

Elected Members Briefing



3 June 2020

Introduction

Welcome to the latest Elected Members Bulletin, your weekly update from COSLA covering issues related to COVID-19. Information and resources can also be found on COSLA's social media accounts, with the **Facebook account** and **Twitter account** updated on a regular basis. The COSLA website can be found at **cosla.gov.uk** and the **KHub** for Elected Members is also regularly updated.

The current number of COVID-19 cases and the risk level can be found on the **Scottish Government Website**. **NHS Inform** continues to be the source of up-to-date public health information. All Scottish Government COVID-19 related guidance can be found on **their website**.

Help and support for those experiencing domestic abuse is available at **https://sdafmh.org.uk** The helpline number is **0800 027 1234**.

Key Messages

Lockdown has begun to ease with the introduction of **Phase 1**, as announced by the First Minister last week.

While some outdoor activity restrictions started to relax on Friday, the public are still urged to stay at home as much as possible and maintain strict physical distancing when outdoors.

Please could this message be shared as widely and as often as possible.

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Finance

The latest position, in a very complex and fast changing environment, is that the Scottish Government has been allocated over £3.5 billion in consequentials.

Of that so far £380m has been allocated to Local Government to address the COVID-19 response and an additional £1.33bn is being routed through Local Government in the form of various business grants.

Leaders discussed the ongoing financial pressure facing Local Government on Friday.

They noted serious concerns that the significance of the full year and ongoing additional costs have not been recognised and agreed that the President would write to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance to seek a commitment on the additional resources required to deliver essential services across Scotland.

COSLA Officers are turning the focus to capture the estimated full year costs of COVID-19 as we move to recovery phases, and this will form the next phase of our cost exercise.

Cllr Macgregor will meet with the Cabinet Secretary today (Wednesday) to voice Local Government's concerns about current financial pressures, and to ask that we work together to make representation to UK Government where appropriate.

COSLA Officers continue to press Scottish Government on funding for Councils to continue providing food to vulnerable individuals and families over the summer period, building on the great work since March.

COSLA Officers additionally continue to work on releasing the health and social care funding through the Local Mobilisation Plans.



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Test and Protect

At Friday's meeting, Leaders discussed a report on Test and Protect, previously known as Test, Trace, Isolate and Support (TTIS).

Test and Protect is a key component that supports the further relaxing of lockdown measures contained within the Route Map.

Councils will be providing support at a local level to ensure people can isolate and get support safely, building on the work Councils are already undertaking across Scotland to support vulnerable groups, including those asked to shield - in response to COVID-19.

COSLA will continue to work with SOLACE, Directors of Finance and others in the Local Government family to ensure this program recognises the different needs of communities across Scotland and that adequate resources are available to enable support to be provided and sustained as this program continues.

More information on the program **can be found here**.

Help and advice is also available on **the Ready Scotland website**.



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Reopening of schools - physical distancing guide

The Scottish Government and COSLA have developed **guidance for education authorities and schools** to support a safe, phased reopening.

The guidance has been developed by the COVID-19 Education Recovery Group, which is co-chaired by the Deputy First Minister and COSLA's Children and Young People's Spokesperson, Cllr Stephen McCabe, with a membership that includes Local Government bodies such as SOLACE and ADES, representatives from trade unions and wider stakeholders. The guidance, which will support local authorities in the development and implementation of Local Phasing Delivery Plans, provides advice on determining capacity in line with physical distancing requirements, safely operating home to school transport, enhanced hygiene and health and safety.

Reopening and managing household waste recycling centres

COSLA and the Scottish Government have released **joint guidance on the reopening of household waste recycling centres**, which was due to get underway on Monday.



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President urges caution with Routemap

COSLA President Councillor Alison Evison has encouraged members of the public to remain vigilant and maintain social distancing as we enter the first phase of the route map out of lockdown.

She said: "With exceptional weather forecast for many parts of Scotland I would ask that people continue to do their bit to help keep everyone safe.

"We all have a duty to respect - and not undo - the heroic efforts of the Local Government Workforce, who have done a wonderful job in delivering essential services at this time.

