

EXECUTIVE BOARD

15 April 2020

Present:

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

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

123. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on 8 April 2020 were accepted as a correct record.

124. COVID 19 DASHBOARD - KEY INDICATORS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / CCG Chairs / Director of Governance & Pensions /Assistant Director - Policy, Performance & Communications, which provided a high level summary of number of cases and number of deaths for Tameside and also included some other useful information from the modelling work around predictions:

- NHS Improvement dashboard- this provided a dashboard view of the ICFT data around Covid-19.
- The system view page gave information around the ICFT in relation to flow which would be useful to see around pressures etc.
- The GM and National view tab gave a map of the cases and the rank and rate of cases.
- The next page gave information on NHS111 Online and a view of the increase in demand for this service split by age and sex as well as pathways.
- NHS 999 & 111 page provided information on calls for symptoms of Covid-19 by week.
- Population page gave some further information around our population.
- The care homes page gave the number of beds available for each locality.
- The GM weekly report gave a provider view of activity against predicted benchmarked.
- Included at the end was a data caveats sheet.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

125. MANCHESTER AIRPORT GROUP EMERGENCY INVESTMENT

Consideration was given to an exempt report of the Director of Finance, which set out a proposed financial investment into the Manchester Airport Group of companies in order to provide financial stability and ensure it was best-placed to react and rebuild business operations as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted. The Director of Governance explained the need for confidentiality and consequences of insider trading.

AGREED:

That Executive Cabinet subject to receiving a full and detailed report and independent expert advice will be recommended to:

- (i) In accordance with paragraph 18 of Part 4, Access to Information Procedure Rules and paragraph 14 of Part 4, Scrutiny Procedure Rules of the Council's constitution, and having consulted with and/or obtained the agreement of the relevant statutory officers and elected members, Executive is asked to approve this matter as urgent, in that any delay caused by the key decision and call-in processes, would seriously prejudice the legal or financial position of the Council or the interests of the residents of Tameside and exempt the above.
- (ii) Approve the proposed arrangements to provide investment by way of new shareholder loans to the Manchester Airport Group alongside the other shareholders (the other nine GM councils and IFM);
- (iii) Approve the increase in the capital budget[of up to £12.95 million] to be funded through prudential borrowing;
- (iv) Approve the Council entering into a legally binding letter of commitment alongside the other nine GM councils and IFM, ;
- (v) delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Finance, Director of Governance & Pensions and Executive Leader to negotiate and finalise the funding package including the Tameside ("Council") shareholder loan as outlined in the body of this report together with any other necessary ancillary documents or agreements to effect the transaction,
- (vi) delegate authority to the Chief Executive, Director of Finance, and Director of Governance & Pensions to approve the detailed arrangements for, and terms of, the shareholder loans and associated documents;
- (vii) delegate authority to the Director of Finance to approve the detailed accounting arrangements for the loan, including the classification between revenue and capital; and
- (viii) delegate authority to the Director of Governance & Pensions to authorise the execution and completion of the Shareholder Loan documentation (and any other necessary ancillary documents or agreements) to put into effect the above recommendations and the proposals.

126. FUNDING FOR QUEST MEDIA

Members received a briefing from the Assistant Director (Policy, Performance and Communications), which explained that as the regions only truly multi-channel media network, Quest media's platforms reached thousands of local residents every day covering a population of over 500,000 people. The role of Quest Media and indeed all local news networks was central to residents receiving the most up-to-date information from a locally trusted source in the current fast paced, rapidly evolving situation.

It was suggested that a purchase of advertising that would run over the next 12 weeks to the value of £20,000 would benefit the borough and help prevent the spread of the virus by reaching the widest possible audience with our messaging. It would also support Quest Media as a key local business to remain operational with much needed revenue. An upfront payment of a quarter's statutory advertising would help with cash flow and immediate difficulties with retaining staff.

