

**Meeting of: Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth)**

**Date: 27 May 2020**

**Subject: Informal Working Group – Covid-Related**

**Attendance**

Board Members:

Additional Attendees:

Cllr N Buckley	Cllr J Lewis – Executive Member for Resources
Cllr K Dye	Cllr J Pryor – Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
Cllr L Cunningham	Martin Farrington – Director of City Development
Cllr P Truswell (Chair)	Sue Wynne – Chief Officer Employment and Skills
Cllr J Taylor	Gary Bartlett – Chief Officer Highways and Transportation
Cllr M Shahzad	Rebecca Atherton – Principal Scrutiny Advisor
Cllr R Grahame	
Cllr N Dawson	Apologies: Cllrs Goddard, Hall Maqsood, Mulherin, Eve Roodhouse
Cllr P Wadsworth	

1. This was the second Infrastructure, Investment and Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board meeting to be held remotely. It was a private working group session rather than a public meeting.
2. The purpose of this meeting was to provide Members with an overview of relevant key actions and decisions that have been taken by the Council during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Cllr Truswell invited Martin Farrington to provide an introductory briefing to the Board. Martin provided an update on the administration of Government grants to local businesses, informing the Board that grants have been paid out to 11,000 individual companies.
4. During the administration process it was noted that eligibility criteria precluded some smaller local businesses from accessing much needed funding. These issues were fed back to Government and the subsequent decision to introduce a 'top up' scheme for smaller organisations has been welcomed. It was noted that in Leeds it has been proposed that 10% of the allocated 'top up' funding should be ring fenced for small charities.

5. Cllr Lewis highlighted the hard work of the officers administering grants and the speed in which they processed the payments.
6. Gary Bartlett updated the Board on measures to enable social distancing in city and district centres. He provided an overview of the first phase of measures including payment widening, which have been completed in the city centre and provided an update on the implementation of phase 2 proposals. The second phase has seen pavement widening and extended footways put into place in district centres such as Otley, Armley, Chapel Allerton and Morley. It was also noted that major scheme work has continued during the lock down period with social distancing in place. Consultation on phase 3 measures was discussed along with the potential to introduce 'school streets' in more areas of the city following an initial trial.
7. Members of the Board asked for further information about the school streets programme and the Board discussed an aspiration to roll out the project in different areas of the city. It was noted that there would be challenges to address with funding and resources should there be a city wide roll out of the approach.
8. Gary went on to provide an update on the public consultation launched on the commonplace platform, welcoming the scale of public responses. In response to member queries Gary confirmed that thousands of responses were received within the initial 10 days of the consultation and acknowledged the scale of the challenge that presents in terms of review and response given capacity within the service. Gary confirmed responses would be discussed with ward members and the potential sites prioritised.
9. Members sought clarification about the receipt and distribution of Government funding for active travel. Gary confirmed that the funding is likely to be passported to the local authority via WYCA. Some concern was expressed about Government suggestions that funding could be received incrementally. However, work is proceeding at risk given the need to ensure safe public spaces and safe travel.
10. The Board were reassured that the investment in temporary barriers and equipment would provide long-term benefits given the potential to re-use those assets in future projects.
11. Sue Wynne provided an update on the numbers of universal credit claimants in the city. The figures for April were discussed and the significant upward trend in claimants highlighted. Sue agreed to share the breakdown of claimant numbers by ward with Board members after the meeting [*information provided*]. Sue noted that 13 wards now have claimant rates in double figures with 21.4% of the working age population in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill now claiming universal credit, which would translate to an increase of 892 claimants. Concern was expressed about the impact of this trend on the most deprived areas of the city.
12. Sue outlined the offer of support being provided to those looking to move into employment and highlighted the number of people successfully supported into work, particularly within the care sector. The Board discussed the move to provide a stronger online offer and the recommissioning of next year's adult learning programme. The Board were updated on work to retrain online learning tutors to use Google Classroom and the development of two new websites which are due to go live in July.

13. The Board discussed the priority areas for work programming over the next two remote meetings and into the autumn cycle. Immediate priorities included transport, sustainable development, inclusive growth and digital inclusion. A request was made for ongoing updates on the progress with the commonplace consultation.
14. It was agreed that Flood Risk Management should be taken in the autumn so as to allow members to focus on issues more closely associated with the coronavirus response and associated recovery plan over the next two sessions.
15. Members of the Board remain committed to pursuing an inquiry into road safety but agreed that it should not be progressed while meetings are held remotely due to the additional sensitivity around engagement with campaigners directly affected by the most serious consequences of road traffic accidents.
16. The next Board meeting will take place in public (albeit remotely) on 25 June at 10.30am. There will be a pre-meet for members at 10.15am.