

## **BOARD**

**2 June 2021**

**Commenced: 2.00pm**

**Terminated: 3.15pm**

**Present:**            **Elected Members**            **Councillors Warrington (In the Chair), Bray, Cooney  
Fairfoull, Gwynne, Kitchen, Ryan and Wills**  
                         **Borough Solicitor**            **Sandra Stewart**  
                         **Interim Assistant**            **Ian Duncan**  
                         **Director of Finance**  
                         **Deputy S151 Officer**            **Caroline Barlow**

**Also in Attendance:**    **Tracy Brennand, Jeanelle De Gruchy, Richard Hancock, Sarah Jamieson, Dr  
Ashwin Ramachandra, Elaine Richardson, Ian Saxon, Paul Smith, Emma  
Varnam, Sandra Whitehead.**

**Apologies  
for Absence**            **Councillor Feeley**

### **10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Board meeting on the 19 May 2021 were approved as a correct record.

### **12. NEW CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE DELIVERY MODEL**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment / Assistant Director Operations and Neighbourhoods setting out what a future service offer may look like and sought permission to undertake public consultation to fully understand and consider views before implementing any changes.

It was explained that, on 26 August 2015 Executive Cabinet, following a comprehensive review of the Council's face to face Customer Service function, agreed a new model for the service. The review took into account the usage of the service at that time, the likely reduction in the need for the service in the future, the increasing cost to serve and the public's determination in consultation that this was an area where budget cuts could be made.

It was determined that the service offer would consist of Level 2 service (book, pay, request a service and verification of housing benefit documents) which would take place at all libraries in the Borough. Additionally Ashton Customer Services would be retained and continue to offer a reactive drop in Level 2 service and also in-depth housing benefit and council tax support advice (Level 1 service). The service was suspended in March 2020 due to the Covid 19 pandemic and no face to face Customer Service function had been offered since that time. During that period officers had been supporting call centre operators handling customer enquiries via the telephone, web chat or on-line. Officers had also been assisting customers to complete housing benefit/council tax support applications by telephone appointment.

It was now deemed timely to undertake a further review of the service to determine how this might be offered in the future taking into account the changes in peoples' attitudes to technology, the future

need for a reactive drop in face to face service and the fact that face to face customer service had always been the highest cost channel with the lowest volume of customers.

The report gave details of the service prior to and during Covid 19. The demand in customer service was examined, which had reduced significantly over the years. The cost of the service was also scrutinised with the cost of each transaction for the face to face customer service function far outweighing the cost of other channels.

Members were advised that it was clear that, with the advent of social trends and technological advancements, the way customers accessed services had changed over recent years. The pandemic had pushed the use of technology to another level and served to create a catalyst for change in peoples' attitudes. Many who would not have previously used technology in any aspect of their lives were now turning to such platforms to order shopping, access services, keep in touch with family/friends etc. Some evidence of this change could be seen following the Council introducing a web chat function in early 2019/20. Since implementation, over 12,000 enquiries had been responded to via this channel. Residents were able to access services on the Council's website for both information and advice but also to complete applications for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, discounts/exemptions and notify of change of circumstances etc. Applications could be completed on all devices e.g. PCs, laptops, tablets and smart phones.

It was fair to conclude that if a customer had accessed a service by an alternative channel whilst face to face customer services had been suspended, and that contact produced the required results to satisfy the enquiry, accessing by that method in the future would be preferable to making the trip to customer services and queuing up at a drop in service with no guarantee of not having a long wait time.

As protectors of public funds it was incumbent upon all Council services to review the service offer from time to time and ensure services were cost effective whilst meeting residents' needs. The Covid 19 pandemic had created a unique circumstance where change had been accelerated at pace and this change had led to many residents becoming less reliant on face to face services. These circumstances should be capitalised upon when determining future service provision rather than simply returning to the previous landscape and it was therefore now time to undertake a further review of the Customer Service provision.

