

## COVID RESPONSE BOARD

8 April 2020

**Present:**

<b>Elected Members</b>	<b>Councillors Warrington (In the Chair)</b>
	<b>Bray, Cooney, Fairfoull, Feeley, Gwynne, Kitchen, Ryan and Wills</b>
<b>Chief Executive</b>	<b>Steven Pleasant</b>
<b>Borough Solicitor</b>	<b>Sandra Stewart</b>
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	<b>Kathy Roe</b>

**Also in attendance** **Dr Asad Ali, Steph Butterworth, Ilys Cookson, Jeanelle De Gruchy, Richard Hancock, Dr Ashwin Ramachandra, Ian Saxon, Sarah Threlfall, Jayne Traverse and Jess Williams.**

**Apologies for Absence** **Councillor Wills**

### **105. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting on 1 April 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

### **106. RECOVERY FROM COVID 19**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / CCG Chair / Chief Executive & Accountable Officer that set out the content of a GMCA report, which provided early considerations for enabling effective recovery from COVID-19 in Greater Manchester.

It was stated that although recovery arrangements were not yet formalised, a number of recovery issues and considerations had already been raised. These included for example:

- The need to recognise that many of those who will die (and their families) will not receive the service they usually would.
- The environmental impact - the period of lockdown has seen a reduction in pollution levels globally and lessons will need to be learnt about future travel patterns and sustainable living.
- Capitalising on other opportunities to 'build back better', for example by building on positive examples of community cohesion.
- Planning for the relaxation of social distancing which will present new risks and challenges for public services.
- Financial impacts - the need to put organisational finances back on a solid foundation. For example, there will be large hits to council tax, business rates, the airport, Metrolink revenues and other fees and charges, and so there will be a job to assess impacts and make representations to Government. There will also be a need to plan to address additional local financial implications which occur as result of the new national debt.
- The nature/speed of economic recovery – ranging from the number of companies that will decide to 'un-furlough' staff through to the impact C19 will have on consumer choices/demands, future ways of work, supply chain decisions, travel and security. Whole new areas of economic growth could emerge.

- The impact of C19 on creating 'sustainable places'. This is strongly linked to the economy but the nature and viability of places and investments may have substantially changed as a result of C19. This can range from whether small independent retailers choose to re-open in town centres through to the overall demand for office space.
- The health & social impact – ranging from immediate issues of people 'celebrating' being 'released from lockdown' causing pressures for emergency services and anti-social behaviour through to issues which may take a longer time period to identify such as domestic abuse and mental health issues. There will also have been considerable investment in health facilities and ensuring this investment is not wasted for the future will need to be considered.
- The skills impact – ranging from issues of young people not in education, training or employment as a result of C19 through to different skills needs for a changed economic future. e.g. the increased demand for digital/tech skills for a more 'online' economy.
- The public sector service impact - public services will have been under considerable strain for a long period of time, and the impact, finances and adjustment of public services will need careful consideration, not least because of potential future pressures due to further 'lockdown' waves. Some services may be able to be delivered in completely different ways – after several months of 'online service delivery'.
- It will also be important to consider the 'infrastructure investment' that will be needed to support recovery e.g. building back Metrolink, bus, rail services and Full Fibre/other investments the CA/LAs will need to make to support recovery.
- Considering the impact of COVID-19 on Greater Manchester's progress in delivery against other existing strategic objectives, including those set out within the Greater Manchester Strategy.
- Acknowledging and planning for the huge debriefing, learning and evaluation opportunities and requirements which will be presented, from organisational to international level.

In this context the report proposed that the Strategic Coordination Group agrees to the establishment of a Recovery-Co-ordination Group alongside the Strategic Co-ordination Group to provide leadership for local recovery.

It was proposed that the group is established / terms of reference are agreed by the Strategic Coordination Group by 14th April. The Strategic Coordination Group is asked to nominate a lead Chief Executive to chair this Group with officer support being led/co-ordinated by Simon Nokes (Exec Director, Policy/Strategy GMCA).

It was proposed that initial membership of the group includes:

- a local authority Chief Executive (Chair)
- Simon Nokes, Exec Director, Policy/Strategy GMCA to lead/co-ordinate officer support
- a representative from AGMA CCRU / GM Resilience Unit
- a representative from the University of Manchester
- Officers who could provide a strategic recovery focus across the following thematic areas:

- welfare and health/humanitarian assistance
- infrastructure
- environment
- transport
- economy
- community recovery
- emergency services
- communications
- finance

**AGREED:**

- (i) That the report be noted and direction of travel endorsed.
- (ii) That a half-day session be held with Executive Members to consider recovery issues at the appropriate time.

**107. GUIDANCE RE PRIORITISING WASTE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment)/Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods), which informed Members of a guide produced by government to help local authorities prioritise their waste collection services during the coronavirus pandemic.

It was explained that the guidance, which was non-statutory, was to assist local authorities to maintain services during the period affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Circumstances would vary from local authority to local authority and some of the recommendations may not be appropriate for some local authorities. Many local authorities already had contingency plans, which they were now implementing and these should be taken into account in service planning.

