



NOTICE OF DECISIONS MADE BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor made the following decisions on May 13 2020. All recommendations shown were approved by the Mayor.

The decision will become effective on May 27 2020 unless called in by the Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel (OSBP) on May 26 2020. Should an earlier date for holding an OSBP meeting be identified, this will be communicated to all Members of the Council.

1. Covid-19 Recovery: Business Rates, Business & Resident Support.

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the jobshare Cabinet Member for Culture, Jobs & Skills, Councillor Joe Dromey, the Mayor and Cabinet agreed that:

- (1) the broad package of support to business and residents set out together with the specific recommendations indicated below be approved;
- (2) Across all areas of income collection for the next three months note the Council's general approach be noted and endorse the following be endorsed:
 - a. Generate invoices based on existing agreements and charges unless specifically waived;
 - b. Hold the sending of any reminders for payments due on bills raised; with communications emphasising payment flexibility for business those struggling to pay and not referencing enforcement action;
 - c. Invite all customers, businesses or residents, to contact the Council early to discuss any financial difficulties they may be facing as a result of Cod vi19;
 - d. Offer flexibility to vary payment schedules to waive charges for up to three months and reset future payments to recover the monies due thereafter.
 - e. Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Acting Chief Finance Officer to scope the recommended options, implement processes and eligible accessibility criteria.

(3) the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Acting Chief Finance Officer be authorised to introduce temporary top-up to emergency loans to support families with unexpected Covid-19 bereavement costs, to bridge the circa 7 week delay in obtaining the £1,000 DWP 'funeral expenses payment'; this is subject to the outcome of the current all Borough's representation to DWP to reduce delays in processing applications.

(4) the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Acting Chief Finance Officer be authorised to implement the following proposals as part of a comprehensive package of support to help protect Lewisham business and jobs:

(5) For Council commercial tenants - if requested by the tenant and having checked on a case by case basis that they have availed themselves of other available government support, to:

a. At least defer all commercial rents due up to a 3-month period - essentially terms would be agreed to recover the rent over a longer period.

b. Allow flexibility for officers to discount or forego commercial rents due for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs with fewer than 250 employees, and a turnover of less than £50 million) who have not received business rates relief or grants, voluntary groups and charities – initially - up to a 3-month period,

c. Consider in June on whether to defer or forego rent for a further quarter for businesses that - still remain vulnerable to imminent closure.

At an estimated cost to the Council from loss of income of up to £800k.

(6) For commercial waste customers - where appropriate for those not trading (e.g. excluding supermarkets), agree an initial three-month free-period on annual waste collection charges from the 1 April 2020; and if requested, defer payments for 3-months for SMEs who are still trading (e.g. shops) at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income of up to £500k.

(7) For Licenced premises - provide leniency on when the statutory premises licencing fee is paid, not to suspend premises for non-payment of license fees, not to chase on non-payment – but continue to invoice premises for their annual fees as normal. Council will provide a 3 month grace period after the Covid-19 lockdown regulations cease before chasing payments and suspending premises.

(8) For Commercial tenants paying service charges - If requested, defer charges due from Forest Hill Business Centre and Bow Arts Trust for up to a 3-month period, with consideration in June for a further quarter deferral - essentially terms would be agreed to recover the full service charge over a later or longer period.

(9) For Market Traders - endorse the agreed blanket approach to cease all fees and charges to support Lewisham Markets & Traders without charge penalty or loss of pitch for the first quarter at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income from all markets across Lewisham of £225k.

(10) For Business parking - endorse the four month blanket reduction on annual business parking permits from the 1 April 2020 at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income of £130k.

(11) For Shop Forecourt licences - cease all fees and charges to support Lewisham business owners without charge, penalty, or loss of shop forecourt licence for the first quarter at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income from all licensed shops of £35k.

(12) a 'Lewisham backs Business' Task Force, comprising lead Members, representatives from the local business community, industry, and officers be established to develop and coordinate a whole Council response to supporting business and jobs recovery quickly and inclusively from the disruption of Covid 19.

**Kim Wright,
Chief Executive,
Lewisham Town Hall,
Catford SE6 4RU.
May 15 2020**