

Emergency Committee

Tuesday 18 August 2020 at 14:00 at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Crompton (Chair);
Councillors Ali, Hadley and Shaeen.

Officers: David Stevens (Chief Executive), Stuart Lackenby (Director – Adult Social Care), Lisa McNally (Director – Public Health), Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy), Sue Stanhope (Interim Director – HR), Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager), Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer) and Chris Ward (Director – Education, Skills and Employment).

56/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Millard and Councillor Moore.

57/20 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared at the meeting.

58/20 Additional Item of Business

There were no additional items of business to consider.

59/20 COVID-19 Response

The Committee received an update on the Council's COVID-19 position and response from the Director – Public Health.



Emergency Committee – 18 August, 2020

It was reported that the number of people contracting Covid-19 in Sandwell was concerning and was being monitored closely. The level of cases across the West Midlands had also increased significantly.

It was acknowledged that Sandwell was doing a higher rate of testing than the rest of the West Midlands and the England average which included those areas in local lockdown, for e.g. Leicester and Oldham, etc.

Cases in Smethwick continued to be high whilst West Bromwich cases had now fallen significantly since July 2020. Intensive community engagement was being undertaken in Smethwick which included work with local businesses and media outlets and continued to be an area of concern particularly in Soho and Victoria and St Pauls wards.

The Council had invested in ensuring that care homes in Sandwell remained infection free which was demonstrated in the low number of COVID-19 deaths in Sandwell care homes, despite the high infection rate in Sandwell, in comparison to the rest of the Black Country and England.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, placed on record her thanks to officers for the work they were continuing to do to protect residents in care homes and the continued monitoring being undertaken via the track and trace system.

Consideration was also given to proposals on the use of the Defra Emergency Assistance Grant, a one-off grant in the sum of £520,530 to help the authority support those struggling to afford food and other essentials over the coming months due to Covid-19.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the Defra Emergency Assistance Grant be allocated to the following activities:

Emergency Committee – 18 August, 2020

	£
SMBC Operated Food Hub	40,200
Replacement for Food Hub	50,000
Fareshare	6,000
Local Welfare Provision	188,000
Food Pantry Development	60,000
Brushstrokes	39,000
Local Food Banks	30,000
Welfare Rights Team	42,200
Total	455,400

- (2) authorise the Acting Section 151 Officer and the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods to allocate the remaining balance of the Defra grant in the sum of £65,130.

60/20

Appointments to Vacancies on Committee and Roles

Approval was sought to make amendments to:-

- Cabinet Advisor remits;
- appointment to vacant Cabinet Advisor roles;
- appointment to vacancies on the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee;
- the Constitution so as to remove the requirement for a member of the executive to be appointed to Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee as there was no legislative requirement for Cabinet appointments to be made to the Committee.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to the amendments to the Cabinet Advisor areas of responsibility and appointments made to those roles as follows:-

Community and Neighbourhood Development –
Councillor Hartwell;
Adult Social Care and Health – Councillor S Jones;
Community Wealth Building – Councillor Worsey;

Emergency Committee – 18 August, 2020

Skills and Employment – Councillor G Gill;
Housing – Councillor M Hussain;
Transport - Councillor Simms;

- (2) that Councillors Bostan and Mabena be appointed to fill the current vacancies on the Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee;
- (3) that Part 3 – Responsibility of Functions of the Council's Constitution be amended in relation to the membership of Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee to remove the requirement for a member of the Executive to sit on the Committee.

Meeting ended at 14:18

This meeting was webcast live and is available to view
<https://teams.microsoft.com/#/broadcastPlaybackScreen>