

10 March 2021**Agenda Item: 7****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES****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). To establish the resource required to continue with a sustainable operating model until the end of March 2022.

Information

2. This report provides an update on the PPE activity as part of the emergency response to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.
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. To date, the PPE Team have dealt with 3,151 requests and distributed over 2,242,743 items across the County since March 2020.
4. In July 2020, Personnel Committee approved the establishment of staffing resource to support the Council's ongoing requirements to fulfil PPE provision. This resource was established until May 2021, on the basis that from May 2021 PPE support could be stepped-down and there would be a return to routine supply arrangements. However, while the issues experienced around supply chains in the early stages of the pandemic have now largely been resolved, and demand has stabilised, due to the continued prevalence of COVID-19 there is an ongoing requirement for the provision of PPE. It is currently understood that despite the size and scale of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, PPE will continue to be required at the same levels for some time.
5. The County Council has an established secure PPE supply route, with regular monthly drops of free PPE to meet our demand. On 12 January 2021, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) confirmed that this provision of free PPE to the health and social care sector has now been extended to 30 June 2021 and that a review will be conducted in April 2021 to inform plans for post-June 2021.

6. External social care providers are able to access the Government PPE Portal for their COVID-19 PPE requirements. As a result, the majority of requests received by the County Council are now from internal services and Direct Payment (DP) recipients / Personal Assistants (PAs), who are not eligible for the Government Portal. However, if an emergency situation arises and they are unable to access PPE through this route, external providers can access PPE through the County Council.
7. The County Council is working with Nottingham City Council, who are leading the procurement of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) contract for ongoing PPE supplies. This will provide resilience to Government supplies, including PPE for non-COVID-19 related uses. This is due to go live in spring/summer 2021 and will be available on a call-off basis to regional partners.
8. The County Council PPE warehouse is managed by an Operations Team, comprising the County Council Facilities Team, supported by redeployed colleagues from Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) and the Parking Enforcement Team. Core activities include receipt of stock, storage, stock management and distribution of all PPE items.
9. PPE stock is delivered to social care, health, education, and other settings on a request basis. Orders are processed through an open source software stock management system (NOP Commerce). Typical delivery following approval by the PPE Project Team is 1–3 working days.
10. The PPE Team are also now providing logistical support for the Asymptomatic Rapid Lateral Flow Testing Programme (Community, Vulnerable Groups, and Frontline Workforce). 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.

Governance and Reporting

11. The County Council PPE operations have a robust governance route to ensure that all areas of the authority have continuous oversight of activities. PPE Operations are governed through reports to the Corporate Leadership Team and the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee. The Risk Safety and Emergency Management Board (RSEMB) is also utilised to discuss PPE issues as required.
12. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Logistics Cell meets on a monthly basis and is supported by a fortnightly planning meeting. The Logistics Cell reports into the Tactical Coordination Group (TCG).

Resources

13. The following resourcing is proposed to continue operations until the end of March 2022:

Table 1 – Proposed Resource:

Area	FTE	Indicative Costs (per annum)
Project Management and associated administrative support	2.15	£96,000
Operational warehouse and delivery staff	5.5	£162,500

14. Additionally, 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.

Other Options Considered

15. As outlined above, it was originally anticipated that PPE operations would be stepped down from May 2021, but because of the continued prevalence of COVID-19 and the likelihood that the need and demand for PPE will be ongoing, it has been necessary to reconsider options for the provision of PPE.
16. Other options considered included ending the centralised supply of PPE; supplying PPE only to internal services; and supplying PPE to internal services and DP recipients, but not external providers.

Reasons for Recommendations

17. Due to the continued prevalence of COVID-19 and the likelihood that the need and demand for PPE will be ongoing but stable, it is recommended that the County Council continue to supply PPE to all existing users. Retaining centralised provision will ensure that PPE is readily available, quality assured, and used in the correct capacity. This approach will also minimise disruption to our service users (internal and external) and LRF partners. Furthermore, the systems, processes and resources required to continue the PPE provision are already in place.
18. Further periodic reviews of PPE provision will be undertaken throughout 2021/22, including a further review of supply in line with the DHSC planned review of PPE provision in April 2021.

Statutory and Policy Implications

19. 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

20. The cost of the staffing resource for a 12-month period is outlined in Table 1. This is the maximum cost bearing in mind that some of the required resource may be met from existing capacity / allocations.

Human Resources Implications

21. The fulfilment of the posts included in Table 1 will be through a combination of resource allocations and recruitment as required. Where recruitment is required it will be undertaken in line with Council HR policy.

Implications for Service Users

22. The continuation of these posts will enable the Council to continue to source, supply and distribute PPE for COVID related use to internal adults' and children's care services; and DP recipients / their PAs¹ in line with national guidance. The County Council will also support external settings where they are not able to fulfil an urgent need.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members agree to:

- 1) The continuation of the posts listed in Table 1 until 31 March 2022.
- 2) Periodic reviews of PPE provision throughout 2021/22, including a further review of supply in line with the DHSC planned review of PPE provision in April 2021.
- 3) Further reports being submitted to Personnel Committee if staffing requirements are impacted by changes to PPE provision.

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Constitutional Comments (KK 16/02/21)

23. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 23/02/21)

24. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 20 of the report.

25. The cost of the staffing resource for a 12-month period is outlined in Table 1. This is the maximum cost bearing in mind that some of the required resource may be met from existing capacity/allocations. The balance of funding required will be met from the Central Government COVID grant allocation for 2021/22.

HR Comments (JP 24/02/21)

26. The posts within Table 1 will be extended to 31.3.22. Any recruitment that may be required will be subject to the Authority's recruitment policies and procedures.

¹ These groups are currently not eligible to access the Government PPE Portal for their PPE.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All