

ALL EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR - COVID-19, NO 18, 22 MAY 2020

I hope that this latest briefing finds you and your family all well. We are now nearing the end of week 8 of the lockdown and are thankfully starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel with our First Minister publishing the Scottish Government's Route Map yesterday.

First of all, I want to once again take this opportunity to express my gratitude and thanks to all those employees who continue to attend work to allow us to provide our services to the communities of Tayside and, in particular, the vulnerable groups we provide services to. Your efforts are all extremely appreciated by not only me and the Corporate Management Team but by our Joint Committee and our clients, the three constituent Councils.

Secondly, I want to provide you with an update on where we are as an organisation with our application for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and our recovery plans.

Furlough/CJRS Application

In previous briefings I advised you that Tayside Contracts was investigating and taking legal advice regarding whether it may be possible for us to utilise the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) and place some employees on furlough.

After lengthy discussions with our three recognised Trade Unions, our constituent Councils and our Governance and Strategy Group (GSG) we have decided that we can progress an application to the CJRS for a limited number of Tayside Contracts' employees.

I previously explained that this 'in scope' group was likely to be a proportion of employees within our Catering Unit, Construction Division and support services function and it is on this basis that I wrote out to all employees in these groups seeking their agreement to be put on furlough. The reason for doing this is that we can change employees who are furloughed, if required, provided that they are furloughed for a minimum of three weeks at a time. This can also be backdated.

I am pleased to report that we have received a positive response to these letters and those employees selected for furlough will soon receive a further letter confirming that they are on furlough and that their terms and conditions have been temporarily amended on this basis. I would like to thank these employees for their cooperation on this matter as this will allow us to reclaim any funding we legitimately can through the CJRS and this will go some way to protecting income and jobs going forward which was the main aim of this course of action.

The CJRS has been extended by the UK Government until 31 July 2020 and thereafter it is likely to be revised and phased out in some form. We hope to receive more information on this from the Government over the course of the next 2 weeks and thereafter we will be reviewing our position in line with this and our plans for progressing out of lockdown.

Recovery Plans

I previously committed to keeping you up to date on our plans for coming out of lockdown as an organisation, our 'recover plans' as we are now referring to them, and so I want to provide a short update on this. Although these plans very much depend on what approach is taken by the Scottish Government,

what restrictions remain in place and what services our constituent Councils require, some information of which we have only just received in the form of the Scottish Government's Route Map; work is progressing well on them. As you would expect, the recovery plan for our Construction Division is progressing at a slightly faster pace than the plans for other areas given the approach taken by the Scottish Government in relation to which areas of industry can start moving towards returning to work.

It goes without saying that the health and safety of our employees remains our overriding and number one priority and this will continue to be the case in our recovery planning. It is clear, that social distancing and good hygiene, such as regular and thorough hand washing, will continue to be a requirement in the longer-term. We are therefore consulting with our professional Health and Safety and HR Advisers along with our Trade Unions as part of our recovery planning to work through the myriad of options and the implications these may have on our previous ways of working etc.

Our generic and site-specific COVID-19 risk assessments have served us well in relation to the work that we are currently doing across the organisation but as we move forward and start to increase the number of employees at work and the variety of work being conducted, we need to ensure that health and safety is never compromised in anyway.

I therefore want to remind employees once again that **Tayside Contracts employees will never be asked to carry out any tasks that present a risk to their health**. The most important elements of risk control are that adequate handwashing facilities are available and that no one will carry out tasks that cannot be done without a 2-metre social distancing separation being in place. If this cannot be achieved or alternative risk control measure(s) put in place, then employees will not be asked to carry out those tasks/continue to work in that environment.

I want to remind employees that they must raise any concerns they might have regarding their health and safety with their line manager immediately to allow the manager to address the concerns as appropriate. This also goes for any other work related concerns that an employee may have i.e. these should always be raised in the first instance through the normal management hierarchy and only if this fails to achieve a satisfactory resolution (or is not appropriate in the circumstances) should an employee raise their concern with our Health and Safety or HR Team and thereafter a Trade Union.

You can be assured that, along with your manager, I will continue to keep you briefed on our recovery plans as we move forward over the next weeks and months.

If you have not already done so and wish to provide your email address to us to benefit from electronic access to communications, please forward your email address to Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk. We will not forward your email address onto any third parties or use it for any other purpose other than to communicate with you.

Iain C Waddell, Managing Director, 22 May 2020