The guidance was intended as temporary and government was monitoring developments on waste services provision with local authorities and the waste sector. Local authorities were encouraged to maintain services as much as possible. The contents of the guide may change to align with the latest advice from the government on the coronavirus pandemic. The guide suggested the following priorities:

High priority – These services are the most important and should continue as normal. These services are a legal requirement and/or otherwise there were likely to be severe impacts on environmental and human health if they were suspended completely. Local authority residents were most likely to rely on these high priority services.

Medium priority – If these services were stopped there would be some disruption but the impacts won't be as severe as the high priority services being suspended. There will be less risk to human health than if high priority services were suspended. These services were important although local authority residents were less reliant on these services than high priority services.

Low priority – There would be minimal or no impact or disruption if these services were suspended. There would also be minimal or no risk to human health if these services stopped.

**AGREED:**

**That the Executive note the guidance, which was issued on 7 April 2020, and endorsed the current approach in Tameside.**

**108. ADDITIONAL CREMATOR CAPACITY IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) / Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods), which informed Members of the need for additional cremator capacity and the two options available to the Council for sourcing this.

It was stated that given the unprecedented situation caused by the COVID 19 crisis, the contractor who was replacing the cremators was approached and was able to provide the Council with additional cremator capacity on a temporary basis. These temporary cremators once installed could be kept on to provide the necessary capacity to allow a faster programme completion of the main three burners as per the original capital programme plans. The report set out the details of the following three options:

There were three options available to the Council detailed below.

- Option 1 – Simplified Rapid Deployment Containerised Cremator
- Option 2 – Standard Specification Human Cremator (Containerised)
- Option 3 – Do nothing

**AGREED:**

**That the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) be recommended to approve Option 1 as detailed in this report: Hire, install and subsequently decommission a containerised cremator as part of the Council's planned resilience in the COVID-19 outbreak**

## **109. TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THE LICENSING SERVICE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

Consideration was given to a report of Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment)/Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods), which outlined the temporary changes to the Licensing Service in response to COVID-19.

It was explained that the Council's main consideration when determining licence applications was the protection and safety of the public. The Council was responsible for issuing and enforcing a range of licensing from taxis, premises, animal health and gambling to protect the public. Due to the Covid 19 outbreak the Council was unable to continue to deliver the same level of service and will have to make some changes to overcome some of presenting issues. There was an need to balance complying with the Council's statutory obligations whilst continuing to protect public safety.

In respect of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage vehicles, they were regularly used to transport children during the school run. Elderly, disabled and other vulnerable users also relied heavily on the door-to-door service they provided, as it was often the only way for many residents to access local services.

Currently, many licensed drivers and their vehicles were being used by the Council to deliver supplies to vulnerable residents who were self-isolating and therefore it was still crucial that licences were issued to fit and proper persons and safe, well maintained vehicles.

Members were informed that with effect from 30 March 2020, the Department of Transport granted a 6 month exemption from MOT testing for cars, vans and motorcycles. However, this exemption was only applicable to vehicles that had an existing valid M.O.T, and therefore did not apply to compliance tests for licensed vehicles which were subject to higher standards.

In Tameside, the taxi trade had voiced concerns that due to their current earning capacity, licence holders were unable to afford to pay for their licence and due to many garages closing their business following the government restrictions, they were unable to service their vehicles or procure parts necessary to ensure the vehicle met the Council's mechanical and safety compliance standards.

The Taxi Trade were continuing to request some changes to support them through this period and the Local Authorities across Greater Manchester were taking different approaches to this. On 17 March 2020, the Greater Manchester Taxi Trade Coalition (GMTTC) wrote to all Licensing Managers within Greater Manchester requesting common arrangements regarding dealing with licence renewals and providing an option to defer the payment of licence fees. The letter received from the GMTTC was attached at Appendix 1 to the report; the response sent on behalf of the GM Licensing Manager Group was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

The authorities within Greater Manchester had been unable to agree a consistent approach to dealing with the challenges COVID-19 had posed to the processing of some licence applications and therefore, there were many local arrangements that had been implemented and this had

caused confusion. A table showing the current situation across Greater Manchester and each authority's approach to dealing with licence applications relevant to Private Hire and Hackney Carriages was attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

Some authorities were providing a blanket extension of up to 6 months to all licences relevant to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing regime without issuing new licence plates or badges, instead issuing dispensation letters. This method posed a significant public safety risk and the longer the period that this practice continued, the larger the risk.

The report set out proposed approaches for Tameside with regard to licensing for drivers, vehicles, operators, hackney and private hire fees and annual fees for Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005 licences.

#### **AGREED**

**That the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) be recommended to approve the following service adjustments:**

#### **Drivers**

- (i) Option 1 – Process the driver renewal licence application as usual except suspend the requirement for drivers to submit a medical certificate and allow applicants to complete a self-certification form. The applicant would be required to submit the medical certificate once GP practices resume normal service.**  
**AND**
- (ii) Option 4 – Upon request and where licences are due to expire before the end of June, offer licence holders the opportunity to temporarily suspend their drivers licence.**

#### **Vehicles**

- (iii) Option 1 – To continue to process the vehicle renewal licence application as usual and require vehicle proprietors to submit renewal application forms and relevant paperwork, including insurance via email, and continue to test vehicles to ensure that they are safe and mechanically sound.**  
**AND**
- (iv) Option 4 – Upon request and where licences are due to expire before the end of June, offer licence holders the opportunity to temporarily suspend their vehicle licence.**

