

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****COVID-19: UPDATE REPORT****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members on the impact of the Coronavirus crisis on the work of Nottinghamshire County Council, and the Council's response and recovery planning.

**Information**

2. This report is an update on Nottinghamshire County Council's response to the coronavirus emergency. Information is provided on the current public health situation in Nottinghamshire, the work that is ongoing to support the response to COVID-19 and the plans that are being implemented to move into the recovery and renewal stage of the emergency.

**Public Health Update**

3. The current numbers of COVID-19 cases in the UK and Nottinghamshire can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-COVID-19-information-for-the-public>. The current numbers of COVID-19 deaths in Nottinghamshire can be found on the [Office for National Statistics website](#).
4. As of 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there had been a total of 1,446 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Nottinghamshire residents. This is a rate of 175.7 per 100,000 residents as opposed to 276.7 per 100,000 for England. Data from the Office for National Statistics released on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 indicated that, as of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020, there had been 569 deaths due to COVID-19 in the Nottinghamshire population.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

5. The LRF Logistics Cell has been set up to plan, procure and distribute PPE across the health and social care sector. To date it has distributed hundreds of thousands of PPE items to services across Nottinghamshire. Established arrangements are in place for services with urgent PPE needs and no orders are being left unaddressed. Ordering of PPE continues to be pursued through our supply chains and in collaboration with our partners. In addition, work has commenced on a Recovery Plan for PPE to establish a sustainable operating model that can be stepped up or down in response to subsequent peaks of the virus.

## Local Outbreak Control Plans

6. As part of the launch of the nationally delivered Test and Trace Service, upper-tier local authorities have been notified that they should prepare a Local Outbreak Control Plan by the end of June. The purpose of the plan is to describe arrangements for controlling the rate of COVID-19 transmission in Nottinghamshire to enable a return to life as normal as is possible for as many as possible, and to do so in a way that is safe, protects our health and care systems, and supports our economy. The plan must be centred around seven themes covering various aspects of preparedness, response, and political leadership.
7. Implementation of the preparedness and response elements will be overseen by the Director of Public Health, working closely with Public Health England's local health protection arrangements, district and borough councils, and with the Local Resilience Forum. Political leadership will be exercised through what the guidance describes as an engagement board. The terms of reference for the engagement board will be developed as part of the plan.
8. Achieving the objectives of the plan will depend not only on local collaboration but also on the role of national government in delivering reliable testing infrastructure and timely unfettered access to postcode level information about new cases.

## **COVID-19 Programmes of Work**

9. Members will be aware that five programmes of work are managing the response to the emergency both corporately and with partners county-wide. These are: -
  - Support for Vulnerable Adults
  - Support for Vulnerable Children and Families including Schools
  - Community Support and Resilience
  - Support for Business and the Local Economy
  - Corporate Resilience

## **Support for Vulnerable Adults**

### Emergency Coronavirus Operating Models

10. In recognition of the pandemic and following guidelines from central government to manage pressure on the health and social care system, Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) adopted an emergency operating model in order to respond to demand for support, and different ways of working required by the social distancing guidance. This model has been successful in managing demand. To date ASCPH have not enacted any Care Act easements and the expectation continues to be that it is "business as usual" and the easements will be considered as required, dependent on service capacity and levels of risk experienced within services.
11. The emergency operating model for ASCPH continues to be in place. As part of the move towards recovery planning, consultation with staff has been undertaken to assess what aspects of the emergency model have worked well and can be incorporated into a future operating model once the emergency phase has ended, to ensure that opportunities for transformation and improvement can be captured.

