

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 13 July 2020

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WARD(S): All

PORTFOLIO: Councillor Sabia Akram – Portfolio Holder for Governance & Customer Services

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

COVID-19 DECISIONS UPDATE

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this Report is to inform Cabinet of the time line of major events since the last Report to the Cabinet on this subject on 15 June 2020 and of the further significant decisions taken by officers since that date, and to seek ratification of those decisions.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet are asked to note this Report and to ratify the significant decisions taken by officers since 15 June 2020, set out in the Schedule to this Report.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

The decisions taken by officers and set out in this Report have sought to support, as far as reasonably practicable at the present time, the objectives of the [Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy](#) (SJWS) and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities –

The decisions set out in this Report have been taken with the over arching objective of protecting public health and the well being of residents and ensuring that the Council is able to achieve this objective lawfully, and as effectively as possible, in the prevailing circumstances. The recommendations contained in this report seek to ensure that the Council are able to continue to try to meet this objective and thereby be in a position to continue to address the priorities of the SJWS and the JSNA appropriately.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

The recommendations contained in this Report, namely the noting and ratification of the further significant decisions taken by officers by Cabinet at the first available opportunity, will enable the Council to be in a position to be able to go forwards to try and continue to meet the following objectives of the Five Year Plan.

- *Our children and young people will have the best start in life and opportunities to give them positive lives.*
- *Our people will become healthier and will manage their own health, care and support needs.*
- *Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and visit.*
- *Our residents will have access to good quality homes.*
- *Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide jobs and opportunities for our residents*

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

Any financial implications of significant decisions taken by officers in connection with the need to deal with the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are monitored weekly by a special finance group and will be reported to cabinet as part of the usual financial reports to cabinet.

Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
That the Cabinet note and ratify the significant decisions taken by officers since the “lockdown” came into force.	Failure by Members to note and ratify these actions and decisions increases the risk of challenge and disruption. Ratification provides the opportunity for the Council to build upon the good results already achieved and to move forward strongly by building upon these results with greater engagement across the Council	The significant decisions and actions have been taken in accordance with governance arrangements put into place in consultation with the Council’s statutory officers and in accordance with all applicable guidance issued by and best practice recommended by all relevant bodies.	Likelihood – Very Low – 2 Legal/ Regulatory – Critical Score: 6	Increasing return to usual decision making structures and processes as circumstances permit.

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Any decisions taken by officers pursuant to the statutory regulations enacted by the Government to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic to enforce business closures and restrict assembly could potentially be challenged under the Human Rights Act 1998 as being a breach of article 11, relating to the freedom of assembly and association, and of Article 1 of the First, relating to the right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions. It is considered, however, that risks of successful challenge are low as, in the latter case, derogations are permitted to control use of property in the general interest and, in the former case, for the protection of public health.

Under the Council's Constitution, the Chief Executive has delegated power to act in case of emergency and urgency authority to exercise all council side functions. Additionally, under the constitution, all matters not specifically reserved are deemed to be within the delegated authority of the Chief Executive and Directors for all purposes which fall within their directorate or budget area or area of responsibility to which they may be nominated from time to time

The Cabinet may ratify any decisions of officers falling within their functions.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

All the significant decisions set out in this Report were taken having regard, so far as was practicable in the circumstances, to the public sector equality duties and the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

(d) Workforce

The decisions taken by officers which have affected the Workforce are set out in the schedule to this Report.

(e) Property

The restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus Act 2020 on the ability of the Council as a landowner to take action to enforce payments of rents will have had an effect on the Council's asset management position. Any long term effects on the Council's property portfolio and asset management strategy will need to be evaluated in due course.

(f) Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs

The Council have not at present carried out any systematic analysis of the effect on carbon emissions and energy costs of the decisions taken by officers since the "lockdown" took effect. It is considered that it is self-evident, however, that the restrictions on travel and the reduction in the use and occupation of Council premises and other council activities means that it is unlikely that there was an increase in emissions and energy costs during this period.

5 **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 On 15 June 2020 Regulations came into effect allowing the general re-opening of English retail shops and public facing businesses with the exception of restaurants, bars, pubs, nightclubs, cinemas, theatres, museums, hairdressers but requiring the wearing of masks on public transport.
- 5.2 On 15 June 2020 some school children returned to schools.
- 5.3 On 16 June 2020 the steroid dexamethasone is announced to be of significant benefit in reducing deaths in serious cases of infection by the virus.
- 5.4 On 16 June 2020 the Government announced the extension of the school meals vouchers scheme over the summer holidays.
- 5.5 On 17 June 2020 the Minister for Innovation said that the contract tracing app was not a priority and might not be ready until the winter.
- 5.6 On 18 June 2020 the Government announced the injection of £100bn into the economy to counter an expected downturn in the economy.
- 5.7 On 19 June 2020 the Government announced the setting up of a £1bn fund to help school children catch up with missed school work.
- 5.8 On 19 June 2020 the UK Covid-19 Risk Level is lowered from 4 to 3.
- 5.9 On 20 June 2020 the Government confirm the impending conclusion of the review of the 2 metre social distancing rule.
- 5.10 On 22 June 2020 the Government announce the end of shielding from 1 August.
- 5.11 On 23 June 2020 the Prime Minister announces the relaxation of social distancing rules and the re-opening of hotels, pubs, restaurants and hairdressers from 4 July 2020
- 5.12 On 28 June 2020 the Home Secretary announces that the Government is considering imposing a local lockdown in the town of Leicester.
- 5.13 On 29 June 2020 the Health Secretary announces stricter lockdown restrictions in Leicester. The BBC publish analysis that indicates the UK the hardest hit of the G7 countries for Covid-19.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

A further report on this subject in the same terms will also be submitted to full Council at their next meeting.

This Report may also be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting of that Committee.

7 **Conclusion**

This Report brings The Cabinet up to date with major events since the last report to the cabinet on this subject on 15 June 2020 and informs the Cabinet of the

significant decisions taken by officers since that date. The noting and ratification of those decisions by the Cabinet at the first available opportunity will enable the Council to continue to seek to meet its duties to protect public health and to serve the well being of those who live, work and visit its area.

8 **Appendices Attached**

Table of significant decisions

9 **Background Papers**

The Coronavirus Act 2020

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Business Closures) (England) Regulations 2020

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 and regulations amending the same.