#### **Operators**

- (v) Option 1 – Process renewal applications for private hire operator licences which are due to expire as usual.**

#### **Hackney And Private Hire Fees**

- (vi) Option 2 - Offer licence holders an option to defer payment of the fee for a period of 3 months (to be kept under review).**

#### **Annual Fees For Licensing Act 2003 And Gambling Act 2005 Licences**

- (vii) Option 2 – Delay sending out annual fee reminder letters for an initial period of 3 months (to be kept under review).**

#### **110. TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THE PARKING SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Transport and Connectivity) / Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods) which outlined the proposed temporary service changes to

Parking Services in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. It was explained that following the outbreak of the Covid 19 virus, Tameside has been working closely with partners and employees to continue to deliver vital services.

The Council had developed and followed a Business Continuity Plan which had identified the key services that were essential to our residents and businesses. The Council planned to ensure all essential services remained fully operational. At the same time the Council must comply with the advice and legislation enacted by the Government.

To comply with government advice and the requirements of social distancing, the following service adjustments were required. Many services were being delivered differently or more creatively to especially support residents who were social distancing and self-isolating.

- Parking Enforcement, Suspension of the Bailiff Service, and Redeployment of NSL Parking Enforcement Officers
- Suspension of Staff Parking Payments

In considering this item Members discussed the financial impact of the measures and the possibility of suspending car parking fees. Members agreed that a report should be submitted to a future meeting setting out the implications of suspending charges for Council car parks.

#### **AGREED**

- (i) **That the Executive Member (Transport and Connectivity) be recommended to approve the temporary suspension from the 1 April 2020 until 1 Jul 2020 or further review of the following:**
  - (a) **off parking enforcement, on both on-street and off-street locations within the borough until further notice and the subsequent redeployment of a number of NSL Parking Enforcement Officers to critical service areas that require extra resources during this period;**
  - (b) **the bailiff service; and**
  - (c) **Suspend staff monthly contract parking payments parking payments.**
- (ii) **That a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out the implications of suspending charges for Council car parks.**

#### **111. ADULTS SERVICE FINANCIAL SUPPORT RESPONSE TO THE PROVIDER MARKET DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Consideration was given to a report of Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Health) / Director of Adult Services, which outlined the response to Procurement Policy Note 02/20 (PPN 02/20): Supplier relief due to Covid-19 in relation to providers of care in Tameside. The PPN 02/20 note set out that contracting authorities should support providers at risk so they were better able to cope with the current crisis and to resume normal service delivery and fulfil their contractual obligations when the outbreak was over.

Members were informed that Adult Services had reviewed all its contracts and payment terms in order to support providers and were recommending that amendments to existing terms are put in place for the duration of the outbreak covering all contracted services including, care homes, support at home, day services and supported accommodation.

It was essential that providers of social care were supported through these unprecedented times, and that providers were in a strong position to take new referrals on quickly to move people out of hospital care or avoid admissions to an already stretched hospital system. The measures proposed had been devised to support providers financially through improved cash flow and incentivise taking on new referrals in recognition of the two hour discharge guidance and to enable particularly where there are clear cost pressures developing in areas including:

- Increased usage of agency staff (consistently at an increased) where staff are self-isolating.

- Increased staffing required to support in particular residents self-isolating in their rooms at meal times or in supporting the mental well-being challenges created through feelings of isolation.
- In line with Government guidance the increased use of PPE equipment and subsequent cost attributed to this.
- Increased cost of supplies such as food, PPE and equipment – it is widely reported that all such supplies have increased in price (PPE supplies have at least doubled in cost, and that is when supplies are actually available) in the early days of the pandemic.

It is essential to support the sustainability of our providers through the pandemic but also ensure that we have a market solidly in place beyond the current and developing crisis. The amended terms, subject to approval, would initially be agreed until 30 June 2020 and reviewed thereafter on a monthly basis.

The report sought authorisation for the Director of Adult Services in conjunction with the Director of Finance, subject to review as outlined, to approve the extensions going forward.

The report also outlined the Council's response to COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Service Requirement guidance. This guidance set out the requirements for the health and social care economy to maximise the pace at which hospital discharges were completed. The guidance required that the cost of any new care package that was commissioned to support a timely hospital discharge, or to prevent a hospital admission, during this period, was funded via the NHS and an individual was not charged for care during this period of enhanced hospital discharges.

The report proposed that individuals who were discharged into home care or a care home placement were not charged until the government notified the Covid-19 period had ended. Individuals would be financially assessed to determine their ability to contribute towards the costs of their care going forwards but it was not proposed that these charges would be applied retrospectively on the basis that the cost of the care would be funded by the NHS and was therefore not chargeable.