12. Through emergency deployment efforts 254 staff were redeployed to support critical Adult Social Care services. There were also 13 deployments from Adult services to Place and two deployments from Place to Adult services. The service capacity in the internal home care and reablement service has increased by over 600 hours, and additional staff are undertaking their induction with the service so this figure will continue to rise. By way of example, in mid-Nottinghamshire prior to the pandemic the average number of visits was around 90 per day. Additional capacity to date has enabled the service to undertake over 140 visits per day where necessary. During the emergency response to the pandemic, 64 beds have been made available across the Council's internal residential and Short Breaks services, including 4 emergency Shared Lives placements. Availability of all these beds has been dependent on sufficient staff during the day and night, which has been an area of focus throughout the period.
13. Adult Social Care worked closely with Community Health partners to rapidly establish two new Integrated Community Discharge hubs in line with new national hospital discharge guidance, which required that people are discharged within three hours of being well enough to do so. This target has been achieved and sustained, despite continued pressure on social care provider capacity. A key enabler has been that in the new model decision making is led by community health and social care, who have oversight of all available capacity in community provision to support discharges. In addition to this, the national guidance required that rapid community services are put in place for the person to be able to return home and any further assessment is completed once they are home. As mentioned above, the internal homecare service provided the default urgent social care pathway out of hospital.
14. In March and April, ASCPH ran a recruitment campaign to recruit more than 100 social care and support workers to work flexibly around the County providing vital social care to older and disabled people in a range of roles. There were 283 applications. So far 225 candidates have been interviewed by telephone. From these, 221 have accepted an offer to join the department's supply register. 43 people have already commenced work across the department's home-based care and residential care teams. Currently, 8 people are being trained to support the independent sector.
15. The work undertaken to support care providers, and especially care homes, in the county will be presented in a report to the next Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee.

### **Support for Vulnerable Children and Families including Schools**

#### **Early Years, School and College Settings**

16. On May 19<sup>th</sup>, the Prime Minister outlined the government's aspiration that schools should open to more children in targeted year groups from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 from 1<sup>st</sup> June with some contact for secondary aged children in Year 10 and Year 12 from 15<sup>th</sup> June. During the lockdown period, schools in Nottinghamshire have remained open for vulnerable children and the children of key workers with attendance increasing from 1,972 on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March to 3,723 on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May (figures refer to all pupils attending schools).
17. Schools were provided with an extensive amount of national Department for Education guidance, particularly during the half term week, to support the wider opening of schools

and this has been supplemented by additional contextualised advice and support from Education, Human Resources, Health and Safety as well as Public Health. With additional demand for key worker places, however, it is unlikely that all of Nottinghamshire's schools will be able to accommodate all the target year groups within the government's anticipated time frame. Children who are not attending school continue to access support for home learning.

18. An update on the number of schools open to target year groups will be provided at the meeting. The decision as to when schools will open to more children will be taken by the headteacher having undergone rigorous and detailed risk assessments.

### Vulnerable Children, Young People and Families

19. All families receiving early help or social work support continue to be risk-assessed to determine the level of support required, with risk levels determining whether visits are face-to-face or via phone/videoconference. All families continue to receive at least weekly contact. There are currently no significant workforce absence challenges impacting on the service's ability to safeguard children.
20. Enquiries to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and subsequent child and family assessments are lower than they typically would be at this time of year. This is likely to be linked to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown and fewer professionals having face to face contact with children. There have not been significant changes to the numbers of children receiving support as children in need of help or protection.
21. The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 came into force on 24<sup>th</sup> April. The Regulations temporarily amend 10 sets of secondary legislation relating to children's social care to support services in managing the coronavirus outbreak. The changes are intended to support services to try and manage the increased pressure on children's social care and cases of staff and carer shortages arising from illness due to coronavirus. In line with the Amendment Regulations, the Department is seeking to implement one amendment relating to temporary, 'Connected Persons' foster care:
  - a. Under the existing Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010, local authorities had the power to temporarily approve a child's *"relative, friend or other person connected with"* the child as a temporary foster carer for a period of up to 16 weeks (normally while a longer-term placement is sought).
  - b. The Amendment Regulations have now extended this period to 24 weeks and removed the requirement for the temporary foster carers to have an existing family or other connection to the child. Local authorities can therefore now approve anyone who meets the requirements as a temporary foster carer, rather than only those who are connected to a child.
22. This amendment is intended to support the Department to manage placement capacity over the coming months, based on the anticipated increase in children entering local authority care during, and in the aftermath of, the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department is seeking to utilise this amendment as a precautionary measure, in the event that the volume of children entering local authority care exceeds the placement options available.

This proposal is subject to approval at Children and Young People's Committee on 15 June 2020 and Policy Committee will be updated in the meeting.