It was explained that the proposed service model for the future would be based on providing the most appropriate access channel according to customers' requirements and would be very similar to the current offer but with the addition of face to face contact where necessary and only for those where other channels would not be suitable. The principles would be:

- not to re-open the expensive reactive drop in Customer Service centre based in Tameside One at Ashton in the previous format;
- retain Level 2 enquiries at all Tameside Libraries;
- promote, encourage and support a digital first model with the expectation that where possible, residents should self-serve utilising the Council website or other technology such as mobile applications (Apps) where available;
- where this was not possible a supported service offer over the telephone, web chat, email etc. to assist customers with their enquiries;
- where more detailed assistance was required, for example completing a housing benefit application, a telephone call back service by appointment would be available; and
- face to face appointments only for the most vulnerable to ensure that residents were able to access services and assistance without disadvantage. Appointments would be bookable by telephone.

There was no doubt that some customers may be more vulnerable and/or may need additional support to access to services or make enquiries. This could be because the enquiry was complex, there were multiple issues or there were additional health problems which affected a person's ability to manage their situation. Any new service model must take into account all residents' needs and therefore some face to face element would be retained. It was proposed that this would be by

appointment only rather than drop-in and would be following a triage process to understand the nature of the enquiry and the assistance required.

If the proposed service model was implemented staff levels within the service would need to be reviewed. Sufficient staff would be required to conduct telephone appointments to support people with their enquiries and also to undertake face to face appointments where necessary. It would be necessary to consult with staff and unions to ensure they were fully aware of any new service model and staffing structure.

To determine the impact of such a customer contact model as detailed, it was proposed that public consultation was undertaken for a period of 12 weeks from 28 June 2021 – 19 September 2021 to seek views of residents and others who wish to respond. A full Equality Impact Assessment would be completed to fully understand the impact on the communities and particularly those with a protected characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010 and in particular members wanted it to address access to digital.

## **AGREED**

**That Executive Cabinet be recommended to agree:**

- (i) That the reasons for a review and the proposed new delivery model be considered;**
- (ii) That public consultation on the proposed delivery model be undertaken from the 28 June 2021 to 19 September 2021 with the results being presented to Executive Cabinet for further consideration at the end of the year.**

## **13. HIGH STREET TASK FORCE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth / Director of Growth, providing details of the High Street Taskforce programme recently announced by government as part of a package of support to help communities and local government to transform their high streets.

It was explained that, on 19 March 2021, the High Street Task Force (HSTF) was announced by government and would run until 2024. The HSTF provided support to local leaders in town centres and high streets in England. Funded by government, this support included expert advice, training, and data delivered directly to local stakeholders in towns and cities, and a range of resources online that were available to all.

The first 70 local authorities had been selected to enable support to be delivered where it was needed most. Regional indicators of deprivation and inequality had been used, alongside research on the impact of COVID-19 on high street retail, to produce the list of areas that would most benefit from support for their local place making capacity. Hyde Town Centre had been identified as one of the 70 local authority areas. The programme was part of a wider package of proposals declared by the government to support town centres in the wake of the recent pandemic and was linked to the Build Back Better initiative including funding schemes such as the Levelling Up Fund (LUF).

Members were advised that establishing long term partnerships would be a focus for the support and the Task Force would deliver a range of services that were aligned to four objectives and would provide practical support to people and places. These were:

- Boosting Local Authority capacity;
- Building place making skills;
- Coordination; and
- Intelligence and data.

Benefits of being part of the programme included:

- Expert advice on local plans, enabling local authorities to create the best strategies for transformation and investment,

- Facilitation of a local leadership and stakeholder sessions to help build consensus, good will, and momentum behind authorities' plans,
- Training for place leaders and development staff, as well as local stakeholders, based on the latest research on high streets, which could help build capacity for longer-term impact,
- Resources and inspiration for local stakeholders to inform their own action and involvement in place making, and
- Boost trust and confidence in local plans and bids by evidencing adoption of Task Force support and good practice.

Following consultation, the Task Force team had nominated Hyde Town Centre as the area of focus in Tameside. As Hyde Town Centre was identified as one of the first local authority towns to benefit from the programme of support, some initial discussions had taken place with the Task Force in relation to the type and level of support being offered to the Hyde. To help make change happen, Hyde Town Centre would receive a range of tailored support services offered by the Task Force, which may include; targeted expert consultancy, mentoring, visioning or place making workshops, access to local footfall data, and training programmes for place managers and leaders. Hyde Town Centre would benefit from the extra capacity offered as part of the programme and would ensure a joined up approach to the work already taking place including the One Public Estate. It was accepted that all of the town centres would benefit from the HSTF programme as the Council and officers would be able to learn and cascade ideas around the other centres.

