

THE EDINBURGH PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Tuesday 17 March 2020 – 2:00pm: Chief Executive’s Board Room, Waverley Court,
4 East Market Street

MINUTE

Board members present

Cllr Adam McVey	The City of Edinburgh Council
Grant McDougall	Skills Development Scotland (via teleconference)
Hugo Clark	Ministry of Defence (Edinburgh Garrison)
Gavin Donoghue	The University of Edinburgh
Sean Scott	Police Scotland (via teleconference)
Cllr Robert Aldridge	The City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Iain Whyte	The City of Edinburgh Council
Ella Simpson	EVOC
Paul Wilson	EARN
Cllr Susan Rae	The City of Edinburgh Council

Advisers present

Andrew Kerr	The City of Edinburgh Council
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In attendance

Michele Mulvaney	The City of Edinburgh Council
Matt Acton	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Laurence Rockey	The City of Edinburgh Council
Gavin King	The City of Edinburgh Council
Peter Murray	NHS Lothian
Liz McAreavey (via teleconference)	The Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce (via teleconference)

Apologies

Cllr Cammy Day	The City of Edinburgh Council
Keith Anderson	Edinburgh Affordable Housing Partnership
Audrey Cumberland	Edinburgh College
John Tibbitt	Edinburgh Association of Community Councils
Mairi O’Keefe	Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce

1 Coronavirus (COVID-19) Planning and Response

The Edinburgh Partnership was convened to discuss Partners' response to the outbreak of Coronavirus.

Andrew Kerr outlined measures that were being taken by the City of Edinburgh Council in response to the Coronavirus outbreak:

- Banning all travel unless necessary.
- Closure of several operations, including the Festival Theatre, Assembly Rooms and places where people would be likely to congregate.
- Cancellation of a Citizenship Ceremony.
- The potential closure of libraries and community centres was under consideration.
- Group Leaders were implementing Council recess and would determine if the recess period should be extended.
- Closure of day centres took place on 16 March 2020.

The financial impacts of these measures were highlighted particularly the loss of income and the need to undertake unforeseen expenditure in responding to the implications of the Coronavirus outbreak. The Council would be revisiting the corporate plan and budget and informal conversations were underway with national government regarding funding to cultural organisations and funding for health and social care.

There were challenges associated with the Council's waste services as a result of staff absences, and a plea was made for the forbearance of Partners while the Council worked through these logistical problems.

It was acknowledged that community resilience would become one of the most important issues during this time which would help people in the city help themselves.

Volunteer Edinburgh, updated on its approach and reported that there had been a heartening upsurge in those within the community wishing to help, in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. Some of this had occurred at a grassroots level and there were concerns that this was not formalised through trained and managed groups. Volunteer Edinburgh was keen to ensure that there was some guidance and control in the efforts being made at local levels and had updated guidance on how to be a good neighbour and acts of citizenships, alongside reaching out to groups to help them help their community wisely. It was believed that the Coronavirus outbreak

was likely to persist for some time and there were concerns about how to overcome people getting fatigued by the ongoing need to help others.

Ella Simpson updated on the response to Coronavirus from EVOC. Day centres in the third sector had closed and EVOC were considering how outreach activities could be undertaken, possibly by using day centres which had closed as community hubs. The NHS had offered protective equipment and would allow the third sector to use their procurement process for obtaining further equipment.

EVOC was being proactive and looking at people who were not usually in contact with services to reduce social isolation, for example those in the recovery community and considering other ways to support these communities. Consideration was being given to best contact people on a regular ongoing basis which may be for up to three to five months by building on existing resources such as Volunteer Edinburgh and Caring in Craigmillar. Ensuring support to allow coordinators in the various community hubs to work effectively was fundamental to EVOC's response.

EVOC were to reach out to LAYC for vulnerable adults, for those with underlying mental health conditions and if schools were to close, as a result of Coronavirus, to ensure young people's hunger issues were being addressed.

Liz McAreavey, from the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce gave an insight into the issues being faced by businesses as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak. The Chamber of Commerce shared that pubs and restaurants were struggling and asked for Partners to note that there was a willing workforce in this sector who were presently under employed and could be called upon should additional capacity be required in the public sector. The night-time economy had faced hardship as a result of cancellation of events which had led to job losses in this sector.

Grant McDougall from Skills Development Scotland indicated that there was support available to help businesses impacted through the Partnership Action for Continued Employment (PACE), to minimise the impact of those people and businesses facing redundancy. Skills Development Scotland were developing more digital content to support service users and would circulate their contingency plan which was being developed.

The Partnership discussed assets which were presently being underutilised which could be called upon such as under employed taxi drivers who would be able to move goods and people which was an offer which had been communicated via the cab office and the Council's own fleet and employees who could act as drivers, which was available for use by the partners during the Coronavirus outbreak. The capability of digital resources, as the world moved into a lockdown as a result of the Coronavirus outbreak was discussed, particularly concerns that with Microsoft and google were reaching capacity and the acknowledgement that most

organisations will be operating and doing everything digitally, but that there were foreseen Information Technology challenges which existed.

The Partnership agreed that there was a role for the Council to take forward in respect of coordination, organisation, and communication. It was recognised that some groups would self-organise, in their response to the Coronavirus outbreak, however it was important that somebody coordinated the volunteer effort from health and Police and to ensure that this capacity exists within the volunteer centre. Commitments were made to divert staff to assist from EVOC and The City of Edinburgh Council.