The Council's ongoing partnership with Quest Media significantly extended the reach of our messaging through three key sources:

- On Air – Tameside radio transmits on a daily basis across the borough with an average of 80,000 listens per month. Radio was a key additional resource to Council owned channels as it reached residents who may not have televisions or internet access for online platforms.
- Online – Quest Media operated social media platforms and www.questmedianetwork.co.uk where they could provide instant updates that reinforced local and national messaging. They reported 250,000 website page views per month on average, a 905,000 monthly average reach on social media with engagement of over 185,000. The online audience is primarily aged 25-34 with ages 25-54 all being identified as high users.

- Print – The Tameside Reporter and Glossop Chronicle had a weekly readership of over 80,000 with 84% of the 25,000 printed copies delivered direct to the door. The remaining 16% could be picked up from public venues. The readership was primarily an older audience 35-64 but has readership of all ages ranging from teenagers to aged 75+.

The strategy was to utilise the spend within their print and radio to maximise the potential reach of key messaging, target those that were potentially most vulnerable, and extend beyond our own available channels.

The paid for messaging would primarily be based upon the following areas:

- National health guidance – Stay at home / wash your hands
- Localised support for:
 - Business and Employment
 - Wellbeing
 - Mental health
 - Emergency support
 - Service changes and offers
- Community resilience and thanks

AGREED:

That to support the response to COVID-19 (coronavirus) and to directly support our main local news outlet to remain operational as a critical means of reaching our residents with key messages an Executive Decision be made to.

- (i) **approve the purchase and upfront payment of £20,000 worth of advertising with Quest Media over the next 12 weeks**
- (ii) **approve the upfront payment of next quarters statutory advertising fees which equates to £8,500.**

127. PROPOSED TEMPORARY CHANGES TO BEREAVEMENT SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO COVID 19

Consideration was given to a report of Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) / Director (Operations and Neighbourhoods), which explained that the Bereavement Service provided an essential service to Tameside residents, performing a key public health function during the COVID-19 outbreak in ensuring that burials and cremations were carried out in a timely and appropriate manner.

It was stated that the COVID-19 pandemic would lead to a significant increase in deaths over the next few months and it was vital that the Bereavement Service did everything possible to maximise its capacity for dealing with burials & cremations, whilst ensuring that staff within the service were allowed to carry out their duties as safely as possible. In order to protect residents, service providers and staff, all functions which involved face-to-face contact with individuals from outside the service had ceased, or been minimised where it was not practically possible. Some changes to the way the Bereavement Services were undertaken had already been altered. In line with other Greater Manchester Authorities, the number of mourners within Crematorium and Chapels had been restricted to 10. This guidance had also been applied to burials.

Other measures enforced in order to protect the community and staff, included the removal of Hymn and Remembrance books from all venues. Sand boxes were no longer provided at the graveside for families. The scattering of cremated remains with families present, or the placing of cremated remains in memorial sanctums etc. with families present, were temporarily suspended. The electronic touch screen Book of Remembrance had been removed for the foreseeable future.

Consideration had been given to the potential community impacts of some of these changes to the service. An Independent Advisory Group had been established to help advise the Authority on sensitive community issues. A Community Cohesion Officer had discussed the proposed changes

to the service with members of the group who had made a commitment to sharing this information within their own communities and feeding back any concerns.

In order to remain operational and to maximise the service's capacity in the face of the pandemic there were a number of actions the service proposed to take:

- (a) Ensuring that there were sufficient appropriately skilled staff in all parts of the service to allow for the increase in demand and the likelihood of increased staff absence.
- (b) Measures to be put in place to keep staff as safe as possible by protecting them from infection in line with Government guidance, particularly in relation to social distancing and infection control measures.
- (c) Consideration must be given to further measures to deal with the possibility of extremely large number of deaths.

Greater Manchester was working together to address the issues that COVID-19 presented to the region. Additional temporary mortuary facilities had been acquired; 4 'Nutwell' mortuary units had been procured for Tameside Hospital. A temporary mortuary was being established for Greater Manchester at Trafford Park, which would provide up to 4,000 additional mortuary spaces.