Once Tameside had been appointed an advisor from the Task Force team of experts, they would contact the Council to discuss scheduling the first 'Unlocking your Place Potential visit'. From this visit, further tailored support would be programmed in for Hyde. This work would determine the necessary intervention required for the town centre. From this, the Council would seek to prepare an action plan in order to begin to implement recommendations that were identified as a result of this programme of work. There would be a further report to Executive Cabinet outlining the findings of the diagnostic and focus for the action plan.

#### **AGREED**

**That Executive Cabinet be recommended to:**

- (i) Formally participate and engage with the programme and with government delegates responsible for delivering the support; and**
- (ii) That the focus of the support will be Hyde Town Centre.**

#### **14. TARGETED NATIONAL LUNG HEALTH CHECKS**

The Executive Member, Adult Social Care and Population Health / Director of Commissioning submitted a report, which provided an update on development of the Targeted Lung Health Check (TLHC) Programme within NHS Tameside and Glossop CCG (T&G CCG).

It was explained that TLHC programmes were paused from March 2020 due to COVID-19 and implementation of the fully managed 'End to End' T&G CCG TLHC service from Manchester Foundation Trust (MFT) was limited. In June 2020, NHSE published the addendum to the National standard protocol in response to COVID-19; to recommend virtual initial TLHC assessments and removed the requirement to undertake spirometry or blood pressure assessment.

TLHC programmes recommenced in August, following the publication of the Phase 3 planning guidance, which stated: 'All existing projects within the Targeted Lung Health Check programme to be live by the end of 20/21'. In September 2020, NHSE released revised Clinical and evaluation data sets and MFT confirmed their intention to work in partnership with T&G CCG to deliver a fully managed TLHC service with capacity to accommodate additional tertiary surgical capacity and CT capacity (following lengthy discussions over an extensive period of time).

In October NHSE, formally notified TLHC programmes that they would extend the length of the programme to March 2024 to accommodate the pause due to COVID-19. A revised two year

trajectory was submitted to NHSE on 9 October 2020 to indicate the first T&G TLHC would commence on 1 February 2021 and the full roll out across the Locality would be completed by March 2022. This enabled all Low Dose Computed Tomography (CT) scans required by the protocol to be completed by March 2024.

The Strategic Commissioning Board on 25 November 2020, approved the recommendation to commission the 'End to End' fully managed Targeted Lung Health Check service from MFT on a phased approach to delivery. Phase 1, mobile unit operating in the existing COVID-19 safe site at the Etihad with people from Denton, Hyde and Ashton invited (duration approximately 38.5 weeks). Phase 2 would extend to Stalybridge and Glossop and the sites location would be confirmed (duration approximately 24.5 weeks). Should the constraints of COVID-19 change, the locations would be reviewed and if possible, a location within Tameside and Glossop would be used. To deliver the TLHC programme within National timeframe (2 year phased planned roll out of the TLHC programme, with all follow up Low Dose CT scans complete by March 2024), MFT continued to work in partnership to enable Contract sign off and mobilisation of the TLHC programme, and to agree a revised start date in discussion with NHSE.

Members were informed that the screening element of the Lung Health Checks, Smoking Cessation and CT scans would all be delivered in one place (One Stop) on a mobile unit close to where people live (when COVID-19 restrictions were lifted as detailed within the addendum, which was in place until March 2022). MFT would work with providers across GM to ensure that people who required any follow up care, had the choice to receive this care closer to where they lived except when support could only be delivered by specialist centres.

T&G CCG continued to work with GM Cancer and GM colleagues from MHCC, MFT, Salford CCG, Salford FT, Specialised Commissioning, and Christie to ensure coordinated approach to delivery of TLHCs. T&G CCG continued to work with partner organisations to develop pathways that incorporated TLHCs working to the revised National Standard Protocol (issued due to COVID-19 and in place to March 22).