#### **AGREED:**

**That the Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Health) be recommended to agree that all providers be written to with a clear offer of financial support as follows and all proposals will be reflected in related contracts as necessary:**

#### **Care Homes**

- (i) To pay in borough care home providers a monthly gross sum at the start of the month the relevant care home bed fee rates based on 90% occupancy levels (less the places funded by other third parties). The Council therefore guarantees each care home will receive income for 90% of its available beds each month including private and out of borough placements.**
- (ii) Fee rates for occupancy levels above 90% will be enhanced by a premium of 20% per bed. This enhancement is designed to incentivise homes to continue to take new residents in a difficult climate and recognises the additional cost pressures due to staff shortages and therefore agency staff use; increased number of staff due to social distancing measures; and the increased costs attributed to supplies including food, PPE equipment and equipment.**
- (iii) These funding arrangements will be backdated to 19 March 2020.**
- (iv) To take effect with immediate effect for 4 months with a review to be undertaken by 15 July 2020 when the arrangements will cease if not sooner.**

#### **Support at Home**

- (v) To pay the support at home providers a monthly sum at the start of each month which is the average actual hours based on the 3 month period 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2020. This will be a minimum guaranteed amount. If providers deliver in excess of these hours there will be an adjustment made in the following calendar month.**

- (vi) To take effect with immediate effect for 4 months with a review to be undertaken by 15 July 2020 when the arrangements will cease if not sooner.

#### **Day Services**

- (vii) To pay the day service providers a monthly sum which is average actual placements delivered based on the 3 month period 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2020.
- (viii) To take effect with immediate effect for 4 months with a review to be undertaken by 15 July 2020 when the arrangements will cease if not sooner.

#### **Supported Accommodation and other block contract arrangements**

- (ix) Where we have a block contract arrangement in place with providers the Council will continue to pay the contracted rate even if numbers accessing the service reduces during this period.
- (x) To take effect with immediate effect for 4 months with a review to be undertaken by 15 July 2020 when the arrangements will cease if not sooner.

#### **Financially Assessing and Charging for Care and Support**

- (xi) The report proposes that individuals who are discharged into home care or a care home placement under the enhanced discharge process are not charged until the government notifies this Covid-19 period has ended. Individuals will be financially assessed to determine their ability to contribute towards the costs of their care going forwards but it is not proposed that these charges will be applied retrospectively on the basis that the cost of the care will be funded by the NHS and is therefore not chargeable
- (xii) An individual in receipt of a home care package that is increased to ensure their needs can be met in their home environment is not financially reassessed at this time and their contribution remains the same until the end of this period is announced where this avoids a hospital admission.
- (xiii) Where an individual needs to move from a residential to a nursing placement the existing financial contribution is maintained until a revised contribution is calculated at the end of this period where this avoids a hospital admission.
- (xiv) When an individual is assessed as requiring a new care package or care home placement to be commissioned to meet their needs and this has not prevented a hospital admission then the current practice is maintained – the individual is financially assessed to determine their ability to contribute towards their care.

#### **Government Supplier Relief**

- (xv) The Government have made available various supplier support reliefs during the Covid 19 period, some of which are financial. Suppliers should not be claiming contractual relief from a local authority and claiming separate relief from the Government to the effect that a supplier gains an undue advantage by claiming relief twice for the same hardship.
- (xvi) If it is found that any supplier is found to be taking undue fair advantage, or failing in their duty to act transparently and with integrity, then the Council has a right to take action to recover payments made.
- (xvii) Suppliers are also to declare if insurance provision in place for any loss of revenue.

### **112. BUSINESS RATES - RESPONSE TO COVID -19. RELIEFS, GRANTS AND RECOVERY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth) / Assistant Director (Exchequer Services), which set out the Government funded reliefs and grants for businesses in response to the economic position arising from COVID-19, and highlighted the

expected loss of income to the Council in respect of monies owed as recovery activity is suspended for the foreseeable future.

In the budget on 11 March and on 17 March 2020 the Chancellor announced an extension to a number of business rates reliefs already in place and the award of grants of either £10k or £25k depending on rateable value and eligibility criteria. The new reliefs were set out in the report.

Small Business Rates Relief had been in place for a number of years and eligibility was based on a property rateable value of less than £15k and the number of properties in use. The effect of being awarded SBRR was that 100% relief was granted which meant that no rates are payable in that financial year. There are 3,810 eligible businesses in Tameside that would have no rates to pay this financial year as they were awarded 100% Small Business Rates Relief (SBRR). The total estimated cost of this was £9.736m. The Chancellor announced that a £3k grant be awarded to businesses in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief in response to the COVID-19 economic crisis, which was subsequently increased on 17 March 2020 to a £10k grant. This meant that approximately £37m in grants would be paid to eligible businesses in Tameside in respect of Small Business Rates Relief qualifiers. This grant was to help small businesses meet their on-going costs and would not have to be repaid. The Business Rates Service had identified eligible businesses and letters and application forms were sent out on 30 March 2020 to those businesses. Sample letters and application forms were also available on the Council's website.

Retail Relief had been extended to include not only retail sector but to also include the leisure and hospitality sectors such as cinemas, museums, restaurants, gyms, bars, for example and a whole range of other businesses open to the public. The Expanded Retail Relief, (now known as Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief), meant that 100% relief was awarded to any eligible business and so had no business rates to pay during 2020/21. There were 882 eligible businesses in Tameside that will qualify for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief (RHLLR) and have no rates to pay this financial year at an estimated cost of £25.2m.