"Our workforce has also been instrumental in helping to keep people safe during this pandemic and it is vital that we avoid jeopardising the good work they have been doing and the progress that has been made."

President at CYP panel session

The President joined Scottish Government Ministers and took part in a remote meeting of the Cross Party Group on Children and Young People at the end of last week looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the children and young people's sector.

The session was Chaired by Iain Gray MSP.

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Local Government and Communities Committee

In addition, the President will be joining Jim Savege of SOLACE and COSLA's Nicola Dickie in giving evidence to the Local Government and Communities Committee today (Wednesday).

They will outline the unprecedented challenges felt by Local Government during the COVID-19 crisis as it carries out a vital role in supporting vulnerable communities, children and families, local businesses and key workers.

The committee will also hear of ongoing work, such as support for businesses during the pandemic, work with Trade Unions on safety and resilience issues, ensuring the sustainability of the education sector, co-ordinating and managing the additional funding announced to address the COVID-19 pandemic, work to address 'exacerbated' challenges within vulnerable communities and the extensive efforts to ensure waste services continue with minimum interruption.

Road to Glasgow

Councillor Steven Heddle, COSLA's Environment and Economy Spokesperson, participated in a Ministerial Dialogue with Local and Regional Governments on Thursday (May 28) to prepare for the Glasgow Climate Summit next year.

The "Strengthening Coordination Towards the Review of the Paris Climate Agreement" was organised by the United Nations and COSLA's worldwide membership body United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). This builds upon Cllr Heddle's successful participation at the COP25 Climate Summit Madrid "Road to Glasgow" seminar Last November.

Cllr Heddle provided the Scottish perspective at a roundtable with Environment Ministers from South Africa, Ivory Coast and the mayors of Accra (Ghana), Konya (Turkey), Soria (Spain) and among others.

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European Charter

Leaders were provided with an update on the European Charter of Local Self-Government: Members' Bill at Friday's meeting. The paper provided members with an update and review of the progress made towards securing one of COSLA's long-held objectives - the legal formalisation of local democratic government within the governance structure of Scotland.

COSLA's Communications Team will put together a lobbying strategy to press for its early enactment.

Ministers will be lobbied around the benefits to Local and National Government of the Charter, while opposition parties will be briefed and their support sought throughout its progress.

To do so, COSLA will seek the support of professional associations across Local Government, the trade unions, academics, civic society and other key partners and influencers.

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Attempts will also be made to secure media coverage, and consideration given to how Spokespersons might focus on key messages relevant to their remit.

Leaders will be kept updated on developments.



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Business Gateway

As Scotland enters phase one of the Scottish Government's route map out of lockdown, business owners are looking for advice and guidance on how to restart, and the implications that has in terms of staffing, marketing and business planning.

Business Gateway has been focused on creation of new resources to support them through this transition period including three new guides: **starting to sell online**, a **5-point plan for online sales** and a **checklist for communicating with clients as you come out of lockdown**.

These resources will be signposted to from FindBusinessSupport via a joint campaign with the Scottish Government and other enterprise agencies, which is due to launch in the coming weeks.

Trading Standards Scotland

Trading Standards Scotland is part of COSLA. In the **latest edition of their Scam Share bulletin**, they outline scams which have been reported by consumers across Scotland, including those related to the COVID-19 outbreak.

There is some very useful information for local communities, covering issues such as COVID-19 phone scams, false medical claims and fake electrical products.

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Debate Night Extra

COSLA's Resources Spokesperson, Councillor Gail Macgregor, will join the BBC Debate Night Extra panel tonight (Wednesday). **[You can listen here.](#)**

Summary

The Local Government workforce and partners across sectors are working hard to support our communities. We continue to highlight this across our social media channels using #CouncilsCare and it is heartening to see communities working together to look after each other. Retweets and follows would be greatly appreciated.

Further briefings will be issued, however our social media channels, Khub and website will be continually updated.

If you or your officers require any clarity from COSLA officers on policy matters, please contact the team in the usual way. If you are not sure who to direct your email to, please contact COSLA member support: membersupport@cosla.gov.uk

Thank you all for your efforts during this challenging time.



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