In March 2021, MFT confirmed their commitment to joint working with T&G CCG to ensure screening commenced no earlier than 1 June 2021.

On the 23 April 2021, the CCG agreed to fund reasonable additional costs for diagnostics and other associated activity, relating to the Targeted Lung Health Check Programme and onward referral.

On 28 April 2021 MFT confirmed acceptance of their internal business case and ability to provide the managed service to T&G CCG (phase approach to delivery). MFT confirmed their intention to commence Targeted Lung Health Checks (TLHCs) within T&G CCG on 5 July 2021 (to commence in the Denton neighbourhood, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report) with invitation letters starting to go out in June 2021. Low Dose CT scans would commence in August 2021.

In terms of funding, it was explained that the initial funding envelope available of £6.3m included a fixed element for staffing and a variable amount based on agreed trajectories. Since the initial plan was submitted, the extraction criteria had changed and therefore there was likely to be a higher variable cost element than previously anticipated. It was expected that this higher variable activity would be fully funded by the national programme.

The report concluded that the change in model due to COVID-19 would enable T&G CCG to deliver the TLHC programme as required and increase the opportunities for early identification and treatment of health issues that left undetected would adversely impact on an individual's healthy life expectancy. Progressing this programme was a key priority for the Strategic Commission and a Long Term Plan commitment.

## **AGREED**

**That the Strategic Commissioning Board be recommended to note the additional funding requirements and progress on the development of a fully managed 'End to End' TLHC service**

from Manchester Foundation Trust (MFT), who are the only tertiary provider of thoracic surgery within Greater Manchester.

## **15. CONCORD SUITE AND ADJACENT PAY & DISPLAY CAR PARKS**

### **AGREED**

**That consideration of this report be deferred to a future Board meeting when the review of the Capital Programme considered to avoid matters being considered outside of a wider context of priority, need and available budget.**

## **16. LEISURE ASSETS CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment / Director of Population Health providing a summary of progress to date in relation to the delivery of the Council's capital investment programme to improve sports and leisure facilities approved by Executive Cabinet on 24 March 2016.

Details were given of the following completed schemes:

- (a) Active Copley heating system replacement (£0.369m)
- (b) Active Copley pitch replacement scheme (£0.177m)
- (c) Active Medlock roof replacement scheme (£0.120m)
- (d) Active Dukinfield development (ITRAIN) – (£1.3m Council investment & £1m repayable loan by Active Tameside).
- (e) Active Longdendale Development (Total Adrenaline) – (£0.600m repayable loan by Active Tameside)
- (f) Active Medlock Synthetic Turf Pitch Replacement (£0.120m) – (£0.013m underspend)
- (g) East Cheshire Harriers Floodlight Replacement Scheme – (£0.100m)
- (h) Tameside Wellness Centre (£16.374m)

It was explained that Schemes a) to g) had been delivered within budget. As set out in the approved financial comments, an overspend of £0.036m on the Tameside Wellness Centre scheme had been offset from an underspend on the Medlock Synthetic Turf Pitch Replacement scheme and the Hyde Pool extension scheme. This approach was approved Executive Cabinet on 24 March 2021.

In respect of Active Hyde Pool Extension (£4.034m), it was reported that the Hyde Pool extension scheme was due to achieve practical completion on the 4 June 2021, which was 5 weeks later than previously reported to Panel in March. The delay was due to the need to retile sections of the pool tank due to noncompliance issues. The Council was not liable for any costs in relation to the delay. Active Tameside continued to be updated on progress. This had supported their mobilisation planning in readiness for the buildings handover, which in turn reduced the time required to get the facility operational to an absolute minimum.

### **AGREED**

**That Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel be recommended to note the report and that, going forward, the Leisure Assets Capital Investment Programme with any further updates, will be included in the Growth Update report.**

## **17. ADULTS CAPITAL PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Health, Social Care and Population Health / Director of Adults Services providing an update of the developments in relation to the Adults Capital Programme for:

- schemes previously approved and still underway; and

- the usage of the wider disabled facilities grant (DFG) including the housing adaptations budget.