The Chancellor also announced that eligible businesses receiving Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Relief should also receive a grant of £10k if the rateable value of the premises was up to £15k or a grant of £25k if the rateable value was over £15k and under £51k and subject to current state aid rules. This grant was to help businesses meet their on-going costs and will not have to be repaid. There were 345 eligible businesses in Tameside that meet the criteria for the £25k grant and 316 eligible to receive the £10k grant and all 661 of these are also in receipt of the RHLLR. The cost of this is estimated to be £11.785m.

Members were informed that a new Business Rates bill would be sent to all businesses in receipt of a relief which showed the relief entitlement. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the estimated numbers and values of reliefs and grants by category.

The government had also announced a series of support measures for businesses and working age claimants of Council Tax Support. 4,739 businesses would not have to pay any business rates in 2020/21, total estimated relief cost £35m which would be fully funded by Government Grant. 4,014 businesses may be eligible to receive £10k grant funding subject to eligibility, total estimated grant funding cost £40.14m, which will be fully funded by Government Grant. 345 businesses may be eligible to receive grant funding of £25k subject to eligibility, total estimated grant funding cost £8.6m, which will be fully funded by Government Grant.

The emerging economic position indicated that collection and recovery of monies in respect of business rates in 20/21 was likely to be difficult and which may impact on the Council's overall budget position. As at 31 March 2020, total business rates arrears were £3.971m (equivalent to approximately 7% of net rates for 2019/20) with no recovery action now taking place on these arrears until further notice. Approximately £8.7m of business rates income was due to the Council for the period April to June 2020. Where these amounts were not paid and fall into arrears, no recovery action could currently be taken, and as the level and age of arrears increases, the prospects for recovery were diminished.

**AGREED:**

**That the Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth) be recommended to agreed:**

- (i) The current position on Government funding for business rates payers is noted;**
- (ii) The risk of lost income due to reduced collection rates and the suspension of recovery action is noted. Net business rates due in the period April to June 2020 are approximately £8.7m, in addition to £3.9m of arrears at 31 March 2020. No recovery action is now taking place until further notice. Where amounts due are not paid and fall into arrears, no recovery action can currently be taken, and as the level and age of arrears increases, the prospects for recovery are diminished.**

**113. COUNCIL TAX - COVID -19 HARDSHIP FUND 2020 TO 2021**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth) ) / Assistant Director (Exchequer Services), which detailed the Council Tax Hardship Fund announced by the Chancellor on 11 March 2020 in response to COVID-19, payable at a rate of up to £150 to Council Tax Support claimants of working age. The government has awarded Tameside £2,158,109 for this purpose.

The Government had made clear that the expectation is that the majority of the hardship fund would be used to provide council tax relief, alongside existing local Council Tax Support schemes. On 24 March 2020 the Chancellor announced a £500 million hardship fund in response to the COVID-19 crisis with the aim of providing Council Tax Relief to economically vulnerable people and households affected by the coronavirus.

The hardship fund should be used to provide a £150 reduction to the Council Tax liability of each working age household in receipt of Council Tax Support according to Government guidance. It was for the Council to decide locally how any remaining monies, if there are any, should be distributed.

Tameside has been allocated a Council Tax hardship fund of £2.15m and a Hardship Fund of £2,158,109.

The Council Tax hardship monies should be administered in accordance with the guidance provided by the Government to initially award up to £150 to each working age Council Tax Support claim and new Council Tax Support claims made in 2020/21. The current Council Tax Hardship Policy should be amended to reflect the £150 to be awarded to all working age recipients of Council Tax Support subject to potential funding constraints. Proposals on the administration and how any excess funds may be awarded for Council Tax purposes, are detailed through the Councils existing Hardship (Section 13a) Policy.

The COVID-19 crisis was expected to have a significant impact on the collection and recovery of Council Tax during 2020/21 due to loss of employment, increase in Council Tax Support claims, suspension of issuing recovery documents, cancellation of Magistrates Court hearings and enforcement action. The estimated potential loss over a 2 month period was £3.26m. Council Tax collection was monitored monthly as was Council Tax Support scheme costs both of which would impact on the Councils overall budget position.

**AGREED:**

**That the Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth) be recommended to agreed:**

- (i) Payment of £150 be paid to all existing and new working age Council Tax Support claims, subject to funding, in 2020/21.**
- (ii) Any remaining funds to be administered under Section 13a Hardship Policy on a case by case basis, with review of remaining balance in December 2020.**

- (iii) **That the potential loss of income arising from COVID-19, estimated at £3.26m for a 2 month period, and which may impact on the Councils overall budget position be noted. This will be reviewed in July 2020**

#### **114. TEMPORARY SERVICE CHANGES ACROSS THE OPERATIONS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS DIRECTORATE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19.**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) / Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods) which outlined the temporary service changes across the Operations and Neighbourhoods Directorate in response to COVID-19. The report focused on the functions that were under the portfolio of the Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment.

It was explained that the Council had developed and followed a Business Continuity Plan which had identified the key services that were essential to our residents and businesses. The Council planned to ensure all essential services remained fully operational. At the same time the Council must comply with the advice and legislation enacted by the Government.

To comply with government advice and the requirements of social distancing, the following service adjustments were required. Many services were being delivered differently or more creatively to especially support residents who are social distancing and self-isolating.

