

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 A Simpson
Councillor T Tariq

Officers: G Little – Chief Executive
L Ridsdale - Deputy Chief Executive
J Witkowski – Head of Legal Services
M Woodhead - Section 151 Officer
L Kitto – Interim Deputy Finance Officer
J Gallagher – Democratic Services Manager

**Apologies for
Absence** Dr J Schryer (CCG representative)

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 the six key objectives. The Chief Executive informed members that there will still sufficient critical care bed capacity across GM and the Nightgale Centre has now accepted their first patients and will provide support to hospital via a step down service.

There has been an increase in Covid 19 cases in Care homes each Home has now a named GP. PPE for social care services still remains problematic and further work is needed, this will include working with partners in the Northern Care alliance.

Other work undertaken this week has included; 800 residents (500 in the last week) supported via the HUBS. GMP in enforcing the lock down is working with environmental health and trading standards and representatives from the Council's Licensing Department. Enforcement is generally good across the Borough with only minor problems including young people congregating in parks, small number of parties and similarly a small number of pubs allowing private drinking sessions – Officers have been adopting an approach of engagement first.

With regards to Business; there are £40 million pounds of grants available, £15million has been already distributed. An additional 3million pounds has been made available from GM to support smaller businesses. Additional support will be provided from Deloitte working together with Local authority staff, the primary aim will be to reach out to Bury Business - 327 of which have already been identified. 100 Council staff have been redeployed into community hubs. Plans are underway in respect of recovery and this will embed and capture the new ways of working. Members sought assurances that there was sufficient PPE equipment for the Boroughs Care Homes.

Responding to a question in respect of the use of volunteers, the deputy Chief Executive reported that the numbers of volunteers has increased and the Council is as of yet not making full use of the cohort as the demand is containable. Work is underway to develop the social engagement offer to the wider community including the NHS volunteers.

It was agreed:

The verbal update be noted.

2. VIRTUAL MEETINGS UPDATE

Janet Witkowski, Deputy Monitoring Officer provided Members with an update with regards to the Regulations which now enable Council Meetings to be held virtually.

The report contains details of proposals to include additional meetings of Cabinet and Health Scrutiny, as well as to continue with a scaled back Annual Meeting, scheduled to take place on the 20th May. The update included a commitment to a resumption of all Council meetings as soon as practicable.

Members sought assurances that the Council would ensure that Members had the necessary equipment to be able to fully engage in this process.

It was agreed:

The verbal update be noted.

3. FINANCE REPORT

Mike Woodhead provided a verbal update in respect of the current financial position of both the Council and CCG. The Section 151 Officer reported that it is difficult to accurately predict the financial picture at this stage, as, pressures are still emerging, additional funding unclear, duration and eventual impact of the crisis unknown. To give an idea of scale of the financial pressures - the Council's £5.4m share of the national £1.6b pot might need to cover - increased demand in ASC and Children's services, reduction in Council Tax income, reduction in Business Rates, reduction in rents, trading income, fees and charges.

It was agreed:

The report be noted and further updates be provided at future meetings.

4. SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS (EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS)

Members considered the following Urgent Council Decisions:
Bury Response – Hardship Support for Individuals and Businesses

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.

- 5. FOR INFORMATION - LIST OF COVID 19 RELATED OPERATIONAL DECISIONS**
- 6. FOR INFORMATION - NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**
- 7. EXEMPT REPORT – STRESS TESTING UPDATE**

COUNCILLOR D JONES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 3pm and ended at 4.15pm.)