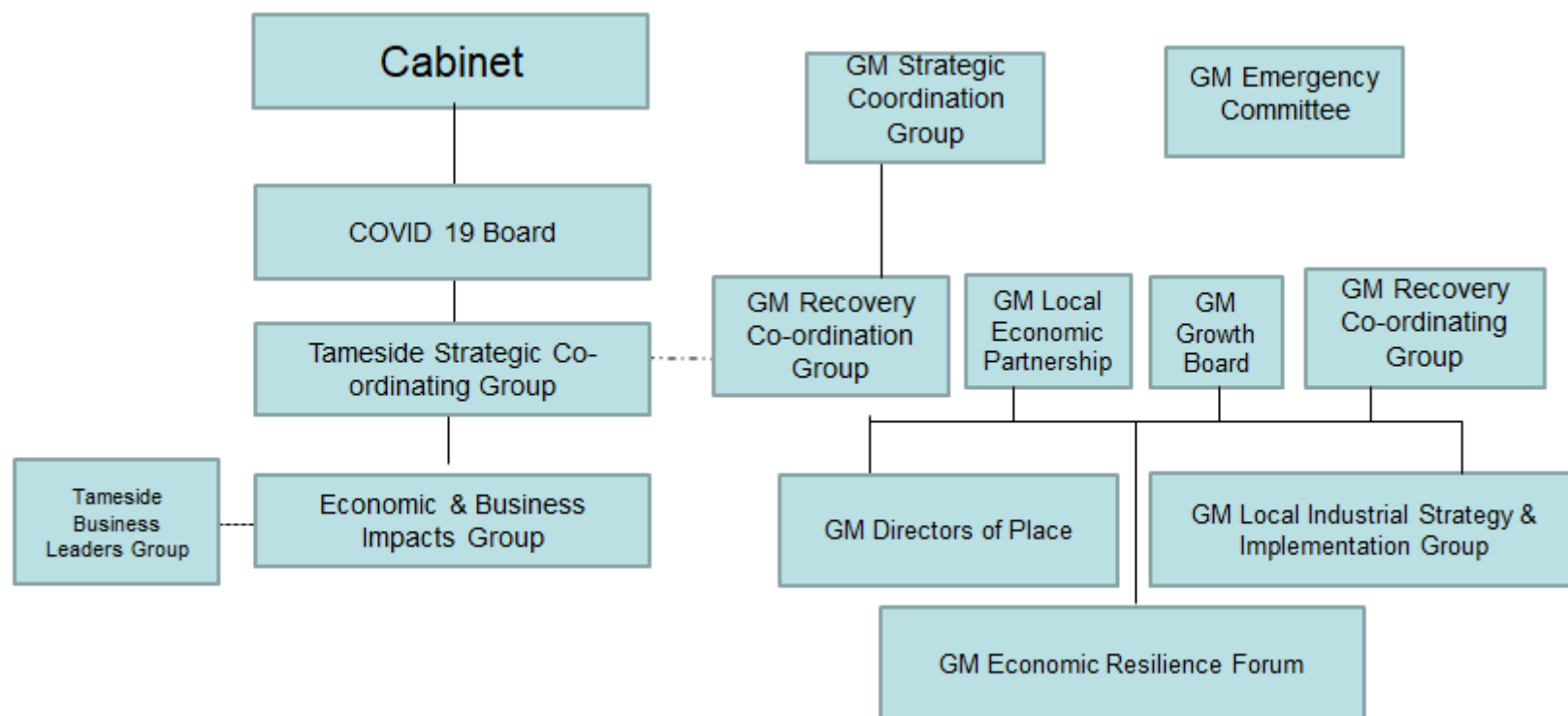
GM Response – ‘Build Back Better’

GM Mayor and Local Enterprise Partnership

- A future where business can still be profitable and sustainable, but not at any cost
- Where the people are treated and paid at a level that reflects the valuable roles they perform
- Where budding entrepreneurs of any age, stage and postcode can grasp the new business opportunities
- Where people can be employed in meaningful jobs but still have time left in their day to spend with family and friends
- Where young people can fulfil their true potential not pay the biggest price
- Where being digitally enabled means more fulfilling and better paid work
- Where the world can watch and learn from us about how a growing and productive economy can provide a positive outcome for investors as well as for the planet.



