

COVID 19 – EMERGENCY POWERS GROUP

In attendance: Councillor D Jones (in the Chair)
Councillor P Cropper
Councillor T Pickstone
Councillor J Mason
Councillor R Caserta
Councillor A Simpson
Councillor T Tariq
Dr J Schryer (CCG representative)

Officers: G Little – Chief Executive
L Ridsdale – Deputy Chief Executive
J Witkowski – Head of Legal Services
D Ball – Director of Operations
P Lakin – Director of Economic Regeneration
J Gallagher – Democratic Services Manager

**Apologies for
Absence** Councillor N Jones

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 following areas:

Three high areas of risk: Adult social care, PPE and Testing.

Adult Social Care – continues to be higher acuity of patients in primary care, each care home has been allocated a named GP.

PPE – 53,000 items in stock, daily surveys undertaken to accurately assess stock levels. The Borough has benefited from work undertaken by the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, the Forum has been very efficient in getting supplies to all areas.

Testing – there remains sufficient testing capacity for all front line staff. Further updated information will be shared with Managers and Staff in relation to availability of testing facilities – uptake will be monitored.

Support to Business – National data has predicated a real terms fall of up to 35% in GDP. £22m pounds worth of grants have been distributed to businesses in the Borough – Bury leadership group to target those business that as of yet applied for a grant.

Waste recycling centre – Meeting of GM Leaders agree to a partial re-opening of the waste recycling centres will looking at how this is to be managed, potential date for re-opening is 2nd May 2020.

Future items for consideration by the EPG:
Mental health Update
Recovery plan

Equalities Impact

Questions/Comments

Responding to a member's question the Chief Executive reported that all patients are now tested before discharge, there is also a longer period of assessment following the test before the patient returns to the Care Home. To assist in preventing transmission, the infection control team have provided additional support to Care Homes. OCO commissioning staff are in daily contact with care home staff and additional support is provided by staff in primary care. Councillor Simpson reported that the Council will look at appointing Care Home infection control champions.

Responding to a Member's question with regards to capacity, the Chief Executive reported that there is Critical Care capacity in FGH and across GM, there is also capacity at the step down service provided at the Nightingale unit. Despite available capacity as the number of Covidm19 cases is expected not to peak but instead to follow a longer and flatter trajectory and therefore would not look to reduce capacity in residential homes or hospitals.

Action: GL to provide information in respect of residential/care home capacity levels

Responding to a Member's question, the Chief Executive reported that need to ensure the message about availability of testing is communicated more widely.

It was agreed:

The verbal update be noted.

2. COMMUNITY HUBS UPDATE

Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive provided Members with an update with regards to the Community Hubs.

A key part of Bury's Covid 19 emergency response has been the establishment of five Community Hubs, to provide the infrastructure to support vulnerable people. The initial priority was to support those clinically vulnerable.

This paper sets out proposals to take this agenda forward, building on the success of the Community Hubs and the existing Integrated Neighbourhood Teams and Public Service Partnership Hubs. The model will provide greater capacity to respond to the current emergency and is designed to be retained through the developing recovery strategy to help us move further and faster towards our "Bury 2030" ambition.

Questions/comments

Responding to a Member's question the Deputy Chief Executive reported that the number of volunteers had increased from 100 to 500, and have been triage for those that hold DBS licenses.

With regards to health and social care records, information governance and the handling of personal data will be included in the Community HUB governance arrangements.

It was agreed:

- The Community Hub Teams do not take a role in proactively contacting residents identified as vulnerable to Covid 19. Proactive case management will instead continue within health and care teams and Housing with referrals to Hubs for support outside of service provision as appropriate and referrals will continue to be taken from the National Shielding Contact Centre.
- a digital consultation exercise is held to invite wider communities to indicate what support they would like from the Hubs and the help and capacity they can bring
- communication continues around the work of the Hubs including encouraging residents to self-identify and agree to the Council processing their information in order that we may update our records and provide proactive support
- Community Hubs are developed to provide community infrastructure; manage formal referrals and develop and direct residents to self-help materials
- A Public Service Partnership hub is established to take a data-led approach to management of issues outside the community and health & care remit
- A detailed neighbourhood model of governance is developed

3. SUPPORT FOR TOWN CENTRES

Paul Lakin provided an overview of proposals to support for the Boroughs town centres I response to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Future of Town centres- a number of challenges

- The shift towards online retail will have picked-up pace during the lockdown. We have seen a spate of physical retailers go into administration during the lockdown and more are likely to seek protection from creditors in the next few months. Of all our town centres it is Bury which has a large physical retail footprint and is therefore at most threat from seeing units close and the void rate increase.
- The corporate leisure sector is facing particular challenges associated with shutdown. This will likely lead to a reduction in demand for space from F&B (food and beverage) chains. The existing occupiers in the Borough such as Frankie and Bennies and Pizza Express are facing severe trading challenges. Where there are existing vacant units, such as in the leisure element of the Rock scheme, units may prove difficult to let and could stand empty for a prolonged period.
- Prestwich, Ramsbottom, Whitefield and central Bury have a large number of independent restaurants, cafes and bars. The ability of these businesses to survive will be dependent upon their ability to meet costs during the shutdown and the willingness of their landlords to forego rent payments and the banks being pragmatic where they hold outstanding debt Critical to the survival of these businesses will be the willingness of customers to return quickly and in volumes once the lockdown is over. This could be hampered by a wider economic downturn with consumers generally tightening their belts.

Creation of Town Centre Economic Recovery and Growth Stakeholder Boards
Integration of Town Centres Recovery Work

Questions

Members discussed the future of the Longfield site and Prestwich regeneration. Responding the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing reported that he would envisage the Council would take a bigger role (in partnership with other stakeholders) driven by public funding to drive forward a new vision for Prestwich.

Responding to a question in relation to MPs involvement in the Economic Recovery and Growth Stakeholder Boards, the Director of Economic regeneration reported that the membership is currently being reviewed.

It was agreed:

The report be noted.

4. MUSLIM BURIALS

In the absence of the Director of Operations, the Deputy Chief Executive provided an update in respect of muslim burials.

The total cost of ANY burial in Bury is £2069 which includes £1085 for the plot, £106 for the rights of burial, £777 for the interment (weekdays) and £101 for the marker stone. This charge is the same for all faiths.

It was agreed:

1. Where there is more than one funeral for a registered Bury resident in the same household within the course of 3 months we will reduce burial costs by 25% for the 2nd one, for a six month period. Although this will rarely apply, it would impact on income by approximately £500 for each relevant funeral.
2. The vault cost cannot be reduced as they are charged at cost, the vault is a preference not a religious requirement and therefore a discount on this element should not be applied.

5. SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS (COUNCIL FUNCTIONS)

Members considered the following Urgent Council Decision:
Payments for agency and supply workers

It was agreed:

That in accordance with the Council Constitution's Special Urgency procedure, the relevant committee Chair 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's website

6. SPECIAL URGENCY DECISIONS (EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS)

Members considered the following Urgent Executive Decisions:
Community HUBS

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.

- 7. FOR INFORMATION - LIST OF COVID 19 RELATED OPERATIONAL DECISIONS**
- 8. FOR INFORMATION - NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**

COUNCILLOR D JONES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 2pm and ended at 3.10pm.)