

Appendix 1 - Coronavirus Scrutiny Final Recommendations & Officer Comments

RECOMMENDATIONS WITH OFFICER COMMENTS

| Rec No. | Recommendation | Reason for Recommendation or extract from minutes (if required) | Service Officer Comments <i>(Including Any Resource and Legal Implications)</i> | Recommended Cabinet Response <i>(Accept/Reject/Refer to COVID Panel)</i> |
|---------|--|---|--|---|
| R1 | The individual risk assessments of school staff should be more than tickbox exercises and they should give staff, particularly BAME staff, the ability to raise issues and concerns. The assessments should also be available to staff as a matter of routine. | | <p><u>Gary Redhead, Assistant Director of Schools:</u> Our individual staff risk assessments encourage discussion between both the school and the member of staff. All staff are given the opportunity to bring up any issues and concerns and a joint action plan is produced. The school and member of staff sign the risk assessment and a copy is given to the staff member.</p> | Accept |
| R2 | Pupils should have access to the internet to use online learning services, this has not been possible in all families as there is an uneven access to technology. | | <p><u>Gary Redhead, Assistant Director of Schools:</u> We have undertaken a survey of schools last term and it is apparent that they are at different levels of development of the remote education strategy.</p> <p>We know that some of the communities served by our schools, struggle to access online platforms and many households have limited equipment. With all of this in mind, we encourage all schools to place pupil access to high quality learning materials and interaction with their teachers at the heart of their remote provision, whatever form it takes.</p> <p>We are working through Ealing Learning Partnership to provide support to schools</p> | Accept |

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| | | | <p>depending on where they are in the development and implementation of the on-line offer. Further information is available on Ealing Grid for learning.</p> <p>https://www.egfl.org.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/remote-education</p> | |
| R3 | There is controversy surrounding DfE and its alleged refusal to reimburse schools that did not use Edunred to issue vouchers to pupils who have free school meals. This issue should be revisited to ensure schools are not left with a large bill after the pandemic. | | <p><u>Gary Redhead, Assistant Director of Schools:</u> We will continue to raise these concerns with the DfE as part of a broader concern over the costs of the pandemic for schools</p> | Accept |
| R4 | Education services should continue to work with schools to increase parent confidence in returning their children to school. | | <p><u>Gary Redhead, Assistant Director of Schools:</u> At the end of the first half term, Ealing's attendance rate was comparable to the national and London average. Where schools have concerns about attendance and despite their best efforts the family is not engaged, schools should raise these specific concerns with the attendance service</p> | Accept |
| R5 | The Council should hold on to those new ways of working, particularly as highlighted in | There have been many advantages and good practice derived from virtual | <p><u>Paul Murphy, Safer Communities Team Leader:</u> No comments but service officers happy to accept</p> | Accept |

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| | the domestic abuse presentation, which have had a positive impact. | working and tech usage. RISE has access to burner phones which they have been giving out to victims to ensure they can communicate with the service on an urgent basis. It is easy to link people and connect organisations with technology. Meetings can be arranged and take place with colleagues based at different sites. In certain cases it is more time efficient for meetings to take place remotely. | | |
| R6 | The Council should introduce training for staff who are on the phones, to better prepare them in the case of a second spike. | When the pandemic hit, there were reports of Councillors and the public trying to contact the Council by phone and not getting through to the correct departments. | <p><u>Alison Reynolds, Director of Customer Services:</u> Contact centre staff team receiving calls on the Ealing Together line set up in response to the pandemic are currently trained in a wide range of services. These include providing financial support, food support, access to online shopping, community assistance and also identification of safeguarding or services required from social care.</p> <p>The wider group of Customer Service staff are briefed on the support available and can and will direct residents as appropriate to the correct teams and services. All Customer Services staff</p> | Accept |