Tameside Response



Tameside Economic Response

Key areas of work and principles still stand to shape our economic recovery activity

- Our People Our Place Our Plan
- Growth priorities agreed at Council February 2020
- Emerging Draft Inclusive Growth Strategy document in production
- Emerging Housing Strategy, Strategic Asset Management Plan, Local Plan key documents in production



Tameside Economic Response – Business Activity

- Internal cross Council weekly Economic and Business Impacts Group established to co-ordinate response
- Business support team increased from 1 to 8 FTE staff at outset
 - Subsequently increased to 24 to deliver Discretionary Grants
- External COVID19 Business Leaders Group established for high level business intelligence response and shape Council activity
- Food Hub business co-ordination 20,000+ items donated by firms
- PPE co-ordination – Gowns, valves, masks
- Contact 400 businesses by phone re: support and gather intelligence.
- Enhanced Business Support E-shot to @2200 business email addresses
- Dedicated business support page added to Council website
- Dedicated employment ‘virtual jobs fair’ page
- Business Resilience Clinic established to provide peer to peer business support and signposting (7 business champions signed up)
- Delivering Discretionary Grant Fund to local companies £2.3m
- Delivering Mandatory Business Grants and Reliefs to local companies £70m
- Supporting companies to re-open safely



Tameside Economic Response - *Emerging Draft* Inclusive Growth Strategy

1. Attract inward investment and support existing businesses to increase the number of good jobs in the borough.
2. Increase aspirations, employment, pay, skills and health across our whole population.
3. Increase productivity across our whole economy
4. Encourage, start and grow new businesses and social enterprise models
5. Direct local spend to support local SMEs and social enterprises grow
6. Ensure that our transport system links our residents to jobs and services
7. Deliver the digital and transport infrastructure needed to grow our economy
8. Make our Town Centres hubs for living, culture, employment and services
9. Increase quality, affordability and choice in the borough's housing offer
10. Use the Public Sector Estate to support start-ups, social enterprises and charities to deliver and grow and to drive development and regeneration
11. Enable an inclusive digital and creative economy for people and business
12. Build back better from the COVID-19 Pandemic.



Tameside Economic Response – Delivering Growth Priorities

- **COVID19 Related Initiatives**
 - Economic Recovery Planning
 - Discretionary Grant Fund
 - Reopen High Streets Safely
 - Business Resilience Clinic
 - Redundancy Response
- **Development of Strategic Sites and Town Centre Regeneration**
 - Godley Green
 - Ashton Moss
 - St Petersfield
 - Vision Tameside and Ashton-under-lyne
 - Stalybridge Town Centre Challenge
 - Droylsden
 - Hyde
 - Denton
 - Hattersley
- **Strategic Connectivity**
- **Employment and Skills Projects**
- **Strategies and Plans**



Tameside Economic Response – Delivering Growth Priorities – Focus on Redundancy

- Ensure Growth Priorities are delivered
- Co-ordinated response with key partners such as Jobcentre Plus
- Understand and deliver National programmes (as appropriate)
- Re-purpose GM Work and Skills programmes and spend
 - Working Well
 - Adult Education Budget
- Continue to deliver and align local programmes
 - Tameside Employment Fund (youth unemployment)
 - In-Work Progression Pilot (start date in discussion)
 - Adult Community Education (Skills delivery)
 - Routes to Work (Disability employment)
 - Living Life Well (Mental Health)
 - Apprenticeship delivery
 - Digital Inclusion programme
 - Physical activity pilot
 - Virtual Jobs Fair



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council's scrutiny function is well positioned to respond to local challenges and has an important role to provide direct insight and support to the Executive on a range of key matters. Improving outcomes for residents remains at the forefront of all work priorities, with scrutiny members being well placed to provide essential feedback on the lived experience of individuals and communities based on the impacts of Covid-19 and the local response.
- 1.2 Scrutiny panel meetings resumed in June for the 2020/21 municipal year. In addition to work programme development, a request was made by the Scrutiny Chairs for all panel members to take time outside of the meeting to note experiences on impacts and the response to Covid-19 in Tameside and subsequent recovery measures.
- 1.3 The table below summarises the feedback and insight from scrutiny panel members, received in June 2020. Key points have been separated into the following categories:
 - Responding to Covid-19
 - Health Systems
 - Economy
 - Children and Families
 - Vulnerabilities (elderly/shielded, BAME, homelessness, domestic abuse)
 - Future consideration
- 1.4 It is acknowledged that some points lack a certain level of detail and they are to be received as direct and timely feedback from communities. Key messages aim to inform future planning associated with the response and recovery to Covid-19 in Tameside. Scrutiny Chairs therefore consider it appropriate that the overarching insight and perception of communities should be shared with the Council's Executive at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.5 At this stage, there is no requirement for the Executive to respond to the report and it is hoped that the learning points can be shared with relevant service areas. Scrutiny work programmes for 2020/21 will pick up a number of measures in place to improve Covid-19 related outcomes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Panels feel that it is important to provide some additional context in terms of Tameside's starting position, pre Covid-19, based on a range of health and economic risk factors that will ultimately determine how severe and long-standing impacts associated with the pandemic are likely to be.
- 2.2 It is nationally recognised that while all efforts have been made to respond to Covid-19 as a health crisis and serious threat to life, it is now coming to light that future challenges have the likelihood to be profound and far-reaching for the resilience of households and communities. This relates directly to some of the expected and delayed external factors such as uncertainty of future employment, housing, education and timely access to healthcare and support.
- 2.3 As a Council, we have continued to maintain an effective level of local intelligence, insight and performance monitoring. The strength of local partnerships and cooperative working allows us to be best placed to draw on a wealth of information that will ultimately support a local recovery plan.