Details were given of approved projects for 2020/21, as follows:

	<b>Project</b>	<b>Total Funding Approved</b>	<b>20/21 Allocation</b>	<b>Projected Outturn</b>	<b>Re-profiling</b>
1.	Christ Church Community Developments(CCCD)	£150k	£120k	£120k	£0k
2.	Moving with Dignity (Single Handed Care)	£375k DFG	£179k	£163k	£16k
3.	Disability Assessment Centre	£250k DFG	£250k	£0k	£250k
4.	Brain in Hand	£20k DFG	£0k	£0k	£0k
5.	Mount Street	£100k DFG	£100k	£100k	£0k

Members were advised that the replacement of ageing and obsolete equipment was also approved, however, it had been profiled with allocated funds in 2021/22 of £45,593 with on costs. Details of the wider DFG and other related adaptation funding and discretionary non-adaptations funding were also contained within the report.

Works at Mount Street were completed as described in the previous report and no further costs were anticipated on this scheme.

Full details of the Adult Services capital programme were included in an appendix to the report.

The report concluded that a number of projects were completed or due for completion shortly including Mount Street supported accommodation, that was up and running; Day Services review, which was a medium term piece of work; and Brain in Hand, whose contract expiration was at the end of May. 4C was due to open in line with the nation's roadmap proposed date of all restrictions easing towards the end of June, if all the tests were met. This was a testament to the service, which continued its best to deliver projects and meet improved outcomes for people through challenging times. All costs and benefits were being monitored and reviewed regularly taking into account people's changing needs and ensuring the right support was in place; whether that be assessment staff or adaptations to enable people to remain as independent as possible in their own homes.

#### **AGREED**

**That the Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel recommend that Executive Cabinet note the progress updates.**

#### **18. REFRESHED PEOPLE OFFER 2021-24**

A report was submitted by the Executive Leader / Assistant Director, People and Workforce Development outlining a number of new and refreshed people initiatives to support the development of the workforce. The report introduced the proposed People Plan for 2021-2024, in addition to the new Competency Framework and refreshed Annual Development Review/Performance Development Review process; the new Greater Manchester Leadership & Management modules; the refreshed e-learning offer, and the refreshed Induction Programme.

It was explained that over the last 12 months, the workforce had to radically change the way that it operated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to keep vital services running, ensuring continued compliance with Government guidance and health and safety guidance. With 89% of the Council's workforce working from home for at least part of their working week, there had been a shift

in the support that most employees required to ensure they continued to feel connected to their colleagues, their manager and to the organisation as a whole.

Tameside Council and Tameside & Glossop CCG introduced the current People Plan in 2018. The plan supported the delivery of the organisation's key priorities by ensuring it continued to attract, develop and retain a talented workforce, so it could continue to deliver and commission high quality services to the citizens of Tameside & Glossop.

The existing People Plan was for the period 2018 – 2021. In light of COVID-19, and current and potential future ways of working, it was important to re-evaluate the strategic aims for the workforce over the next few years, to ensure that:

- our people offer was robust
- we create and sustain a positive culture
- we continue to attract, develop and retain the best people
- we are ready and committed to embrace the opportunities and challenges presented to us by the pandemic and beyond.
- we are able to capture and embed the positive aspects of our changed way of working, increasing flexibility and performance

The proposed People Plan 2021-2024 continued to be underpinned by the organisation's STRIVE values. However, it was proposed that the current value of 'Value Difference' be amended to 'Value Diversity,' to reflect the organisation's commitment to sustaining a culture that celebrated inclusion and the diversity of the workforce and recognised the individual contributions that employees bring.

The Plan continued to play a critical role in embedding values and behaviours, which would enable transformational change, whilst driving continual improvement in delivering the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

The newly proposed strategic aims for 2021-2024 were detailed in the report, and the full People Plan was appended to the report at Appendix A.

Members were advised that a competency framework was a structure that set out and defined each individual competency required by individuals working in an organisation which, when done well, could increase clarity around performance expectations and establish a clear link between individual and organisational performance. A new competency framework, as appended to the report at Appendix B, had been developed to support the Tameside Council and Tameside & Glossop CCG Corporate Plan and People Plan, in addition to the Greater Manchester Reform Principles to enable consistent performance management.