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| | | | are briefed on a regular basis regarding changes relating to the pandemic which may impact residents. | |
| R7 | The Council should ensure that all of Ealing's town centres have pre-identified community spaces which can be used by voluntary groups for food storage/packing in the case of a second spike. | | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> Depending on the scale of a future pandemic wave, and the corresponding need, where there is a community response, we will seek to enable it by offering the use of appropriate community spaces. Health and safety and capacity must be considered before granting access to sites, as was the case with Gurnell community centre, Greenford Hall and YAC. | Accept |
| R8 | The Council engages with community groups on our communications strategy and on its website interface to understand how this can be improved. | | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> The Community Engagement team are in ongoing dialogue with voluntary and community organisations and improvements have been made including the creation of a new online resource hub to enable groups and individuals to download communications materials including videos, social media assets and printed materials to share with others. This includes a range of materials in community languages. | Accept |
| R9 | A single point of contact for emails should be monitored and responded to by a team. The residents and volunteers | This relates to enquiries from the voluntary and community sector in the case of a second wave of infections. | <u>Alison Reynolds, Director of Customer Services:</u> In response to the pandemic we set up two email addresses that are continuously monitored by customer services staff relating to Covid-19. | Accept |

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| | need to know what they can get and from where. | | To ensure residents get the right support as quickly as possible, a decision was made at the beginning of the process to encourage residents to telephone us on the dedicated Ealing Together number rather than email with their enquiries. Residents will then speak to a trained member of staff and this gives us the opportunity to provide useful advice and gather all the information required to provide a more valuable service, tailored to their personal circumstances. We have found that this approach is quicker, more responsive and customers often receive a more comprehensive service package than they originally requested. | |
| R10 | The Council's website needs to be developed so that it can match potential suppliers with those requiring goods. | Councillors had reported that organisations had approached them who were willing to donate goods to assist the Council and Community in their response to COVID. The examples given were PPE and food parcels. However it was difficult for these organisations to get in contact with the appropriate | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> A web form can be added to the existing "I want to help" page on the coronavirus section of the website if further calls for community action are made. This form would enable the selection of goods / services being offered from a drop-down and automated routing of the offer to the relevant service area / team | Accept |

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| | | departments to make their donation. | | |
| R11 | An emergency rollout plan be built in order to involve the whole community in responding to a second wave. | There was a disconnect between the number of people offering help and the capacity of the Ealing Voluntary and Community Service to accommodate this. This partly reflected the huge uncertainty in the early days of the response and the Ealing Together volunteers scheme helpfully alleviated pressure on small organisations but some volunteers found this frustrating. Therefore, a more co-ordinated approach was required for the future. | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> Ongoing engagement with VCS partners is being maintained via Ealing Together as well as ongoing engagement with volunteers (see recommendation 12). The need going forward is uncertain but the council is committed to working in partnership with the community. The appoint of a VCS consortia led by EACH to support public health focussed community engagement and area based community engagement being led by the community engagement team are examples of how the response is evolving as we move through the pandemic. | Accept |
| R12 | Given the greater number of volunteers than those needed to volunteer, it is important moving forwards to address this with regular communication with those who had volunteered and focus on long term active citizenship to support to the recovery. | Only around 10% of those who volunteered were utilised by the Council during the pandemic. | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> A forward plan is established to provide registered Ealing Together volunteers with regular updates for active citizenship, skills and adult-learning opportunities, alongside individual volunteering opportunities | Accept |

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| R13 | A workable software solution in relation to process the shielding user data efficiently, without the need for as much labour-intensive activity in processing the data. | The council's use of the shielding user data developed through the crisis. There was no established software solution in relation to shielding initially so officers had to manage the shielding cohort using Excel spreadsheets. The council invested in building a CRM system, used its master data management to prioritise calls and integrated with the Gov notify platform to enable text triage. These were all critical to the ability to manage the cohort. The council had engaged with other boroughs to share the experience. However, the process was still labour intensive. This put a high burden on staff and delivery partners at Ealing Community Transport as it was a challenge to collate all the information in time to schedule next day deliveries. Looking forward, the council | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement</u> : The council built a customer relationship management (CRM) solution in the Microsoft dynamics solution being deployed via the digital programme to manage shielding referrals and this is being updated. This and the council's use of data to triage and target residents was identified as good practice by the London Office of Technology & Innovation (LOTI). It is accepted however, that in phase 1 the large volume of data provided by Government and short timeframes made the management of data challenging both for council staff and VCS partners. | Accept |

