

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: The Executive
Date: 23 November 2020
Report for: Decision
Report of: Chair of the Pandemic Scrutiny Committee

Report Title

Interim Pandemic Scrutiny Committee Report

Summary

This report lays out a number of recommendations relating to Homelessness and the Council's Budgetary position for the Executive from the Pandemic Scrutiny Committee following their meeting on the 19th August 2020.

Recommendation(s)

The Pandemic Scrutiny Committee recommend that the Executive;;

- Note the report.
- Continue to look at long term solutions to the potential rise in homelessness, due to the ongoing impact of COVID 19.
- Provide regular updates on homelessness to the Pandemic Scrutiny Committee and all Councilors.
- Review the current process for 208 notices to improve performance to ensure that the Council is able to provide support from the commencement of a placement.
- Include a simplified overview position for any future budgetary reports on Council finances, which are to be included on public agendas. Stating the Council's current budget position, an overview of what this means for the Council and Trafford residents, and what the Executive and Officers are doing to mitigate the budgetary impacts.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background

1. The Pandemic Scrutiny Committee was created on the 15th May by Council to fulfil the Council's Scrutiny function during the COVID 19 pandemic following the suspension of the Council's three Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Following updates that were provided to the Committee on the 19th August the Committee formed a number of recommendations for the Executive to consider.

Homelessness

- 2.1 At the Committee meeting on the 19th August the Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration raised concerns regarding the end of the Government's suspension on evictions and asked the Committee to support the Council in lobbying for this to be extended. The Committee supported lobbying for an extension but noted that it would only be a temporary measure. Since the meeting the Government announced an extension of four weeks to the suspension along with the introduction of a 6 month notice period for evictions to be in place until at least 31 March 2021. While this is greatly improved from the previous position it is still a limited measure. The Committee recommend that the Executive continue to look at long term solutions to the potential rise in homelessness, due to the ongoing impact of COVID 19.
- 2.2 Due to the ongoing impact of COVID 19 and the increased risk of homelessness for Trafford residents this is an area that all Trafford Councillors should be aware of. It is recommended that regular updates on homelessness in Trafford be provided to the Committee and all Councillors.
- 2.3 While it is a requirement that Local Authorities receive a 208 notice when a person is to be placed within the area these are currently not being provided. This was discussed at the meeting where the Committee were informed that all Local Authorities performed poorly in respect to the completion of 208 notices. The Committee feel that the completion of 208 notices, or other suitable forms of notification, needs to be prioritised to enable the Council to ensure that sufficient support is provided to all people who reside within the borough. The Committee recommend that the Executive review the current process for 208 notices to improve performance to ensure that the Council is able to provide support from the commencement of a placement.

Council Budget 2020/21

3. The Committee were provided with the Council's budget monitoring report for quarter 2 at the meeting on the 19th August. The report was very detailed and provided an in-depth breakdown of the Council's finances and projections for 2020/21. At the meeting there was an amount of confusion regarding what all of the figures meant and the impact that they would have upon the Council. Due to the importance of the information provided the Committee feel it should be digestible by all Committee Members and members of the public who access the Committee's reports. The Committee recommend that any future budgetary reports on Council finances, which are to be included on public agendas, include a simplified overview position. Stating the Council's current budget position, an overview of what this means for the Council

and Trafford residents, and what the Executive and Officers are doing to mitigate the budgetary impacts.

Recommendations

4. The Pandemic Scrutiny Committee recommend that the Executive;

- Note the report.
- Continue to look at long term solutions to the potential rise in homelessness, due to the ongoing impact of COVID 19.
- Provide regular updates on homelessness to the Pandemic Scrutiny Committee and all Councilors.
- Review the current process for 208 notices to improve performance to ensure that the Council is able to provide support from the commencement of a placement.
- Include a simplified overview position for any future budgetary reports on Council finances, which are to be included on public agendas. Stating the Council's current budget position, an overview of what this means for the Council and Trafford residents, and what the Executive and Officers are doing to mitigate the budgetary impacts.