

## COVID 19 – EMERGENCY POWERS GROUP

**In attendance:** Councillor D Jones (in the Chair)  
Councillor N Jones  
Councillor T Pickstone  
Councillor J Mason  
Councillor R Caserta  
Councillor S Smith  
Councillor A Simpson  
Dr J Schryer (CCG representative)

**Officers:** G Little – Chief Executive  
L Ridsdale – Deputy Chief Executive  
J Witkowski – Head of Legal Services  
L Kitto – Interim Deputy Finance Officer  
J Gallagher – Democratic Services Manager

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor T Tariq

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The meeting began with an overview of the role of the remit of the Group.

### 1. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF THE EMERGENCY

Geoff Little provided an overview of work being undertaken across the Council and Health and social care sectors to address the Covid 19 emergency. The update including information in relation to testing, personal protective equipment and finalisation of Business continuity plans. The continued development of the Community Hubs and the role of the voluntary sector. As well as work being undertaken to support rough sleepers into accommodation.

In relation to Health and Social Care, Dr Schryer reported that, work is ongoing to support the Acute Trusts, via support for discharge and providing additional capacity in the Community. Establishment of a Covid 19 centres as well as the possibility of additional centres in the Borough and detailed planning in respect of business continuity in relation to GPs and paramedics.

Members asked questions in respect of the quality of data in respect of vulnerable residents, support for those suffering with financial hardship and accessibility of the Contact Centre. As well as the means by which businesses access financial support and current Covid 19 absenteeism rates within the Council.

#### **It was agreed:**

The verbal update be noted.  
Lynne Ridsdale to provide Members with rates of Covid 19 absenteeism.

### 2. SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS (COUNCIL FUNCTIONS)

Members considered the following Urgent Council Decisions:

- Authority to grant 1 year Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers Licences
- Children's services – Market Rate Supplements
- Easter Bank Holiday Payments

Members discussed the Authority to grant 1 year taxi licences and sought assurances in respect of identification, the Deputy Monitoring officer agreed she would raise the concerns expressed with the Executive Director and Licensing team.

**It was agreed:**

That in accordance with the Council Constitution Special Urgency procedure, the Chair of the relevant Council Committees and the Group Leaders agreed that the reports detailed above could not reasonably be deferred.

A decision notice will be published on the Council website.

**3. SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS (EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS)**

Members considered the following urgent Executive Decisions:

- Request to waive procurement rules to allow for the Licensing Service during the COVID-19 Pandemic to permit Personnel Checks, an external company, to undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for "taxi" driver renewals online.
- Freeze Fees and Charges

Members discussed the potential financial risk to the Council and whether there was sufficient government support available to mitigate this risk. As the Council enters the recovery phase all decisions taken in accordance with the Council Constitution Special Urgency provision be reviewed.

**It was agreed:**

That in accordance with the Council Constitution's Special Urgency procedure, the Chair of Scrutiny and the Group Leaders agreed that the decisions detailed above could not be reasonably be deferred.

A decision notice will be published on the Council website.

**4. CHANGES TO SERVICE PROVISION**

Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive provided members with an update in respect of Business Continuity. The update included information in respect of the services that had ceased - redeployment of staff into different roles, namely, the Contact Centre, the Community HUBS/providing additional capacity for priority one services.

**It was agreed:**

The verbal update be noted.

**5. FOR INFORMATION - LIST OF COVID 19 RELATED OPERATIONAL DECISIONS**

**6. FOR INFORMATION - NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**

**COUNCILLOR D JONES**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 4pm and ended at 5.05pm.)**