

ANGUS COUNCIL – 3 APRIL 2020**ACTIONS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC****REPORT BY – MARGO WILLIAMSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE****ABSTRACT**

To inform members of the actions taken by the Chief Executive in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

1. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/CORPORATE PLAN

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities

2. BACKGROUND

Reference is made to paragraph 5 of the Scheme of Delegation of the Chief Executive which states:

“in an emergency, to initiate action under any statutory procedure related to a function of the Council, subject to a report being made to the appropriate Committee at the first opportunity on any item for which Committee approval would normally be necessary”;

This Reports sets out for members’ information the actions that have been taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. ACTIONS TAKEN

In an emergency, to initiate action under any statutory procedure related to a function of the Council, subject to a report being made to the appropriate Committee at the first opportunity on any item for which Committee approval would normally be necessary.

Power Exercised	Date Exercised	Reason	Statutory Procedure related to a function of the Council
Suspension of recovery action on Council Tax and Rents Arrears collection for 3 months. This means no summary warrants or wage arrestments will be made and no action will be taken beyond standard reminders being issued		Many tenants and council taxpayers across Angus will be impacted to some degree by COVID-19 response and may be unable to pay bills timeously or in full. To avoid unnecessary stress for families who may be struggling and potential very negative publicity for the Council I considered it appropriate to temporarily suspend formal recovery action on arrears until 30 June 2020.	Duty to collect Council Tax and Rent applying all due diligence in doing so

Closing Registrars Offices		To reduce the health risk to staff and public in terms of COVID-19 and in compliance with Government Directions	Duty to provide a Registrars Service. (Registration of deaths can now been done remotely.)
Closing Council schools		To reduce the health risk to staff pupils and public in terms of COVID-19 and in compliance with Government Directions	Duty to provide Education Services
Closing Council Buildings		To reduce the health risk to staff and public in terms of COVID-19 and in compliance with Government Directions	Duty to provide Council Services
Closing all Council Recycling Centres		To comply with government guidance in relation to the spread of covid 19 by preventing members of the public from visiting busy sites where social distancing could not be safely implemented.	Environmental Protection Act 1990, duty to provide facilities for the public to deposit their waste
Closing all public conveniences		Lack of staffing resource and also to minimise the risk of the spread of infection	No statutory requirement in this case, but seen as an important public service
Stand down all designated street sweepers		Non-essential service. To comply with government guidance in relation to spread of covid 19 and to protect staff from the risk of infection.	Environmental Protection Act 1990, code of practice in relation to street cleanliness
Temporary suspension of some recycling services		Lack of staff resource. To allow redeployment of existing resource to essential services	Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012
Suspension of parking charges	26 March 2020	Lack of staff resource. To allow redeployment of existing resource to essential services	Car Park Traffic Orders
Reduce road and street lighting maintenance	24 March 2020	Lack of staff and contractor resource. Non-essential service. To comply with government guidance in relation to spread of Covid 19 and to protect staff from the risk of infection.	Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 duty to maintain roads and street lighting
Reduce property maintenance	24 March 2020	Lack of staff and contractor resource. Non-essential service. To comply with government guidance in relation to spread of Covid 19 and to protect staff from the risk of infection.	Duty to maintain property
Changes to school and public transport arrangements/ contracts	18 March 2020	Changes to school opening times/use as key worker childcare hubs, as per government guidance in relation to spread of Covid 19; Changes to regulated bus services due to lack of contractor	Service Contracts/Traffic Commissioners requirements

		resources/passenger uptake	
Suspension of housing allocation policy		Government advice is for people not to move house at this time. People will face difficulties accessing related goods and services.	
Suspension of unplanned repairs except emergency repairs (includes suspension of Right to Repair)		Reduce risk to contractors and tenants. Government advice is for all but essential work to stop.	
Suspend tenant evictions from residential properties who find themselves in financial or other difficulties as a result of the coronavirus pandemic		Government advice – Bill to be laid 31/3/20	
To temporarily suspend the requirement that vehicles which are licensed as taxi or private hire vehicles be inspected annually.	30 March 2020	All taxis and private hire vehicles licenced by Angus Council are inspected by Dundee City Council at their vehicle inspection centre. Dundee City Council have suspended their inspection operations for three months.	Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
Extension of all licences granted under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 or other civic miscellaneous acts which were due to expire on 31 March 2020 for a period of three months.	30 March 2020	The current circumstances have impacted 1) the ability of licence holders to obtain and produce required documentation (photographs, medicals, Public Liability Insurance); and 2) the ability of staff to process applications and ensure that all relevant documentation has been received.	The processing and granting of licences under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.
Reduce provision of temporary accommodation to high risk groups		Reduced availability of temporary accommodation due to suspension of housing allocation policy	

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The actions taken will have financial implications for the Council to varying degrees but it is not possible to fully quantify these at this stage. Additional funding has been provided by Scottish Government which will provide some cover for additional costs and lost income but whether this will be sufficient will depend on how long the current situation goes on for and what actions may need to be taken to keep essential services going. Existing approved budgets can also be re-deployed where necessary. Officers are putting in place measures to ensure additional costs and income lost is recorded and a national method of gathering this information is also in preparation to enable future reporting.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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