##### **Waste and Transport Services**

As one of the Council's key priorities in this health emergency, every effort will be made to ensure that the functions of disposing of refuse and recycling continue effectively. To this end staff in lower priority services would be redeployed to fulfil functions in Waste, both as loaders and drivers. Fleet Mechanics also provide an essential service, repairing and maintaining waste trucks and response vehicles. If necessary, agency staff will be procured to provide added staff resilience both within the Waste Service and the Fleet Garage.

##### **Youth Service**

Youth Service Clubs were suspended until further notice. In addition no face to face events or activities run by Youth Service would take place. The Youth Service would be redeployed to respond to any youth anti-social behaviour in the borough.

##### **Engineers**

The Engineering Service would respond and make safe any highways, lighting, flooding or structural asset emergency. The winter risk management and gritting service would remain a priority and staff would continue to deliver this service. There would be a review of the current engineering capital programme and temporary delays would be put in place for planned infrastructure works.

##### **Operations and Greenspaces**

All scheduled events within public parks and playgrounds would cease until further notice.

Ashton Indoor Market would introduce priority access times for vulnerable residents and designated key works. Between 9-10am vulnerable residents will be given a priority shopping period. General shoppers (including key workers) can shop between 10am – 4pm. The Market Hall would close at 4pm, and the key worker pickups would continue between 4-6pm.

##### **Public Protection and Regulatory Services**

2.10 In order to build resilience and maintain public order, the CCTV staff shift pattern would increase to a 12 hour shift. Licenced staff would also be redeployed from other service areas to support the service. The public access Licencing Counter at Tame Street would be closed. All applications for licences would be processed through the website, via telephone and email. Programmed regulatory work including Food Hygiene & Trading Standards Inspections, inspections of HMO's and Authorised processes would cease until further notice.

### **Bereavement Services**

This service would remain operational, however services would be delivered differently. The number of mourners within our Crematorium and Chapels will be restricted to 10. The chapel was large enough to ensure that mourners were able to adhere to the 2 meters social distancing recommendation. There would also be no access to the reception or waiting areas. Mourners would be asked to remain in their cars until notified by the funeral director to enter the chapel. No mourner will be permitted within the crematory to witness the cremation.

### **AGREED:**

**That the Executive Member ((Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) be recommended to approve the following for the next 12 weeks from the date of this decision:**

- (i) That the service moves to its critical business continuity plan to concentrate all efforts on maintaining the Council's waste, transport and bereavement services, which are the directorate's most critical of services in light of Covid 19**
- (ii) The closure of Youth Service clubs and activities**
- (iii) Cessation of all organised activities and events in parks and playgrounds**
- (iv) Alteration as is seen fit to the opening times for Markets, including priority access times for the vulnerable and key workers.**
- (v) Alteration of shift patterns within the CCTV service, increasing the shift pattern to 12 hours.**
- (vi) Closure of the public access Licencing Counter at Tame Street, the service will be delivered through the web, telephone and via email**
- (vii) Cease the programmed Food Hygiene & Trading Standards Inspections, where inspections of HMO's and Authorised Processes Inspections will be carried out where there are high risk public health concerns.**
- (viii) Cease some enforcement functions to ensure capacity to enforce the Health Protection (Coronavirus Business Closure) Regulations 2020.**
- (ix) Recruitment, redeployment and training of additional staff to ensure continued service provision with Waste and Transport Services.**
- (x) Restrict attendance at funerals at Council Crematoria and Chapels to 10 mourners subject to any further government guidance, which may reduce this to zero.**
- (xi) Temporary closure to the public of the crematoria reception, waiting area and crematory.**
- (xii) The scattering of cremated remains with families present, or the placing of cremated remains in memorial sanctums etc. with families present, to be temporarily suspended.**
- (xiii) Access and changes to the Book of Remembrance is withdrawn.**

### **115. TEMPORARY CHANGES TO THE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19.**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Housing, Planning and Employment) / Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods) which outlined the temporary service changes under the Community and Homelessness team in response to COVID-19. This report focussed on the functions that were under the portfolio of the Executive Member (Housing, Planning and Employment).

The Council had developed and followed a Business Continuity Plan which had identified the key services that were essential to our residents and businesses. The Council planned to ensure all essential services remain fully operational. At the same time the Council must comply with the advice and legislation enacted by the Government.

### **Homelessness Services**

The Customer Services walk in facility has been suspended to public access until further notice. Working with the Council's commissioned service provider, Jigsaw Homes, Housing Advice would still be delivered either by telephone, the website or via the dedicated email address. Information on

how to access these services had been publicised on the Council's website and notices had been posted on the public entrance to the Tameside Housing Advice offices.

The Community Safety and Homelessness Team were working alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and other city region partners to acquire emergency hotel accommodation, and private rented housing for the homeless and those sleeping rough in Tameside & across Greater Manchester in order to provide effective self-isolation areas for these vulnerable service users.

**AGREED:**

**That the Executive Member (Housing, Planning and Employment) be recommended to agree:**

- (i) The closure of the face-to-face counter at Tameside Housing Advice.**
- (ii) To note that the statutory homelessness services, provided by the Council's commissioned partner Jigsaw Homes, will continue to be provided via the telephone and web-based methods.**
- (iii) The Council will work with other Greater Manchester authorities and the combined authority to commission self-isolation facilities for homeless and rough-sleeping service users.**

**116. TEMPORARY SERVICE CHANGES TO CULTURE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES, INCLUDING COUNCIL EVENTS IN RESPONSE TO COVID 19**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage)/ Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods) which outlined the temporary service changes to Cultural and Customer Services on public health grounds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. These changes include temporary building closures, an increased online offer, and the postponement and/or cancellation of events and activities to follow the national guidelines on social distancing.