Identifying future risks

- 2.4 The summary of information and data below is aimed to provide a collective and clear picture on areas of future concern, which allows for a level of comparison to be made when taking account of:
 - Health inequalities and the future demand on services

- Access to future employment and associated rise in the local claimant level
- Delivering safe environments for residents to work and travel
- Equality impacts and the mitigation of risk for outcomes associated with Covid-19

What we know

- 2.5 As a borough we continue to face significant challenges related to health outcomes, skill levels and employment. Covid-19 has presented an unparalleled level of pressure to front line services and the local response has been commendable. Our communities have continued to show a level of compassion and determination needed to ensure we can get through this together. This is evidenced by the speed in which the Humanitarian Hub was established and the coordination between public sector bodies and voluntary agencies.
- 2.6 When collating feedback from communities it has been important to reflect on some of the local challenges, with attention drawn to the following areas (3 July 2020):
- A total of 1,952 households have been supported with food parcels and 446 with prescriptions. Residents in need of support is reducing on a daily and weekly basis.
 - The number of GP appointments made in April 2020 was at its lowest level in 2 years; with an associated reduction in GP referrals.
 - A sharp drop in A&E attendances, levels are starting to rise.
 - Reporting a proportionately high number of deaths in care homes (44% higher than same period in 2019). Over 80 deaths related to Covid-19.
 - A reduction in referrals made to Children's Services linked to most pupils not being in school.
 - Tameside has a high proportion of small and medium size businesses, with £42.8 million paid in business support grants.
 - There has been a noticeable shortfall in Council Tax recovery compared with expected levels.
 - At the end of May 2020 - 27,700 residents had been reported as furloughed (3rd highest in GM). Potential for redundancy, with a knock on effect for employment support, welfare rights and debt advice.

3. FEEDBACK AND LEARNING FROM COMMUNITIES (JUNE 2020)

Responding to Covid-19
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's response and speed in which the Humanitarian Hub was established, along with support from volunteers and businesses has been a real accomplishment and something to be proud of. • The crisis has helped generate a resurgence and increased levels of solidarity and sense of community. • Positive outcomes and innovations, such as online support groups offering help and advice to residents. • Agencies and communities have responded well with regards to food provision and delivering medication to some of our most vulnerable and isolated residents. • Enhanced cooperation and partnerships have had a positive impact on community spirit and cohesion. • A positive message based on the sharing of best practice and finding workable solutions to problems.

Health Systems

- There are a number of future concerns linked to a range of possible impacts that Covid-19 and lockdown measures will have on the mental health and wellbeing of residents.
- A consensus that assessing and supporting the mental health of residents must remain in place as a future priority for the commissioning of health services. To overlook this would be detrimental to both the health and economic recovery of the borough.
- Concerns were raised with regards to the avoidance of Primary Care, reduction in routine appointments and cancer referrals. It is accepted that while Covid-19 has somewhat alleviated aspects of non-urgent demand, the future pressure on key services due to delayed diagnosis is likely to have significant implications on health outcomes for residents.
- Some work may be required in order to understand the equality impacts of Covid-19. Emerging evidence reported nationally has presented an understandable cause for concern within BAME communities and those undertaking key worker roles. It is also unclear as to how the future assessment of risk for disproportionately affected groups can be planned and delivered at a local level. This includes safety measures for all work places and public transport.
- With a significant number of older and vulnerable residents having been shielded for at least 3 months, there will be a need to consider issues associated with loneliness, social isolation. In addition to any ongoing worries around future access to food and medication should a second phase emerge.