Additionally, a 275 space temporary mortuary was to be installed at Tameside General Hospital. This facility, sourced with assistance from the Army, would provide some additional local resilience and would prevent some unnecessary movement of bodies to and from the Trafford Park facility.

In order to deal with the increasing demand on bereavement services it may be necessary for the Council to consider two further service changes:

Cessation of Cremation Services

In order to further minimise the spread of infection and to maintain public health responsibilities, the Council should consider whether it was prudent to provide only 'direct cremation and burial', without mourners and no formal service. Some Councils including; Kirklees, Leeds and St Albans had taken these measures. This change would protect the staff, reducing infection and ensuring a continued service. The circumstances in which the change would be triggered were either a collective decision by Greater Manchester Authorities to alter operational activity or if the Service experienced a lack of compliance by mourners to social distancing or the number of mourners regularly exceeded 10, risking staff safety and the operation of the service. In both cases further consultation would be made with the Executive Member before a decision was taken.

Mass Single Burials

In addition, if the infrastructure was unable to cope with the predicted fatality rates, then a further measure may be to introduce, mass single burials. This would only be resorted to in extreme circumstances, where all other solutions had been considered, and permission to proceed would be sought from the Executive.

AGREED

That the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) consider an Executive Decision recommending:

- (i) The additional staffing capacity and training to support the functions of Bereavement Service be noted.**
- (ii) That the Service moves to 7 day working for Bereavement Services.**
- (iii) The administration functions be moved to electronic paperwork wherever possible; including paperwork submitted by funeral directors and paperwork required by medical referees. Bereavement Services temporarily cease to process memorial applications and concentrate activity solely on funerals.**
- (iv) Physical Registrar checks be undertaken while maintaining social distancing.**
- (v) All services at Dukinfield Crematorium be recorded and the video made available to view free of charge.**

- (vi) **Staff will not enter the properties of deceased persons when dealing with Public Health Funerals in order to find financial or personal details.**
- (vii) **That the Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods be authorised to move to ‘direct cremation and burial’, without any formal committal service, should the circumstances deem it necessary.**
- (viii) **That the Board notes the preparations and co-ordination being undertaken by the Greater Manchester Mortality Planning Group, in particular the additional mortuary capacity at the Tameside General Hospital and the facility at Trafford Park.**
- (ix) **That the Board notes the work being undertaken to install a 275-space temporary mortuary at Tameside General Hospital & the fact that this structure will be exempt from the need for planning permission due to the ongoing emergency situation.**
- (x) **Any further changes to Bereavement Services will be brought to the Executive for consideration.**

128. SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITY TEMPORARY CLOSURE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) / Director of Population Health, which confirmed that the Council's stock of sports and leisure facilities would remain closed until restrictions controlling social contact were lifted. Once the restrictions were lifted then approval to reopen the centres would be sought from the Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Population Health) in consultation with the Director for Population Health.

In line with national guidance advising the UK public to avoid unnecessary social contact, all sport and leisure facilities owned by the Council and managed by Active Tameside closed at 10.30pm on Friday March 20 for an unspecified period. Active Medlock would continue to provide a limited day care service to a vulnerable group of clients during the closure period. However, this may be subject to change based on further national and local guidance/restrictions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic facility closure period, Active Tameside would be providing alternative leisure, health and wellbeing services to keep the general public active, healthy and entertained from home.

In order to reduce the financial impact of the temporary closure Active Tameside had taken up the offer of financial support from central government and furloughed all staff not required to maintain/sustain the company during the period of facility closure. In addition, Active Tameside had business resilience insurance that may be used to fund the remaining 20% of employee costs over and above direct government financial support.