The Council has developed and followed a Business Continuity Plan which has identified the key services that are essential to our residents and businesses. The Council plans to ensure all essential services remain fully operational. At the same time the Council must comply with the advice and legislation enacted by the Government.

**Customer Services and Call Centre**

The Customer Services walk in facility was currently suspended to public access until further notice. During this period the following services would still be provided either by telephone or via the dedicated email addresses: Council Tax, Housing Benefits, general Council services, Foodbank Vouchers and Vulnerable Resident help and advice. Information on how to access these services will be publicised on the Council's website.

**Libraries**

Public access to libraries had been suspended until further notice. In addition no face to face events or activities run by library staff would take place until further notice. During this period a full suite of digital services would be provided, including e-books, e-audio books, digital magazines and newspapers, and other online resources. Residents would be able to manage their library account online, including renewing any items, managing reservations, and changing personal details.

**Home Library Service**

The Home Library Service would temporarily cease in order to comply with guidance on social distancing.

**Local Studies Archives**

The Tameside Local Studies and Archive Centre would be closed to the public until further notice. All scheduled events have been cancelled until at least the end of May in response to the latest government advice to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Online resources will be made available and updated during the closure. Email research enquiries will be responded to during the closure period.

### **Museums and Galleries**

Portland Basin Museum and Astley Cheetham Art Gallery would be closed to the public. All of the scheduled events and activities would be cancelled during this period. During the closure period the public can access online resources via the website. Email research enquiries will be responded to during the closure period.

### **Tameside Welfare Rights & Debt Advice**

This service would remain operational; however the service would be delivered differently. For cases which were currently open, help and advice would be provided by telephone, email and letter. The service would continue to support residents in challenging benefit decisions but this would not include representation in person at appeal tribunal.

### **AGREED:**

**That the Executive Member (Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage) be recommended to approve the following service adjustments be put in place for the next 12 weeks to address COVID 19 situation subject to review:**

- (i) The temporary closure of the following customer-facing Council buildings:**
  - **Libraries across Tameside MBC**
  - **Portland Basin Museum**
  - **Astley Cheetham Art Gallery**
  - **The Local Studies and Archives Centre**
  - **Customer Services, Tameside One**
  - **Welfare Rights and Debt Advice, Tameside One**
- (ii) Representation by Welfare Rights and Debt Advice staff at Tribunals or County Court Hearings will not be carried out in person but through telephone and written advice.**
- (iii) The cancellation and/or postponement of all events and activities until safe and prudent to do so.**
- (iv) The cessation of Library fines during the closure of Library buildings.**
- (v) The cessation of the Home Library service.**

### **117. MONTH 11 FINANCE REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)/CCG Chairs / Director of Finance, which explained that with a gross budget for 2019/20 in excess of £949m, as at 29 February 2020 the Integrated Commissioning Fund had a forecast net spend of £619.050m, against a net budget of £619.022m. The forecast outturn at month 11 was now a small overspend of £0.28m, an improvement of £0.090m since period 10. The improved position since period 10 was due to an improvement in the Growth Directorate mainly due to better than expected planning fee income. However there remained a number of key overspends which place pressure on future year budgets.

It was stated that the regular monitoring report had been drafted before the emerging impact of the coronavirus which would create significant financial changes for the council the CCG particularly the national & local economy not experienced before.

### **AGREED:**

- (i) That the significant level of savings required during 2019/20 and beyond to deliver a balanced recurrent economy budget together with the related risks which are contributing to the overall adverse forecast be acknowledged.**
- (ii) That the significant financial pressures facing the Strategic Commission, particularly in respect of Children's Social Care and Acute Services be acknowledged.**

## **118. 2020/21 INTEGRATED COMMISSIONING FUND AND RISK SHARE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)/CCG Chair/Director of Finance, which provided a summary of the 2020/21 revenue budget allocations of the Tameside and Glossop Integrated Commissioning Fund (ICF) together with updated risk share arrangements. It was stated that the ICF would be stringently monitored and reported to Members via monthly consolidated revenue monitoring reports during 2020/21

Members were reminded that the Integrated Commissioning Fund, subject to the restrictions of current legislation, aimed to include the total annual CCG (Tameside and Glossop) resource allocation and Council (Tameside) budgets so far as legally possible. As reported previously, the creation of a single fund has resulted in a number of benefits including:

- Streamlined governance and decision making.
- Strengthening of cohesive Strategic Commission budget leadership.
- Single Strategic Commission budget resource reporting.
- Single accountable body for the ICF – the Council is currently the lead accountable organisation for the ICF.
- Rationalisation of any existing joint funding arrangements between the Council and CCG.
- Provision of support to strategic place based service provision priorities.
- Alignment to the Strategic Leadership structure.
- All health and Council service resource decisions are intrinsically linked to the corporate strategic priorities.