It was determined that the competency framework would first be incorporated into the performance management process, to fall in-line with the refresh of the Annual Development Review (ADR)/ Performance Development Review (PDR) process. The ADR/PDR process had been refreshed, (as attached at Appendix C to the report) to provide the opportunity for employees to complete a self-assessment against the competencies, to support the discussion with their line manager around their areas of strength and development, enhancing the conversation.

Tameside Council and Tameside & Glossop CCG's contract with 'Me-Learning', the online learning provider, commenced in 2017. The contract was renewed in April 2020, and would continue until 2024. It was reported that the number of learning hours completed by employees had increased year on year since the contract began. It was proposed that a 12-month rolling e-learning calendar be created, and managed centrally by the Workforce Development Team, which set out what mandatory e-learning must be completed each month.

Details of the refreshed Induction and Onboarding Programme were also outlined. As the majority of the workforce continued to work remotely and as the organisation continued to shape future ways of working, enhancing the induction programme was deemed essential to ensure new

starters had a positive experience and additional support to connect with their colleagues and other teams.

Further information was provided in respect of the Introduction of the 'Managing Virtual and Agile Teams' training courses. In recent months, the GM HR Directors Collaborative Group set up a Leadership Squad which comprised of a group of workforce development specialists. The group was asked to design and develop a series of management development sessions to address some of the core challenges that managers were currently facing as a result of the ongoing pandemic and associated restrictions. A series of seven modules had been designed to be delivered locally within each authority. The main emphasis of the programme was to support managers who were managing virtual teams, and were designed to be academically light and focused on discussion and experiential learning.

Members were broadly supportive subject to raising concerns about the fitness for purpose of the IT infrastructure and the available training to ensure that the workforce and elected members were able to work productively.

A lengthy debate ensued about what had been good enough to survive an emergency pandemic was insufficient as a working model going forward and members were clear that this need to be looked and a reviewed starting with understanding members experiences and needs let alone the larger piece of work required to enable an effective and efficient workforce.

#### **AGREED**

**That the Executive Leader be recommended to approve that:**

- (i) The organisational value of 'Value Difference' be amended to 'Value Diversity' to reflect the organisation's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;**
- (ii) The newly proposed People Plan 2021 – 2024, as detailed in the report, be approved and be implemented for all Tameside Council and Tameside & Glossop CCG employees;**
- (iii) The proposed Competency Framework, as detailed in Appendix B to the report be approved and be implemented for all Tameside Council and Tameside & Glossop CCG employees;**
- (iv) The Competency Framework be incorporated into the Tameside Council and Tameside and Glossop CCG performance management processes, as detailed in the refreshed Annual Development Review Pack/Performance Development Review Pack as (Appendix C to the report;**
- (v) The proposed 12-month rolling e-learning calendar for all mandatory e-learning courses, as detailed in the report, and the Training Request Form' as detailed in Appendix D to the report, be approved and implemented;**
- (vi) The proposed 'Corporate Induction' e-learning course be approved and implemented for all new starters of Tameside Council and Tameside & Glossop CCG, as detailed in the report;**
- (vii) The 'Managing Virtual and Agile Teams' training courses and any further subsequent courses developed by the GM Leadership Squad Task and Finish Group, as detailed in the report be approved and implemented; and**
- (viii) The 'Managing Virtual and Agile Teams' and any further subsequent collaboratively developed programmes be added to the ILM Assured STRIVE Leadership & Management Development Programme.**

#### **19. EXTENSION TO FRAMEWORK CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF LIFT AND HOISTING EQUIPMENT – JOINT CONTRACT WITH OLDHAM MBC**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Adult Social Care and Health / Director of Adult Services explaining that, following a joint procurement exercise between Oldham MBC and Tameside MBC in 2019 contract awards were made to 3 contractor/ suppliers for the supply and installation of stair lifts, ceiling track hoists, vertical lifts and step lifts. All these installations enjoyed

a 'life of client' warranty. Included also was appointment of a fourth contractor to deliver temporary gantry hoists for the Tameside Moving with Dignity Scheme.