Construction sites had not been asked to close by government, so work could continue if it was done safely. Employers must ensure their workers on-site were able to follow the public health guidance, and they should consider responsible arrangements for ensuring their workers could travel in line with this advice, such as through staggering site hours to reduce public transport use during peak periods.

The Hyde Pool Extension scheme began on site in late February 2020. The scheme was currently on programme. This was due in part to the fact that works to this point and works in the immediate future were restricted primarily to site preparation and ground works. This element of construction work lent itself to introduction and management of distancing measures which were being strictly adhered to on site. The major concern was that the main contractors supply chain would be compromised at some point in the near future which would have cost and programme implications. The impact of this was unknown at this point.

AGREED

That the Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Health) be recommended to agree that:

- (i) **the Council's stock of sports and leisure facilities will remain closed until restrictions controlling social contact are lifted**

- (ii) **once restrictions on social contact are lifted then approval to reopen the centres will be sought from the Executive Member for (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment) in consultation with the Director for Population Health.**
- (iii) **Active Tameside is recompensed for any related costs of existing furloughed employees who volunteer and have the requisite skills to provide support to Council service provision where additional capacity is required due to Covid 19.**

129. WORKFORCE TERMS AND CONDITIONS CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Consideration was given to a report of Executive Leader / Deputy Executive Leader / Director of Governance and Pensions, which set out the specific workforce provisions to mobilise the workforce effectively to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. It was explained that the provisions were to ensure that the workforce was appropriately managed and remunerated for the work they undertook during the response period, which for many would be different to their normal contracted work and ensured that where members of the workforce become sick or were required to self-isolate because of COVID-19 they were not adversely affected.

The proposed arrangements were a temporary measure during the COVID-19 response period and were an extension of the normal terms and conditions; applying employer discretion to the established pay schemes.

It was stated that the COVID-19 outbreak had placed additional responsibilities on the organisation to support the government in their response to the virus and ensure those who were deemed to be the most vulnerable received the appropriate help and support throughout the pandemic. A number of new and additional responses were being developed to address three key areas of new / additional practical needs due to COVID-19 impact:

- Food (growth in Food Bank use and self-isolators unable to access food supplies)
- Medicine (self-isolators unable to visit pharmacists)
- Wellbeing (impact on physical and mental health)

As the demand for cross organisational redeployment was increasing there was now a centrally coordinated redeployment process to provide an overview of how and where the workforce needed additional capacity and where that capacity could be sourced from. It was increasingly likely that the Council/CCG would need to support partner agencies, particularly the care sector to remain resilient, along with accepting the support of partner agencies to ensure key services, like Waste services continued to be able to operate.

All redeployment was and would continue to be done on a voluntary basis, taking into account each individual's circumstances, skills and availability. Where a redeployment opportunity was possible the appropriate training, support and necessary equipment would be provided as part of the redeployment activity, observing the health and safety requirements and safe working practices due to COVID-19.

To achieve the required workforce flexibility and ensure the organisation was able to deliver critical services, statutory responsibilities and the additional COVID-19 support work the following pay principles were proposed for application across the workforce to achieve consistent and fair pay.

- Payment at the employee's rate of pay or the rate of pay for the job if higher, with associated enhancements/allowances, when redeployed to an alternative role for a prolonged period of time to support the COVID-19 response.
- Payment of additional hours/overtime, out of hours pay enhancements (weekend 15% and night rate) and allowances (i.e. sleep in) in accordance with the Council's agreed pay framework for employees that are required to undertake prolonged additional/overtime hours and work that attracted enhancements/allowances to support the COVID-19 response e.g. Registrars, Bereavement Services, Waste Services, Children's Residential Services.

- Payment of additional hours/overtime and unsocial hours payments (i.e. night and weekend working) in accordance with the NHS Terms and Conditions for employees that were required to undertake prolonged work to support the COVID-19 response.
- Overtime was payable in accordance with the Council's pay framework, unless an exception payment was agreed. Exception arrangements would need to be approved by the Assistant Director (People & Workforce Development).
- Temporary amendments to contractual hours to support the COVID-19 response to support service demands and reflect the employee's availability during the COVID-19 period.

