

# COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

<b>SERVICE AREA:</b>	Resources
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<b>REPORTING PERIOD:</b>	To 30 May 2020

## KEY ACTIVITY HEADLINES

### Revenues and Benefits

- As of Sunday 31 May, we have made 98.37% (2,414 of 2,454) of payments to applicable businesses.
- We have had the final guidance and further FAQ's for the additional £1.5m of discretionary payments we can make to business and charities. We expect to have a policy for distribution early in June.
- We are still awaiting the updates to our Council Tax systems, which MHCLG are aware of, in order to apply the £150 allocations to the 7,700 recipients of Council Tax Support.

### The Registrars Service

- We have received updates from the GRO on Friday (which is being updated on our website)
  - Marriage and Civil Partnership ceremonies should still not be undertaken
  - Notices of Marriage and Civil Partnership should be deferred.
  - Birth registration is still only in exceptional circumstances (there are Pilots being run)
- Death registration appointments continue to be available within 1 to 2 days of request.

### The Bereavement Service

- Appointments for cremations and burials continue to be well managed with no delays. Our local Key Performance Measure that states whether a funeral at the crematorium is available within 5 days of initial contact continues to be met throughout the pandemic.
- 74 cremation slots are available within the next 10 days as of 29th May. No additional appointments (before 9 or after 4) have yet to be opened over this period which is further indication that service demand has reduced. For Burials we have 1 funeral booked for next week and can accommodate a further 14 if required.

### Property

- We have had 44 queries from tenants on rent and other reliefs with 6 deferment arrangements being set up. 74% of April and 55% on May rent bills have been paid.
- We have continued to undertake site visits to ensure currently "open" premises are compliant with government COVID 19 regulations.

### Finance

- The Council has received almost £11m of support from the Government, but estimated costs are now almost £21m. We still await feedback from the returns we made to MHCLG in 15<sup>th</sup> May.
- The Peterborough allocation further £600m funding linked directly to Care Homes is £1.75m.
- The draft statement of accounts is in final review. The 2019/20 outturn report will go to June Cabinet.

### Procurement

- No new updates further to the revised COVID-19 procurement arrangements now in place.

## RISKS / CHALLENGES (AND MITIGATION)

### Finance, Revenues and Benefits:

- Ensuring staff continue to log expenditure linked to COVID-19 properly. We have an online form to log information. These reporting requirements now reflect updated MHCLG requirements.

- Setting out a new Policy for further BEIS funding. We have had an initial meeting and now gathering information to formulate the Policy. First payments are expected in June across the Country.
- We have seen significant reductions in the Council's commercial and tax income due to Covid-19 restrictions in April. This is being reflected in all monitoring returns.

#### **Bereavement and Registrars**

- The number of attendees at a small number of funerals have exceeded the safe numbers to ensure Social Distancing. This is being managed by close working with a range of Partners.

#### **Property and Procurement**

- Undertaking risk assessments on Corporate Building following Government relaxation of Social Distancing in preparation for more users to potentially return to these buildings.

### **WORKFORCE UPDATE**

No significant changes since last week. We have a number self-isolating in the working from Home figures.

Summary	Staff	Work at Premises	WFH and Enabled	In Hub	Notes
<b>Council Staff</b>	97	17	71	9	
<b>Serco</b>	95		95		
<b>Other (NPS)</b>	19	2	17		

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT (increase in costs / reduction in income)**

- The Council completed the May MHCLG monitoring return on the 15<sup>th</sup> May. Cost have now increased to just under £21m (not including Tax income). We now await a response from MHCLG relating to the data and possible future funding Tranches.
- Tax income losses projected forward from April actual data could be £26m for the full year.
- We have had confirmation of an allocation of £1.75m of funding for Care Home protection and £181k for City Centre reopening.
- We are now at 98.37% delivery for BEIS Grants – 12<sup>th</sup> best of 314 LA's in the country last week. A new scheme starts in June.

### **RECOVERY ACTIVITY (plans being considered / future steps)**

- The Cabinet Paper on the Councils financial position has a section that is linked to recovery. Areas we need to address include:
  - Financial monitoring delivery and validation in the recovery period and the remainder of the year (including budget preparation);
  - Alternative service delivery methods which Covid-19 has necessitated.
  - Effective lobbying of our financial position both through peer Councils, the LGA and MHCLG will be key – as will it's timing:
    - Planning the medium-term effects of COVID-19 including: Council Tax and Business Rates income reducing, suppressed external income, increasing demand for services, investment in regeneration schemes to "kick start" our local economy.
- Brexit in December. We must not take our eyes off this as it has the potential for significant impacts on both our economy and overall funding as well as the local economy.
- Notices to enable ceremonies to take place are valid for 12 months. Professional bodies are currently lobbying central government to extend this period to avoid notices having to be retaken.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Nothing to report this week.