

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 17 November 2022

Covid-19: Service Resumption – Response to Motion by Councillor Lang

Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee members are asked to note the latest position with regard to resumption of Council services suspended or amended due to Covid-19.

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2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 There are two areas within the Council where services have not resumed as normal following the Covid Pandemic. These are some cultural venues which remain closed and school foreign visits.

3. Background

- 3.1 At full Council on 25 August 2022, Councillor Lang submitted the following motion:

“Council:

- 1) commends officers for their hard-work, dedication and professionalism in providing so many essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, and recognises the unprecedented challenges which the health emergency and national restrictions brought to much of the Council's core work.
- 2) notes that cases of coronavirus continue to be high and acknowledges the duty of care which the Council has to both protect its staff and to minimise the further spread of the virus.
- 3) nevertheless recognises that all COVID rules and restrictions were lifted by the Scottish Government earlier this year and that the Council also has a responsibility to deliver services in a new business-as-usual environment.
- 4) notes that some services continue to be unavailable, or are only being offered on a restricted basis, with COVID-19 being given as the reason.
- 5) agrees that a report should be submitted to the Policy and Sustainability Committee within one cycle which
 - a) lists all the services which are either not being provided or only being provided on a significantly restricted basis as a result of COVID-19,
 - b) provides the reasoning and rationale for continuing these restrictions, and
 - c) gives an indicative timetable for these outstanding services returning to normal levels of delivery.

- 6) Agrees to refer the motion to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board for consideration on whether the Board wishes similar information on health and social care services.”

4. Main report

- 4.1 Many Council services were initially disrupted during the Covid Pandemic but very quickly adaptations were made so that the services could be delivered in a different way. Due to the restrictions caused by the pandemic, there was a need to suspend some services. These were kept under constant review and there was a comprehensive service resumption process that ensured that services were resumed at the appropriate time and taking into account the lessons learnt during the pandemic.
- 4.2 Services within Corporate Services have fully resumed.
- 4.3 Some of the Council’s cultural venues (Nelson’s Monument, Museum of Childhood, Queensferry Museum and the Scott Monument) were closed as at the outbreak of Covid-19 but have not yet reopened. This is mainly due to the need to carry out further maintenance on the buildings before they can be reopened.
- 4.4 In addition, there are two service activities which have recently been reintroduced (having been suspended at the outbreak of the pandemic). These are:
- 4.4.1 The advertisement of traffic regulation orders (which was suspended as per the Coronavirus legislation), which are now again being displayed in Council Offices and on street; and
- 4.4.2 The assisted collection service, where the uplift of bulky items for vulnerable citizens who are unable to arrange for the item to be placed on the pavement is carried out by Waste and Cleansing operatives.
- 4.5 In addition, there were two issues with automated responses for services in Place. For Traffic Orders, the automated response has now been removed. In Licensing, the automated response has now been updated to remove reference to staff working from home.
- 4.6 In Education and Children’s Services, school foreign visits are currently not permitted. There were a small number of externally funded exceptions. They were fully assessed and approved due to their unique contexts. This has been reviewed by senior Education officers in October with an updated position expected in November
- 4.7 Services directed by the Integration Joint Board have not been included within the scope of this report.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Councillors will be informed when the services outlined above have fully resumed.

6. Financial impact

6.1 There are no financial impacts as a result of this report.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1 Discussions have taken place with all directorates on the services impacted.

8. Background reading/external references

8.1 None.

9. Appendices

9.1 None.