The Partnership discussed ensuring there were resources in place so that a firm focal message could be relayed to members of the public.

The NHS updated on their position:

- There would be formalised training opportunities for volunteers available.
- To ensure the supply of essential personal protective equipment was kept open to the Third Sector to address operational issues and ensure service continuity, with a recognition that demand on this service was likely to increase.

Andrew Kerr from the City of Edinburgh Council provided a further update on how the Health Service was being supported during the outbreak of Coronavirus:

- There would be a joint mobilisation plan for Council and NHS. The Astley Ainslie would be setting up a Coronavirus coordination hub.
- There were plans to offer links between organised volunteering and people who were expressing offers to help.
- In the event that NHS facilities reached capacity, Council assets could be used.
- The Care Inspectorate had been approached regarding the re-registration of Drumbrae Care Home to provide additional beds if required. There were concerns however whether there would be enough staff to service the beds.
- If there was a falloff in available staff from health services, due to staff illness relating to COVID-19, the Council's day care staff, who were appropriately trained may be able to be redeployed into the NHS.

EVOC shared that they were coordinating meetings with charities to understand where there were skills within organisations who were in the Third Sector and may be able to help and assist. It was recognised that this activity needed to be fed directly into the Health and Social Care Partnership and Andrew Kerr would ensure that this contact happened.

Sean Scott gave an update from Police Scotland. Police Scotland had clear plans in respect of which policing activities would be curtailed if required as a result of Coronavirus and guidance was being developed daily and expressed a commitment to working closely with Partners during the Coronavirus outbreak. Concerns about civil unrest were expressed, particularly in relation to accessing supplies and this was contingent upon members of the public remaining calm, and the supply chain being maintained, to avoid shortages.

The Chamber of Commerce were anticipating business failure. Lobbying was underway though the British Chambers of Commerce who in turn lobby Westminster particularly around the modelling that had been undertaken to predict business failure, and the likely support that would be offered to offset this. Cash flow would be a big issue for businesses, particularly in accessing money from banks. There were concerns that the business community would be heavily debt laden coming out of the crisis and not hugely resilient to cope with the upturn in the economy. The sustainability of some businesses during this period was compromised.

The University of Edinburgh shared their plans in response to the Coronavirus outbreak:

- Remote delivery of teaching.
- Classes had been paused.
- Staff to be working from home as far as possible.
- All major events cancelled.
- People in third year and fourth year would be undertaking online assessments.
- Final year nursing and medical students will be called upon by the NHS into active service.

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service updated on their position in response to Coronavirus:

- Control room at Tollcross remained open which was crucial to service.
- Moratorium of leave for employees.
- One or two staff were exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus and were self-isolating at this stage.
- The Fire Service were thinking about the potential concurrency of other major incidents or events and had plans in place to ensure the service could cope.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) updated Partners on their approach to handling the Coronavirus outbreak:

- That is was for the Government to ask for support of the Army, should this be required.

- The focus was considering how the Army could make the maximum number of personnel available should they need to be deployed.
- Length of period of self-isolation for those displaying symptoms of Coronavirus, which was 14 days, was a challenge. Testing to identify if staff had the Coronavirus was the priority for medical personnel.

It was noted that the UK Government announced that there were MOD planners supporting operations, and recognition was given that these were people with specialist planning skills who could assist locally with challenges faced, alongside if deployed by government, general and medical assistance from the military.

Partners agreed to share the daily briefing that their respective organisations issued and work to harmonise the message between organisations to ensure quality control in the messaging going to members of the public. This would be done by sharing the lead contact details for the communications and resilience personnel within each Partners' organisation, and the creation of a communication network amongst Partners.

Decision

- 1 To agree that the Edinburgh Partnership would redeploy staff which were available as appropriate, to assist the third sector with resourcing challenges they may face, as demand on the services within the third sector were increased as the Coronavirus situation evolved.
- 2 To note that EVOC was in discussion with charities to understand where there were skills within charities which would be of material help to the Council and the NHS during the Coronavirus situation. This information would be passed onto CEC and Andrew Kerr would relay this information into the Health and Social Care Partnership, to ensure that contact was made with these charities, should additional capacity be required.
- 3 To note that following the closure of day centres, there would be staff with relevant qualifications and capacity available to help should staff from the health services be impacted by Coronavirus and unable to present for work.
- 4 To note the availability of CEC fleet vehicles, and the availability of staff who could be redeployed to deliver key goods and services to those in need.
- 5 To agree that there was an emergence of people who wanted to volunteer to help vulnerable people and the NHS during the Coronavirus situation, and that Volunteer Edinburgh was best placed to coordinate this effort. CEC and EVOC would divert staff as required to assist as appropriate.

- 6 Skills Development Scotland to circulate the information on the contingency planning for Partnership Action for Continued Employment.
- 7 To agree that each partner supplied the name and the contact information for communications and resilience leads within their organisation.
- 8 To agree that the Head of Communications of the City of Edinburgh Council would establish a Communications network comprising communication representatives across the Edinburgh Partnership which would work together to harmonise Coronavirus messaging and ensure helpful information from each organisation was available to members of the public, primarily on the Council's landing page, but also via the communication messages published by the constituent organisations of the Partnership.

9 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 3 June 2020 from 3pm-5pm at Scottish Enterprise, 99 Haymarket Terrace Edinburgh.