In March 2017, the CCG Governing Body and Council Executive Cabinet, agreed a risk share agreement between the Council and the CCG. The original agreement was in two parts.

- Part A was to be funded from £10m of earmarked Council reserves and was available to the CCG to draw down over two years a maximum of £5m a year through a reduction in the CCG contribution to the Section 75 pooled fund and a corresponding increase to the fund by the Council. It was intended that this be available for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 financial years, with the reverse happening in 2019/20 and 2020/21 to replenish the reserve. In reality only £4.2m of the risk share was enacted in 2017/18, with zero 2018/19 and the £4.2m repaid in 2019/20.
- Part B of the risk share, each organisation shared financial risk in proportion to the respective net budget contributions they make into the Integrated Commissioning Fund (ICF), excluding any CCG expenditure associated with the residents of Glossop as the Council has no legal powers to contribute to such expenditure. In 2018/19 an updated risk share proportion arrangement was approved of 68% for T&G CCG and 32% for the Council, due to the inclusion of all Council budget allocations in 2018/19. This proportion also applied in 2019/20. The risk share was also subject to a cap in prior years as follows:
  - a cap of £2.0 million is placed on CCG related risks that the Council will contribute to
  - a cap of £0.5 million is placed on Council related risks that the CCG will contribute to.

As the financial system had stabilised, Part B of the risk share was no longer required. However, to maintain system flexibility it was prudent to retain the original £10m risk share arrangement on a rolling four year basis, restarting from 1 April 2020 with the Council having the ability to agree to increase the value of Council resources within the ICF by a maximum sum of up to £5.0 million in 2020/21 and 2021/2022 on the condition that the T&G CCG agree a reciprocal arrangement in 2022/23 and 2023/24 should this be necessary.

The risk share arrangements will be kept under review and revisited if circumstances change significantly.

**AGREED:**

**That the Strategic Commissioning Board be recommended to:**

- (i) To note the 2020/21 revenue budget allocations for the Integrated Commissioning Fund.**
- (ii) To approve the extension of the £10m risk share agreement for 2020/21 to 2023/24 as detailed in section 4.**
- (iii) To note the five year forecasts and projected funding gap for the Strategic Commission.**
- (iv) To note that Tameside Council will continue to be the host organisation for the Section 75 pooled fund agreement.**

## **119. CORPORATE PLAN SCORECARD**

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader/Joint Chairs of CCG/ Assistant Director - Policy, Performance & Communications).

**AGREED:**

**That this item be deferred to meeting on 15 April 2020.**

## **120. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH LOCAL TRANSFORMATION PLAN REFRESH AND BUSINESS CASE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Executive Leader/Director of Commissioning, which explained that the transformation of children and young people's mental health was led locally. This meant local professionals from across the NHS, public health, children's services in local authorities, education and youth justice working together with children, young people and their families to design and provide the best possible services for their locality.

To support this local leadership and accountability, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were expected to work with commissioners and providers across health, social care, education and youth justice and the voluntary sectors, to develop local transformation plans for children and young people's mental health.

Local transformation plans were first published in 2015 and set out how local services would invest resources to improve children and young people's mental health across the "whole system". These plans were 'living documents' and local areas were asked to refresh, and CCGs to republish them, on CCG websites every year. The Tameside and Glossop Children and Young People's Local Transformation Plan was appended to the report.

The report summarised the Local Transformation Plan priorities and presented the case for additional investment to drive onward in the expansion and transformation of mental health support for children and young people and their families. The priorities for 2020/21 were:

- Working together in neighbourhoods to make it easier to get help
- Increasing access
- Listening and shaping services with young people
- Focus on families as the best resource
- Increase support for those most vulnerable to improve outcomes

**That the Strategic Commissioning Board be recommended to:**

- (i) recognise the progress to date;**
- (ii) comment on the priorities for 2020/21;**
- (iii) note the proposal to pool TMBC and CCG funding to co-produce and commission a new children and young people's emotional wellbeing offer**
- (iv) Approve the additional investment as follows:**

Element	Proposed investment
CYP Emotional Health and Wellbeing Development - to be commissioned through Innovative Partnership Commissioning	£64,000
Youth MH First Aid Training	£15,000
Early Help Single Access Point - Senior MH practitioner	£50,000
Extend CAMHS to meet needs of 16 and 17 year olds	£95,000
Additional capacity for Autism pathway	£130,000
Raising Confident Kids	£50,000
	<b>£404,000</b>

## 121. IRO ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Deputy Executive Leader / Director of Children's Services, which explained that the purpose of the annual report was to provide an account of the activity of the Independent Reviewing Service for Looked After Children between 1 April 2018 and the 31 March 2019. The report analysed arrangements for looked after children and the effectiveness of the Independent Reviewing Officer service in ensuring that the Local Authority as a Corporate Parent discharges its statutory responsibilities towards those children who are looked after.

### **AGREED:**

**That the report be noted.**

## 122. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Members noted that the following reports were scheduled for the meeting on 15 April 2020:

- Proposed Update To Bereavement Services In Response To Covid 19
- Further Temporary Service Changes Across The Operations And Neighbourhoods Directorate In Response To Covid-19.
- Sport And Leisure Facility Temporary Closure
- Operational Buildings Closure

**CHAIR**