23. In respect of support for children with special educational needs and disabilities, the impact of COVID-19 has meant that many children and young people have not been able to access their usual short breaks, either because the carer is unavailable, the short breaks provider has had to close/cancel their activities, or because they are unable to spend their individual budget on their prepaid card. As a consequence, an amendment has been made to the short breaks offer to allow families in receipt of a Short Break via a direct payment or provider service to instead use their current Short Break allocated package to purchase resources or equipment up to the value of £150 per allocation within the family.

## **Community Support and Resilience**

### **Community Support Hub**

24. As reported to Policy Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, Nottinghamshire Coronavirus Community Support Hub went live on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and is accessible over the phone, via the Council website or the My Notts app. The Hub provides a real-time online database, accessible to all partners, which enables residents in need of support to input their postcode and requirements and be 'served up' with a list of local groups and organisations able to meet those needs. The aim being that those with less complex needs could 'self-serve', and find their own support, without the need for further help.
25. The number of hits to the Community Support Hub website has slowed over the past few weeks to approximately 150 a day compared to in the region of 1000 at the peak. As at 5<sup>th</sup> June, 1014 requests for support had been received since launching the second phase of the Hub, with the numbers of requests per day slowing slightly in the past few weeks. There are currently 277 voluntary groups, 373 individuals, and 233 business offering support and numbers are increasing. All volunteers that come forward are processed appropriately for the safety of those receiving support.
26. Nottinghamshire Community Support Hub and the County Council's Customer Service Centre continue to be in regular contact with clinically extremely vulnerable people registered with the Government's Shielded programme and requiring assistance. As of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020, 36,439 had been identified from NHS data as being extremely vulnerable people and requiring shielding in the County. 18,637 had been in contact with the Government to indicate whether they require support or not, around a third of whom have requested and received assistance from the Hub. For those who haven't registered with the Shielded programme (17,802 as of 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020), a local process has been undertaken, complementing the national effort, to make contact with anyone in this group not known to the Council or its partners. Letters have been sent to alert recipients to the support available through the Hub, and consideration with partners is being given to what further actions are appropriate.
27. A further piece of work has also been undertaken to identify those who, whilst may not be medically vulnerable to COVID-19 itself, may be in need of support at this time, for example those with dementia, or who are frail, elderly or housebound. Nearly 22,000 letters have been sent to this group, again alerting them to the support available through

the Hub. A prioritised set of actions has been agreed with partners to follow-up these letters.

28. The Food Supply Group continues to ensure that those in the shielded group have access to food should there be a delay in receiving food parcels from the government. The Food Supply Group also co-ordinates access to food for those not in the shielded group but who nonetheless have difficulties accessing food at this time.
29. In response to the enormous voluntary support that has been shown by individuals, voluntary groups and businesses through the Community Support Hub, a plan to build a new relationship with these groups is being developed, overseen by the Humanitarian Assistance Group. The purpose of the plan will be to retain the social capital that has been built during this period and support and develop volunteers to continue to play this positive role within communities into the future.

### Nottinghamshire Community Fund

30. Nottinghamshire Community Fund was launched on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. The fund, managed by the Council's Communities Team, is available to local charities and community organisations that are delivering essential services to vulnerable residents impacted by COVID-19, including access to food, medicines and support with well-being. As of 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2020, 170 awards had been made with a total value of £451,740.
31. A task group with partners around the county has been established to undertake an assessment of the financial resilience of the Community and Voluntary Sector in light of the COVID-19 emergency. The sector is a crucial partner in supporting communities through the coronavirus crisis and into the future and it is the intention that this piece of work will inform the support that will be required by the sector going forward.

### Support for Business and the Local Economy

#### Local Enterprise Partnership and Partner Activity

32. In response to the crisis, the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2 LEP) has focused their resources on supporting partner organisations and ensuring clear, coherent and consistent advice to help our business base.
33. The D2N2 LEP are:
- engaging key business representative organisations, trade unions, the Growth Hub and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) through the COVID-19 Coordination Hub. The hub coordinates partnership efforts and feeds intelligence from the local level to Government to shape further policy and support interventions.
  - liaising every other week with local authorities to share intelligence and best practice, map out the local support being provided and receive intelligence on any local gaps in support requiring attention. Working with partners to identify specific issues being faced by those sectors most vulnerable to the crisis, most notably manufacturing and the

tourism, leisure and hospitality sector. Efforts are ongoing to influence and leverage additional support to aid recovery.