The contract commenced on 1 June 2019 for a two-year period expiring on 31 May 2021. Within the tender, an option to extend the contract for a further 2 years in 12-month increments had been included. The report sought a single 12 month extension to the contract in line with Oldham MBC policy.

It was explained that the four companies had all indicated they were willing to continue for a further 12 months within the terms of the existing contract. The current arrangements continued to move the responsibility of long-term maintenance onto the supplier. The current prices had been in force for the duration of the first 2 years however, the contractors had indicated that they may have to request price increases during the extension period once the effect of Brexit became clearer. Both Councils would work to minimise any price increase but understand that certain material costs had risen since in the intervening period. Having explored other options available, this was the favoured option as it allowed the Council to provide continuity of service and would continue to provide savings in both delivery and long-term maintenance to Tameside.

### **AGREED**

**That the Executive Member, Social Care and Health give approval under Procurement Standing Orders 9.3.1 to extend the current contract arrangements for a further 12-month time period from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2022 as a joint agreement with Oldham MBC.**

## **20. ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT (ARG) UPDATE & ADDITIONAL FUNDING OPTIONS**

The Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth / Director of Growth advising Members that the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) scheme has an unallocated pot of £927,385. If this was spent by 30 June 2021, a further allocation of £1,134,095 would be provided by the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

It was explained that a cross departmental team of officers from Growth, Finance, Audit and Communications had met 3 times a week to monitor promotion and delivery of the grant scheme, to minimise the risk of overspending and fraud and to ensure the correct information had been communicated to businesses in the borough. To date 2,506 ARG applications have been received (as of 11 May 2021), of which 1,670 had been paid, 606 were deemed ineligible and 230 were in processing.

Proposed changes to the ARG would increase existing award levels creating a top up payment to eligible businesses to fully utilise both the remaining funding and further allocation to ensure all available funding was accessed and distributed to support businesses and the economy. The change both reflected the approach being taken across GM and the methodology of the Restart grant, which provided further funding to businesses trading from commercial premises on the business ratings list in sectors severely impacted by the pandemic. Furthermore, this would allow the redeployed team to return to their duties once processing was complete avoiding additional impact on the Economy, Employment & Skills team.

Top up payments would be made following the closure of the application window, on 31 May 2021, and completion of processing of all applications to ensure that the financial liability was fully understood. The top up amounts would be amended to reflect the final financial position and ensure that the available funding was fully utilised but not overspent.

The proposals offered two options:

Option 1 (Preferred option): Provide a top up to all ARG eligible businesses who had applied on or before the closing date of 31 May 2021, which would include those trading from domestic premises, including but not limited to, taxi drivers, driving instructors and mobile close contact beauty or

hairdressing services. This provided a fair and equitable approach to all businesses supported to date due to the impact of the pandemic.

Option 2: Provide a top up to only those businesses who had applied on or before the closing date of 31 May 2021, trading from commercial premises only.

Across GM, the anecdotal intention of all other authorities was to increase award levels through top up payments to businesses. GM Officers reported a preference for a common approach to be followed between authorities with an understanding that each area had differing allocations. Information shared to date, in weekly officer meetings, suggested that there was no intention to open to new applications in any GM area as it was agreed that ARG had been widely publicised. Proactive marketing of ARG directly to businesses had provided the insight that many businesses were aware of the opportunity to apply for a grant but had chosen not to as they had not been severely impacted by the pandemic.

## **AGREED**

**That the Executive Member, Finance and Economic Growth approve Proposal Option 1:**

***'Provide a top up to all ARG eligible businesses who had applied on or before the closing date of 31 May 2021, which would include those trading from domestic premises, including but not limited to, taxi drivers, driving instructors and mobile close contact beauty or hairdressing services. This provided a fair and equitable approach to all businesses supported to date due to the impact of the pandemic'.***

**Once the application window is closed and all outstanding applications are processed, award levels will be confirmed and, working with Finance & Audit, the grant team will apply the top up payments.**

## **21. FORWARD PLAN**

The forward plan of items for Board was considered.

**CHAIR**