For the purposes of payments a prolonged period was deemed to be in excess of one working week, pro-rata for part time employees.

The report also considered arrangements for casual and agency staff and monitoring of sickness absence and payments for during sickness absence.

AGREED:

That the Executive Leader/Deputy Executive Leader consider an Executive Decision recommending that the changes to workforce terms and conditions during the COVID-19 outbreak as follows:

- (i) **Payment of overtime, out of hours pay enhancements (weekend 15% and night rate) and allowances (i.e. sleep in) in accordance with the Council's agreed pay framework for employees that are required to undertake prolonged additional/overtime hours and work that attracts enhancements/allowances to support the COVID-19 response e.g. Registrars, Bereavement Services, Waste Services, Children's Residential Services.**
- (ii) **Overtime is payable in accordance with the Council's pay framework, unless an exception payment is agreed.**
- (i) **Continued payment of an employee's substantive full pay when redeployed to work in a lower graded job role to support the COVID-19 response.**
- (ii) **Payment at the employee's substantive rate of pay or the rate of pay for the job if higher, with associated enhancements/allowances, when redeployed to an alternative role for a prolonged period of time to support the COVID-19 response.**
- (iii) **Temporary amendment to contractual hours to support the COVID-19 response.**
- (iv) **Payment of full sick pay for all COVID-19 absences irrespective of an individual's sick pay entitlement, in order to avoid financial hardship during the pandemic.**
- (v) **Agreement that the normal sickness absence triggers will not apply for COVID-19 related absences.**
- (vi) **Agreement that the organisation will support our partner agencies, particularly the care sector to remain resilient, along with accepting the support of our partner agencies to ensure critical services e.g. Waste Services continue to be able to operate.**
- (vii) **Deployment and payment of agency/contract workers in accordance with the agreed assignment. Redeployment opportunities to be considered and offered to agency workers, as appropriate.**
- (viii) **Payment of casual workers at an average rate of pay during the COVID-19 response.**
- (ix) **Consideration of the impact of COVID-19 when undertaking the next annual essential car user review to determine whether an employee qualifies for the essential car user payment. No detriment will be incurred due to the COVID-19 outbreak.**
- (x) **Continue to apply the organisations normal annual leave carry over arrangements, irrespective of the Government changes which now allow up to 20 days to be carried over into the following 2 years annual leave period.**
- (xi) **Only in exceptional and agreed circumstances will workforce activity proceed i.e. service reviews, procedural meetings and TUPE to achieve a necessary change that otherwise would have the potential to adversely affect individuals, services and/or the**

130. COVID19 PROPOSED RESTRICTED ACCESS TO TMBC OPERATED BUILDINGS

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Finance & Economic Growth) / Director of Growth, which explained that as part of council business continuity plans implemented in response to the COVID19 pandemic all but essential services had been suspended and/or staff were working from home where possible. This had resulted in a significant reduction or suspension in use of many of the council's operational buildings. It was therefore proposed that the buildings listed in Appendix A to the report, which would be recognised as requiring revised FM support and cleaning arrangements, which would be kept under regular review.

Access would be restricted to only essential staff engaged in the safe management of each property to enter the building. The LEP/Robertson were to be instructed to undertake essential maintenance, facilities management and security routines and backlog additional cleaning and maintenance that may be afforded by buildings being unoccupied. Any required changes affecting the Tameside Additional Services Contract (TAS) would be managed in conjunction with the LEP as per normal contractual arrangements. In consultation with the LEP & Robertson, FM staff would be redeployed onto other appropriate council priority activity if relevant and would be the subject of separate reporting, once known.

Buildings would be maintained so that they could be reopened quickly and efficiently as required. Access to buildings contained in Appendix A to the report would be available for urgent access or emergency operational needs if required, upon notifying the Director of Growth.

