

**OFFICER**

**TO BE UPLOADED TO THE INTERNET BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

<b>Date:</b> 19/03/2020	<b>Ref No:</b> BGI C19/0001
<b>Type of Operational Decision:</b>	
<b>Executive Decision</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Council Decision</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Status:</b>	
<b>Title/Subject matter:</b> Business changes for review – Urban Renewal (2 teams)	
<b>Budget/Strategy/Policy/Compliance</b> – Is the decision:	
(i) within an Approved Budget	Yes
(ii) in accordance with Council Policy	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b> [Does this decision change policy, procedure or working practice or negatively impact on a group of people? <b>If yes</b> – complete EIA and summarise issues identified and recommendations – forward EIA to Corporate HR]	Yes

## **Details of Operational Decision Taken [with reasons]:**

### **Business changes for review – Urban Renewal (2 teams)**

#### **Private Sector Housing: Private rented sector, owner occupier, empty properties, Houses in Multiple Occupation.**

Home visits will not be undertaken unless the case has been deemed an emergency and that a visit is necessary (risk of death/ no hot water / no heating / defective sanitary provision/fire safety). Any new cases of housing disrepair that come in will be prioritised and our working procedures will be flexible over this period. These cases will be monitored on a daily basis and depending on demand for service if some can be resolved via a phone call, then officers will make any necessary calls or emails/all communication from home.

Any planned (non-emergency) housing inspections over the next couple of weeks are to be cancelled and will be re arranged when the peak of the outbreak has passed and we begin to be more operational.

If it is necessary for a home visit in the case of an emergency, the officer will enquire with the occupier regarding their age and any underlying health conditions and whether they are symptomatic, have been in contact with anyone with symptoms or in contact with anyone who has returned from a county with symptoms in the past 14 days. The occupier will also be asked to take photographs and/or videos to that assessments can be made. That information will be relayed to the manager and head of service and a risk assessment carried out to ensure the safety of the occupier, staff members and contractors of entering and carrying out any necessary emergency remedial action.

Complaints relating to empty properties and nuisance: officers will ask that photographs be provided by the complainant and officers will make effort to contact owner via any details held on council tax but no further action will be taken if we have no details on council data base systems. These cases can be dealt with at a later stage.

The reasons for these changes listed above is to avoid all unnecessary contact with members of the public for the health and safety of our (often vulnerable) service users, staff members and their families at home. The service will be operating at a reduced reactive capacity in light of the current climate but the team will be flexible and adapt as this process continues.

#### **Adaptations Team: Staff provide feasibility inspections for Disabled Adaptations, this service is cross tenure private sector and Six Town Housing.**

New works to properties to be postponed with immediate effect unless the work is of an urgent nature / to enable a hospital discharge and only if the client/ contractor agree to go ahead. Applicants to be advised of this delay by Occupational Therapists.

The reasons behind this are precautionary and in an attempt to prevent unintentional spread of the virus to those that are least able to fight it given the customers in this group have a medical condition and/or disabled and/or children and elderly. Additionally our only full-time Technical Officer is self-isolating due to coronavirus symptoms and has an immediate family member with chronic asthma. We are left with one Technical Officer who works 2 days a week.

If a home visit is required then the following questions are to be asked:


1. Have you recently returned from an affected country?
2. Have you been in contact with anyone that has recently returned from an affected country?
3. Do you have symptoms? High temperature, cough, difficulty breathing?
4. Is the client ok with us coming into their home?

We have a spreadsheet of all active cases for technical officers to update and for Unit Manager to review – this will help reduce our current backlog.

Major Adaptation Panel (MAP) meeting has been postponed, therefore Unit Manager is looking at the options for virtual meetings going forward for existing cases to progress. In the meantime a spreadsheet is being collated of all previously deferred cases and the new cases to be discussed. This will be circulated for comments from all Officers who attend MAP so that decisions can be made on each case whether to approve or not in the interim.

#### **Other approaches**

Urban Renewal have responded to the Coronavirus by gathering information from various bodies' voluntary/public and private to make sure we can signpost those in need for services/advice that we can't offer, such as rent arrears, mortgage arrears for Landlords, food banks and homelessness to name a few . This is an evolving situation and we will continue to support all customers as far as possible.

Decision taken by:	Signature:	Date:
Executive Director or Chief/Senior Officer		27.3.20
<b>Members Consulted [see note 1 below]</b>		
Cabinet Member/Chair		
Lead Member		
Opposition Spokesperson		

**Notes**

1. It is not generally a requirement to consult with any Members on Operational Decisions but where a Chief Officer considers it necessary to consult with the appropriate Cabinet Member and/or Lead Member, they must sign the form so as to confirm that they have been consulted and that they agree with the proposed action. The signature of the Opposition Spokesperson should be obtained to confirm that he/she has been consulted.
2. **This form must not be used for urgent decisions.**