

LAW & GOVERNANCE COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREA:	Law and Governance Directorate – PCC and CCC
REPORT AUTHOR:	Fiona McMillan - Director
REPORTING PERIOD:	21/04/20- 27/04/20

KEY ACTIVITY HEADLINES

- Ran first round of virtual council meetings at CCC following training of officers and members on using Zoom -
 - Communities & Partnership Committee
 - Constitution & Ethics Committee
 - Economy & Environment Committee
 - General Purposes Committee
 - Commercial & Investment Committee
- In terms of technical arrangements these meetings ran smoothly and were livestreamed in Gallery mode on the council's You Tube channel. CCC Members have adapted well to the new technology and style of meetings.
- Continued preparatory work for introduction of virtual council meetings at PCC – virtual meeting protocol has been agreed by PCC Group Leaders and working with IT to test the use of Zoom on PCC equipment (where Chromebooks are used instead of laptops) before training can commence
- Continued testing of both Zoom and Microsoft Teams with officers at PCC and identifying issues and raising with IT
- Will be reviewing Virtual Meeting Protocol at CCC after 19th May when it has been tested for a month
- Considering Scrutiny arrangements at PCC with additional meetings of a joint scrutiny committee planned to focus on Covid-10 response
- Advising on key areas such as contract and procurement exemptions
- Assessing forthcoming decision-making at both councils alongside Directors
- Reviewing and advising relevant officers on emerging Coronavirus legislation/guidance across both councils
- Legal teams at PCC & LGSS Law – continuing business as usual including staffing child protection cases in court where a virtual hearing is not possible and attendance for essential sealing of documents
- Advice as required on temporary emergency mortuary space
- Supporting the PCC and CCC internal Silver/Tactical and Gold/Strategic emergency planning council-wide groups

RISKS / CHALLENGES (AND MITIGATION)

Key Risks

- Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on major projects against legal requirements
- Assessing security risks of IT platforms for virtual council meetings with ICT and Information Governance teams

Key Challenges

- Continuing to work through current technology challenges at PCC (now up and running at CCC) testing options for virtual meetings and identifying challenges including quality of image and sound alongside security risks and training needs for future member meetings

WORKFORCE UPDATE

- Majority of Legal & Governance staff now working from home
- Those that can have been redeployed to front-line working
- Exceptions to this are child protection lawyers who attend court when necessary

- Moved to weekly Microsoft team meetings and daily catch-ups with managers

FINANCIAL IMPACT (increase in costs / reduction in income)

- None so far

RECOVERY ACTIVITY (plans being considered / future steps)

- Considering how we resume full range and type of council meetings as soon as possible once social distancing requirements have been lifted with increased virtual working for non-formal meetings for members and officers
- Potential for hybrid model in the future where some members and officers are physically present in the chamber once restrictions are lifted alongside those who are unable to be present still joining meetings virtually – model has started being used in Parliament

COMMUNICATIONS

- All Directorate related communications are fed through the daily briefings to staff
- Weekly video team meetings