

Report of Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Children and Families)

Date: 8th July 2020

Subject: Update on Coronavirus (COVID19) pandemic – Response and Recovery Plan

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides the Scrutiny Board with an update on the ongoing progress made by the council working with partners and communities in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The Council's Chief Executive provided a comprehensive update report to the Executive Board during its meeting on 24th June 2020 on developments surrounding the Council's Response and Recovery Plan. This report has therefore been appended for the Scrutiny Board's attention.
- 1.3 However, due to the fast paced nature of developments of this issue, the relevant Lead Executive Board Members and the Director of Children and Families have been invited to today's meeting to also provide a further verbal update on the latest position with regard to those service areas that fall within the remit of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

2. Background information

- 2.1 The initial governance and delivery structure to drive the response to the coronavirus outbreak, including an initial Response and Recovery Plan, was considered by the Executive Board in March 2020. A further update report by the Chief Executive, which included an updated version of the Response and Recovery Plan, was then reported to the Executive Board during its first public remote meeting held on 22nd April 2020 ([Link to Executive Board meeting agenda 22-04-20](#)).

- 2.2 During April, arrangements were also put in place for each of the Council's Scrutiny Board Chairs to receive regular briefings from their respective Lead Directors and Executive Members to review the COVID-19 response. During May, these arrangements were extended so that, on a fortnightly basis, all Scrutiny Board Members were also being engaged (as part of a remote working group) in those briefings.
- 2.3 The Scrutiny Board held a further working group meeting on 17th June 2020 to consider the update report of the Chief Executive on the Council's Response and Recovery Plan which was reported to the Executive Board on 19th May 2020 ([Link to Executive Board meeting agenda 24-06-20](#)) During this meeting, the Board was also briefed on the latest position with regard to those service areas that fall within the remit of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board, including Schools, Early Years/Childcare Provision, Children Social Care and Children's Homes.
- 2.4 As part of its first public remote meeting, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is continuing to focus its attention on how the Council and its partners are working collaboratively to support all children and their families during such an unprecedented and difficult period.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Due to the fast paced nature of developments of this issue, the Board will be briefed on the latest position with regard to those service areas that fall within the remit of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board. In particular, the briefing will cover the following:
- Children's Homes
 - Children's Social Care
 - Early years/childcare provision
 - Schools

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 An invitation to this meeting has been extended to the Executive Board Member for Children and Families, the Executive Board Member for Learning, Skills and Employment and the Director of Children and Families to provide Members with a further verbal update on the latest position with regard to those service areas that fall within the remit of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The appended report to the Executive Board references the work ongoing to specifically review inequalities in targeted communities, with equality and diversity being built into the consideration of all citizens and communities work.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Within the appended report to the Executive Board, reference is made to the work being undertaken to adapt the version of the Best Council Plan that was agreed at February Full Council to ensure that the COVID context is accurately captured.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 The appended report to Executive Board also acknowledges that as the Council develops its recovery plans, these will incorporate the promotion of more sustainable and healthy movement of people; exploring new ways of working, adopting digital technology and home working; emphasising the value of green spaces and local community as well as looking to focus on green investments.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 Given the significance of the financial implications of coronavirus, arrangements are in place for the Council's Executive Board to receive separate and more detailed reports on this matter. The Council's Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board will also be maintaining oversight of the Council's financial management strategy in accordance with its remit.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 This report has no specific legal implications.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 The risks related to coronavirus will continue to be monitored through the Council's existing risk management processes.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 As part of its first public remote meeting, the Children and Families Scrutiny Board is continuing to focus its attention on how the Council and its partners are working collaboratively to support all children and their families during such an unprecedented and difficult period. This report therefore provides an update on the ongoing progress made by the council working with partners and communities in response to the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. However, due to the fast paced nature of developments of this issue, the relevant Lead Executive Board Members and the Director of Children and Families have also been invited to provide a further verbal update on the latest position with regard to those service areas that fall within the remit of the Children and Families Scrutiny Board.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Scrutiny Board is asked to consider the information presented during today's meeting and determine whether there are any particular issues or areas it would like to focus on in more detail as part of its work schedule this year.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.