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| | | was bidding to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government digital fund for resources to further develop its capacity. | | |
| R14 | In a second wave, the Council should be more active in promoting voluntary and community sector grants. | The Council made referrals to other voluntary sector organisations, once a referral had been made to the Council. However, the Council also worked with other voluntary organisations to support them in managing their caseloads. For example, they provided grants and supported organisations with implementing best practice. | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> There are no current proposals to tender a second round of voluntary and community sector grants. If further rounds are issued then the council will be keen to raise awareness as widely. During phase 1 this was done by partnering with EHCVS, through the Ealing Together and other VCS networks and via council communication channels and we will look to see how this can be strengthened further. | Accept |
| R15 | An alternative provider be found to run the Council's food fulfilment operation in order to maximise resilience. The type of provider (private, voluntary and community sector or public sector) should not matter, as long as the service provides a value for money for the Council and a good standard of service for residents. | | <u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> The council has agreed a contract with Bidfood for the sourcing, assembly and distribution of high volumes of food parcels if required. | Accept |

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| R16 | Cabinet lobbies Central Government for material funding to address the likely ongoing budget shortfalls. | | <p><u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> The council continues to actively make a strong case through both public (including the 'Pay Your Bill' campaign) and private channels that central government should honour commitments made at the beginning of the crisis to fully reimburse local authorities for the costs arising from the pandemic; and that this should include both additional expenditure incurred as a result of proactive measures to assist the local community and businesses during this crisis, but also the substantial levels of lost income.</p> <p>There remains a significant gap between the financial impact on the council and the funds made available by central government.</p> | Accept |
| R17 | The breakdown of the distribution data for the discretionary support grants be circulated to the Members. | | <p><u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> This was circulated as requested (constituency level data)</p> | Accepted |
| R18 | The Council should amend the turnover threshold for business grants so that businesses are not excluded unnecessarily. | | <p><u>Kieran Read, Director of Strategy and Engagement:</u> The turnover threshold was extended for Wave 3 of the grant scheme to extend to small businesses as well as micro businesses and sole traders. This extended the qualifying criteria to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnover: Not more than £10.2 million | Accepted |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance sheet total: Not more than 5.1 million • Number of employees: a headcount of staff of less than 50 <p>The scheme was closed by central government on 30th September 2020.</p> | |
| R19 | The Council should enhance the role of Councillors in the response to the pandemic as local champions to help support the businesses in their wards. | | <p><u>Connor McDonagh, Assistant Director Economic Growth, Regeneration and Planning:</u> A weekly Business Newsletter issued by comms team, which highlights business support activity and how business can engage with that. The council has also set up a monthly High Streets Taskforce that councillors are invited to engage with so all areas of the borough are represented, and business support activity is shared and debated in this forum.</p> | Accept |
| R20 | <p>Officers provide the following requests for information in writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the 1700 people who had needed support, the number of those people would already have been receiving support and the number of people who would require ongoing support. | | <p><u>Kerry Stevens, Director of Adult Services and Anna Bryden Director of Public Health:</u> In relation to bullet point 1, the information in the request does not track across to activity data we recognise. However we have continued to maintain contact with customers known to the service throughout the year.</p> <p>The average wait time for the out of hours (OOH) telephone service for April- Oct is 1 minute 22 seconds.</p> | Accept |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of home tests carried out in Ealing. • The impact on the use of the NHS 111 call system for care home staff from those homes using the Argyle Care Service. • Context and comparative data for the Care Home Testing in Ealing figures. • Telephone response times for the Councils emergency out of hours (OOH) services. | | <p>According to data from PHE, the total number of home test kits done by Ealing residents between 30/01/2020 and 17/11/2020 is 21,010</p> <p>From the same data we understand the total number of home tests done for residents and staff in care homes between 30/01/2020 and 17/11/2020 is 17,980. This will include all testing done as part of the Department of Health and Social Care's retesting of asymptomatic staff and residents in the care homes but will exclude all tests done on care home residents admitted to hospital. We do not have access to data which allows us to compare this position for Ealing with other boroughs.</p> <p>The remainder of data requested was circulated to the members of the Health and Adult Social Services Panel at its October meeting.</p> | |