Appendix B to the report showed the full list of all buildings which would remain fully operational with additional sanitization cleaning where required.

AGREED:

That the Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth) consider an Executive Decision recommending:

- (i) The buildings contained within Appendix A of this report have restricted access until further notice.**
- (ii) That the buildings contained in Appendix A will be available at short notice should urgent access or emergency use be needed, with any such requests being made to the Director of Growth.**
- (iii) Note that the use of all operational buildings including those subject to closure will continue to be managed in a safe and effective way.**
- (iv) That working with the LEP/Robertson FM staff normally employed on the buildings set out in Appendix A will continue to undertake essential routine tasks and maintenance. Surplus capacity will be redeployed to cover sickness absence, essential projects and increased demand in other council priority areas as appropriate.**
- (v) That any further building closures and changes in LEP/Robertson FM staffing and service changes resulting from the closures to be the subject of a further Board report as necessary.**
- (vi) To note a projected loss of income as a result of room hire cancellations in response to COVID19.**

131. HOSPITAL HOME VISITING SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Adult Social Care and Health)/CCG Chair/Director of Commissioning which explained that during the Covid-19 pandemic peak admissions were forecast to exceed hospital bed capacity in both best and worst case scenarios.

It was explained that an emergency procurement had undertaken to provide medical support for Covid-19 symptomatic and non-Covid-19 patients in their own homes who would ordinarily be in hospital. STAR procurement advised that due to the Covid-19 pandemic urgent services could be procured under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. In this context a direct award could have occurred, however to aid transparency four Greater Manchester providers were invited to submit a

tender within 2.5 days. One tender was received and reviewed by officers and clinicians. The tender met the requirements of the specification in full. Following approval of the Tameside and Glossop Strategic Commission it was expected that this service would mobilise within seven days. This was a temporary contract to ease the pressure on local health and care services.

AGREED:

That Strategic Commissioning Board be recommended to:

- (i) Acknowledge and accept the process followed for this urgent procurement under the emergency Covid-19 arrangements.**
- (ii) Note that there is a potential risk of challenge although this will need to be considered in light of the urgency of response required to Covid and the limited options available.**
- (iii) Approve the temporary contract with the award of the proposed contract for an initial term of 3 months at an indicative cost of £154,137.**

132. BUSINESS RATES COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)/Assistant Director (Exchequer Services) which explained that at 1 April 2020 there were 7,600 businesses in Tameside that were liable to pay business rates. Central government had introduced a number of reliefs, which had the effect of reducing the amount of business rates payable to the Council.

In addition to the reliefs the Chancellor also announced that two grant payments were to be paid of either £10,000 or £25,000 subject to eligibility criteria being met. All reliefs and grants were to be fully funded by the government however the administration and determination of eligibility was to be made by the Council.

The report set out progress for the period 1 April to 13 April as follows:

Headline:

- Total grant payments made as at close of play 13 April 744 paid out to a value of £7.6m
- All grants received up to 1 April assessed and paid with exception of queries
- 200 would be put into payment for applications received on 2 and 3 April on Tuesday 14/4, and remainder of 3rd April on 15/4
- Total grants from 6 April received and awaiting assessment 528.
- 938 grant related queries, many awaiting customer confirmation of bank details, application incomplete or registration amendment required
- 2,364 total pieces of grant related work (inc applications and queries) outstanding across all categories
- 2,318 calls taken (mainly by 4 staff before additional resources in place)
- 309 query emails received
- 35 Councillor enquiries
- 13 MP enquiries
- 2,688 web hits

Issues:

- Process very manual and resource intensive and automated as of yesterday to speed up payments with Audit advised
- Additional resources set up on phones and on new systems and now trained so yet to feel impact
- Lot of queries arising from applications i.e. incomplete and/or need to verify bank details
- There are a number of people making unsubstantiated claims.

AGREED:

That the progress being made and the intention to publicise be noted.

CHAIR