

# COUNCILLORS' INFORMATION BULLETIN

Monday, 27 April 2020

**Bulletin No: IB/1024**

## INFORMATION ITEM

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1 **Chief Executive - Emergency Urgency Decision - Voluntary Furloughing of Some Neighbourhood Services Staff**

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Under the Emergency Urgency Decision powers, the Chief Executive has taken a decision regarding the Voluntary Furloughing of some Neighbourhood Services Staff.

The decision was taken in consultation with the Councillor Peter Lamb, (Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member with responsibility for HR), Councillor Duncan Crow (Leader of the Opposition) and Councillor Jhans, (Cabinet Member with responsibility for Neighbourhood Services), have all confirmed their full support for the emergency decision.

John Braidley, (UNISON Branch Secretary) and staff within the Neighbourhood Services Team has been full engaged and consulted over this decision.

A copy of the full decision is included.



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## RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER EMERGENCY URGENCY POWERS

### SUMMARY OF DECISION TO BE TAKEN:

Given the number of staff within Neighbourhood Services who are not currently undertaking any duties and/or working significantly reduced hours due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it is proposed to furlough a number of staff who volunteer to be furloughed at 80% salary. Initial furloughing will be for a minimum of three weeks and reviewed on a rolling basis thereafter, depending on the Governments lockdown restrictions and phased return to normal duties.

### RELEVANT PERSONS CONSULTED:

- Councillor Peter Lamb, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member with responsibility for HR – responses received and is in full support.
- Councillor Duncan Crow Leader of the opposition– responses received and is in full support.
- Councillor Jhans, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Neighbourhood Services – responses received and is in full support.

*Consultation with the above ran between on Thursday 23 April to Monday 27 April 2020*

- John Braidley, UNISON Branch Secretary – discussion Friday 24th April 2020
- Staff within the Neighbourhood Services Team
- Carron Burton, HR & OD Manager
- Ann-Maria Brown, Head of Legal, Democracy and HR Services

### DECISION MADE:

To apply the Governments Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) with effect from 27 April 2020. To pay 80% of salary to staff (who volunteer to be furloughed) and reclaim the salary through the scheme.

### REASONS FOR DECISION AND FURTHER INFORMATION:

Due to the significant impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, work for a substantial number of employees from Neighbourhood Services has ceased, with all other opportunities for job reassignment and redeployment exhausted and due to the nature of their roles they are unable to work from home. Normal duties cannot resume until the lifting of the lockdown imposed by the Government.

In addition a number of staff have informally stated their preference not to make themselves available

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for work and to be actively furloughed. There are however a number of staff who remain in agreement and are willing to be on call and to respond to alternative duties as required.

## **Government Guidance 'Closing certain businesses and venues Updated (9 April 2020)**

The guidance says that:

The Government set out that as a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of coronavirus. On 23 March the government stepped up measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus and save lives. It published a 'Guidance Closing certain businesses and venues in the guide it listed those businesses and venues that must close.

*Playgrounds, sports courts and pitches, and outdoor gyms or similar,*

In other government guidelines reference is: *Communal spaces within parks such as playgrounds and football pitches will be closed.*

*The Government has issued Regulations namely The Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions)(England) Regulations 2020 which cover those restrictions.*

## **Social distancing.**

The type of roles and locations of the work mean that staff are not unable to apply appropriate measures of social distancing which make the workforce and members of the public vulnerable to being exposed and considered high risk.

## **Review of alternative work.**

A limited number of staff are continuing to undertake some Neighbourhood services duties such as litter picking, fly tipping removal, litter and dog bin emptying and grass verge trimming for health and safety reasons on the highway. In addition a number have been reassigned to assist with other areas of Covid related work, such as assistance in the preparation and delivery of food parcels for the vulnerable, bulk waste collections and burial services. An ongoing review of other temporary duties has been undertaken across the council however there is no other suitable work to redeploy staff into.

I hereby agree that I will take the decision as set out above, for the reasons detailed, under the Council's Emergency Urgency Powers.



**Chief Executive**  
**Date: 27 April 2020**