Economy

- General feedback from the business community has been positive with regards to the local response and measures put in place for guidance, support, eligibility and access to grants/funding.
- Concerns that the impact Covid-19 has had on the mental health and wellbeing of residents has potential to spread further. This may create a direct and adverse link with an expected rise in unemployment following closure of the government's furlough scheme and economic recovery for the borough.
- Residents have concerns about uncertainty connected with the relaxation of lockdown measures, in particular around the insecurity of employment, housing, financial support and debt.
- Some residents may find themselves without support (gaps in the governments systems and approach). What options have been made available to those who may not have been eligible for the furlough scheme and/or small business grants.
- Hardship projections with regards to future unemployment and claimant levels.

Children and Families

- There has been a positive response from local schools, with continued pastoral support, wellbeing checks and food support where needed.
- Concerns of parents associated with children returning to school – information being received and the need for consistency and oversight in messages relayed from schools.
- Broader understanding and expectations to the way youth workers and social workers will interact with children and families online in lieu of face-to-face working for the foreseeable future.

Vulnerabilities

- To review the need for a collaborative approach to assess and remove any potential barriers (physical or psychological), in supporting our elderly, shielded and vulnerable residents to become more socially mobile as lockdown restrictions start to ease further.
- Care homes will require vital and continued support from the Council and partners.
- The Council has responded well to residents presenting as homeless and those with immediate housing needs. This may require periodic review to ensure interventions have been sustainable and to monitor new cases based on future financial impacts of Covid-19.
- Some older residents have expressed confusion about the details of being shielded and the implication of future changes to reconnecting individuals and households.
- Impacts of a rise in the level of alcohol being consumed at home during lockdown, with the hope that this will start to reduce – possible link to increases in domestic abuse.
- There has been a short-term spike in issues related to fly tipping and the disposal of waste. Communities are pleased with the Council's response and support positive messages to highlight impacts this places on the Council and costs to remove. Also to promote the reporting of issues via the app.
- To share any critical learning points from the Council's work with charities and community groups to ensure support is reaching the people who need it most.

Future Consideration

- A need to plan for the challenges we are likely to face going forward and particularly how we work to mitigate the problems that lockdown has imposed.
- Creating a phased plan that looks at how we rebuild confidence, particularly for vulnerable and elderly people who have been shielded; for parents and school staff in order to get children back to school.
- Building on air quality initiatives to seize on a real opportunity to reduce car journeys and invest in sustainable walking and cycling solutions. To include practical issues related to public transport and getting residents back to work. Making alternative journey a viable option, more appealing and easier to access.
- To champion all walking and cycling initiatives. Tameside's corridor for cycling is a bold and ambitious plan to make our borough more cycle friendly.
- A need to assess impacts and feasibility of foodbanks being able to continue responding to increased levels of demand. To develop a sustainable approach to future social and economic support (including food).
- The future financial hardship and wider impacts on all community groups and charities.
- Continue publishing positive images and good news stories on the response of public services and communities to Covid-19.
- A possible need for more area specific communications that addresses resident perceptions of covid-safe spaces.

Councillor Warren Bray
Executive Member
Transport and Connectivity

Ian Saxon
Director
Operations and Neighbourhoods

Chair of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Mike Glover

Tameside One
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Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 6BH

Email: mike.glover@tameside.gov.uk
Phone: 0161 342 2199
Ask for: Paul Radcliffe
Date: 2 July 2020

Dear Councillor Gwynne,

Safe Streets in Tameside

I write on behalf of Tameside Council's Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel. Members have remained suitably informed of the proposals and future measures aimed at primarily supporting residents to maintain responsible social distancing whilst walking, cycling and using public transport throughout the borough.

The Scrutiny Panel seeks to submit a formal response to the Safe Streets consultation. This letter therefore aims to provide a summary of collective discussion points and to express any issues and concerns raised by panel members. I would be extremely grateful if on receiving this letter you are able to take the appropriate action to ensure the collective response is suitably recorded and submitted. It is also hoped that the response can be referenced within future reports and may support wider governance requirements in terms of engagement and feedback used to inform decision making in this area.

In order to address the significant and far-reaching impacts of Covid-19, scrutiny must adapt accordingly to consider appropriate matters with a keen eye on recovery, as well as community and economic resilience. Panel members have received regular feedback from residents and communities based on learning from the impacts, local response and range of challenges the Council is likely to face going forward.

