

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – FINANCE, INFRASTRUCTURE & IMPROVEMENT AND SECTION 151 OFFICER**PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) – RESOURCE IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with an update on the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).
2. To establish the resource required to manage and deliver the three-month transition/decommissioning period between April 2022-June 2022.

Information

3. The County Council continues to provide PPE to social care, health, education, and other settings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in line with Government guidance. The PPE Team have now dealt with over 7000 requests and distributed over 2.5million items across the County since March 2020.
4. In April 2020 Central Government set up the national PPE Portal to supply PPE for external providers, CQC regulated providers have been able to access this since September 2020. In July 2021 the Council also transitioned to place orders directly from the national PPE Portal rather than through the central DHSC team. This has gone smoothly, and all core items of PPE have been available through this new ordering system with no disruption to the supply of our PPE.
5. Due to the launch of the national PPE Portal, the County Council are also no longer distributing PPE to LRF Partners (Nottingham City Council, CCG, and the District Councils) as they have been ordering directly via the national PPE Portal. This distribution channel works well, and the PPE Portal has been able to meet all their core PPE requirements.
6. In January 2022, the DHSC confirmed that post March 2022, all the users of PPE that the County Council currently distributes to will be eligible to order free PPE from the national PPE Portal. In preparation for this, the Council has piloted the START service to order from the national PPE Portal and the H&S Team have audited the received stock, with neither reporting any issues.

7. The demand for PPE from all sectors has stabilised, with orders remaining consistent for several months and reflecting the usage that we would expect in line with current PPE guidance. There is also sufficient supply of PPE through the national PPE Portal and good availability from commercial suppliers in the market.
8. In February 2021, Personnel Committee approved the establishment of staffing resource to support the Council's ongoing requirements to fulfil PPE provision. This resource was established until March 2022, on the basis that from April 2022 PPE support could be stepped down and there would be a return to routine supply arrangements.
9. Following the publication of the Living with Covid strategy, we are now in the position to step down the Council's centralised PPE operation without any disruption in supply for our service users who will all be able to continue receiving free PPE directly through the national PPE Portal until March 2023¹. We would recommend a three- month transition period to ensure effective decommissioning and transition can take place.
10. The PPE team have been providing logistical support for the Community Testing Programme since January 2021. This includes ordering of lateral flow testing kits (LFTs) and associated PPE from the DHSC, and receipt, storage, and distribution of all items at the central warehouse. However, with the recent publication of the Covid -19 Response: Living with Covid- 19 paper the government has confirmed that it will no longer provide free universal community testing and therefore the requirement for us to continue to support this activity will cease.

Resources

11. The three-month transition/de-commissioning phase between April – June 2022 will include:
 - a. supporting our internal teams, DP recipient's, PA's, and unpaid carers in moving to the national PPE Portal
 - b. managing and overseeing the distribution of excess stock and decommissioning of the warehouse site itself.
12. The following resourcing is proposed to support this transition phase:

Table 1: Proposed Resource

Area	FTE	Indicative Costs (3 months)
Project Management and associated administrative support	1.4	£16,600
Operational warehouse and delivery staff	2	£14,200
Total Costs		£30,800

¹ Or until Infection Prevention Control (IPC) guidance is withdrawn or significantly amended

13. In addition to staffing costs there will be additional costs relating to the warehouse facility and the storage and distribution of PPE items. These costs are estimated at £26,000 for the 3-month period.
14. Additionally, over this three-month period there will continue to be a requirement for indirect staffing support from colleagues in Public Health, Procurement, Health and Safety, Quality and Market Management, and Communications. This is not costed above and will be met from existing role capacity.
15. As a contingency we will retain a four-week stockpile of core PPE items and ensure that the required systems, processes, and resources planning that have been developed to support PPE activity, whilst making dormant, can be stepped back up at short notice if required. These resources will be retained centrally by Emergency Planning.
16. The transition/decommissioning phase has been planned over a three-month period. However, following the publication of the Living with Covid strategy and considering any future updates in guidance, this timescale can be reviewed and if all tasks are completed, decommissioning may complete earlier.

Governance and Reporting

17. Governance of PPE will continue through Risk Safety and Emergency Management Board (RSEMB) with reports by exception/as required to Corporate Leadership Team.
18. In February 2022 the Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) approved our recommendation to stand down the Logistics Cell NCC lead function. A debrief will be produced on key learning from the cell and key actions for next time, should we ever need to stand up the logistics cell again in the future.

Other Options Considered

19. Other options considered included continuing 'as is' supplying PPE to internal services, DP recipients, PA's, and unpaid carers through existing operation at Huthwaite utilising the existing stores of NCC PPE. This is not a favourable option because PPE will be available free of charge through the national PPE Portal for all users.

Reasons for Recommendations

20. Although demand and supply for PPE has now stabilized, the need for PPE is still a requirement from central government for health and social care settings. The national PPE Portal has been established for more than one year, and user feedback has been positive with PPE needs being consistently met through this route. Transitioning internal services and DPs', PA's, and unpaid carers to order to the national PPE portal ensures that they will continue to access free PPE until at least March 2023.

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability, and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

22. The cost of the staffing resource for a 3-month period is outlined in Table 1. There will also be costs relating to the warehouse facility and the storage and distribution of PPE items estimated at £26,000. The total cost for the 3-month decommissioning of the current operation is therefore estimated to be £56,800. These costs will be met from the Contain Outbreak Management Funds.

Implications for Service Users

23. All County Council PPE service users will be transitioning over to the national DSC PPE portal between March and May 2022. This transition will be closely coordinated and supported by the PPE team including colleagues from Transformation and Change, Health and Safety, Public Health, Covid Response Service and Procurement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members agree to:

- 1) A three-month transition period between April – June 2022 to support the effective transition and decommissioning of the current operation.
- 2) The extension of the posts listed in Table 1 until 30th June 2022.

Nigel Stevenson

Service Director – Finance, Infrastructure, and Improvement
Chief Executive's Department

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Kaj Ghattaora, Group Manager Procurement, kaj.ghattaora@nottsc.gov.uk or 0115 9773267

Constitutional Comments (EP 28/02/2022)

The recommendations fall within the remit of Finance Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments [RWK 03/03/2022]

The report sets out proposals for the decommissioning of the current operation to distribute PPE items over a 3-month period at an estimated cost of £56,800. This cost will be funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund and there will therefore be no net additional cost to the County Council.

HR Comments [MS 02/03/2022]

Any HR implications are contained in the body of the report

Background Papers and Published Documents

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All