It is pleasing to report that recent feedback has highlighted the positive and proactive response of the Council and partners in providing direct support and signposting to some of our most vulnerable, isolated and 'at risk' residents. Where possible the Council can aim to lead by example in making bold and innovative decisions that enable residents to feel safe and confident to explore social and economic mobility options throughout the easing of lockdown measures and beyond.

For schemes of this nature, the Scrutiny Panel would encourage services to establish and maintain a clear dialogue with communities throughout development stages. This can help to ensure learning from local knowledge is captured and also creates a platform to deliver key messages and targeted information to residents. It is also felt that active listening to what residents say allows for a set of practical and innovative solutions to remove any barriers to

daily life and the ability of individuals to regain social contact, access to employment and leisure.

There is also no doubt that work in this area is closely connected to national and regional initiatives regarding poor air quality and the development of a Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone. An opportunity has also clearly presented itself to build on the Greater Manchester Bee Network at a local level.

Having recently reviewed work priorities and finalised a work programme for 2020/21, the Scrutiny Panel has reached a consensus that the recovery from Covid-19 provides an opportunity to build on a range of initiatives. This includes developing long-term and sustainable projects that seize on the opportunity around walking and cycling.

Members are particularly aware that there is a significant need to raise general awareness and to support behaviour change. I have listed some of the main points below, which are to be viewed as individual responses from members, under the collective of the Council's Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel.

- Panel members are supportive of the positive and proactive steps being taken by the Council to safeguard residents and visitors when walking, cycling and accessing public transport within the borough. The temporary proposals detailed within the consultation aim to build confidence and ensure that safe social distancing measures can be adhered to and maintained.
- The impact of Covid-19 and associated lockdown measures has resulted in an unprecedented reduction in vehicle usage at a local, regional and national level. Whilst this has been a secondary effect in response to the health crisis, feedback has shown that communities have welcomed a reduction in air and noise pollution, traffic and congestion. It is extremely encouraging to see a rise in the number of residents walking and cycling across the borough.
- There is an opportunity for the Council and key stakeholder to build on previous clean air proposals in order to reinforce walking and cycling as a viable and long-term option. It is unlikely that such an opportunity will present itself again in the near future.
- While maintaining a high level of ambition and expectation, a scheme of this nature should be informed by resident feedback and perception. Consideration to review any existing physical and/or psychological barriers that may prevent walking and cycling as an accessible option or alternative (i.e, journeys in excess of a set distance). The importance of key messages that walking, cycling and cars are complementary travel options and not mutually exclusive. A shift from car to bike need not be ideological, but something on which support and advice can be given to encourage residents to take what may be a cautious yet positive first step.
- The Council to work cooperatively with key stakeholders, such as other public sector bodies and local businesses. No organisation should plan to work in isolation. There is an opportunity to build on local solidarity in that this is everyone's problem to solve and a collection of individual changes will have a greater impact on outcomes for all Tameside.
- It is recognised that travel improvements need to support inclusive economic growth.
- It may be that a scheme of this nature could benefit from a public spokesperson or figurehead, similar to that of the Bee Network in order to build traction and to act as a

catalyst to promote behaviour change. This may include case studies of how individuals and households have transformed the way they view and access local travel options.

- Resident perception may be that Tameside has what appears to be a relatively fixed network of roads and footpaths available for walking and cycling. Local topography may also create problems when connecting people to places. This requires a detailed level of planning and possibly an online platform to house a comprehensive tool for route options. Future proposals require an equal amount of attention and consideration across all areas, helping to build assurance that while some plans remain temporary there is a local commitment to create cost effective, long-term and sustainable solutions for our network.
- To review potential challenges associated with the introduction of temporary cycle lanes on the carriageway. Panel members are extremely keen to find viable and long-term solutions that aim to integrate a variety of travel options between a set start and finish point, which may need to connect off road and scenic routes to more integral road infrastructure and pinch points.
- That consideration be given to residents who may have reduced capability or lack confidence to walk or cycle. To explore options with health and leisure partners to develop introductory fitness courses and 'learning to cycle' classes. It may be that future consideration is given to a cycling grant or loan scheme, to be managed at a central level or in conjunction with local businesses encouraging employees to review travel options.
- That where appropriate, the Executive involve scrutiny in future consultation and development stages.

If further clarity is needed on any of the above points, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Mike Glover
Chair – Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

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