- the D2N2 Chair and CEO at a national level through the LEP network board, are highlighting the key impacts on the East Midlands from COVID-19 to influence national government policy and inform recovery planning. This has included roundtable discussions with Ministers and senior officials.

#### D2N2 Redeployment Triage Service

34. The D2N2 Redeployment Triage Service is a partnership between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and (council part-owned) Futures. This service puts in place a rapid assessment, redeployment process for individuals out of work as a result of COVID-19 or refers into appropriate European Social Fund (ESF) skills or employment support.
35. To date, the numbers using the service have been low as the rise in Universal Credit claimants appears to be primarily from self-employed individuals seeking to 'bridge' until they can recommence trading. Below is the latest update available on activity at the time of writing (correct as of 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020).

Total number of individual direct enquiries to date	127
Numbers referred, given advice or referred	104
Any employment outcomes	2 <i>(Majority of enquires have been self-employed individuals claiming Universal Credit)</i>
Number of business enquiries for recruitment or redundancy and actions taken	7
Referral rates via usual routes (Jobcentre plus etc)	385 of which 231 attended

36. The D2N2 LEP are continuing to raise awareness of the service and build strong relationships between all providers in the D2N2 skills ecosystem, in anticipation of further job losses when the Job Retention Scheme is stopped.

#### PPE4NHS

37. D2N2 continues to back and promote the PPe4NHS campaign. At the time of writing this report, the campaign has received donations from 29 organisations across the region. The campaign has now branched out to Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and South Yorkshire. Donations are increasingly coming from companies manufacturing and sourcing PPE, rather than those that were holding stocks for their own usage. Nearly 100,000 individual items of PPE donations have been received.

#### Futures

38. Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) is pleased to showcase the variety of projects available to residents and businesses of Nottinghamshire from Futures our jointly owned social enterprise. They have three strands to their work, [Futures for Business](#), [Futures for You](#) and Futures Employment Solutions. Staff are working hard across the county to help those affected by the COVID-19 crisis to get back into work and training. Careers

Coaches are working remotely with individuals whose employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis as well as those leaving education to find and apply for jobs or training over the phone, by video chat or email. Futures also offers tailored support to businesses to navigate the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 emergency, including support with recruitment, redundancies, apprenticeships and training.

### The Growth Hub

39. The Growth Hub, in which the Council is a partner, continues to offer direct practical support and information for business during the current challenging economic circumstances.
40. The Growth Hub acted quickly to ensure its operations reflected the immediate needs of businesses as lockdown was announced, managing an upsurge of over 700 enquiries per week in the first weeks of lockdown with over 84% of enquiries COVID-19 related and specifically, seeking advice on the various sources of financial support. In the last few weeks the volume of enquiries has flattened, with businesses moving away from 'fire-fighting' towards re-opening and reviewing their future operations.
41. Wider sources of funding remain in place for companies looking to develop and grow, including the Growth Hub's Business Investment Fund (funded through the wider European funding secured for the Growth Hub) which has maintained healthy levels of interest. There have been 24 applications from businesses across the County, currently at different stages of assessment. Grants of between £3,500 and £20,000 are available, up to a maximum of 35% of the total project costs. Amongst wider viability checks, the assessment looks to review the degree to which the applicant's operations can be considered as COVID-19 proofed. This suggests that a good proportion of businesses are still seeking to invest in their business' future.
42. The Growth Hub has restructured its events programme and launched a full on-line programme with 26 webinars being delivered during April 2020 with 733 attendees and a further 31 seminars taking place over May. This has been complemented by the Council and district partners funding a specific webinar programme on business resilience. Further details are available online at: <https://www.d2n2growthhub.co.uk/events/>.
43. The Growth Hub has secured additional resources both directly and in collaboration with neighbouring Growth Hubs to deliver additional support to businesses. In recognition of the value of the quality business support, the government has offered an additional £230,000 per annum over the next 3 years. Subject to awaited guidance, the Growth Hub is reviewing with its core partners including the County Council how best to focus these resources on business recovery. At the time of writing, this is likely to focus on sector and targeted geographical area support; on key and vulnerable sectors; on supporting targeted groups such as young people into business; on (re-)start-ups and diversification as well as an enhanced access to finance packages.

### Coronavirus grant funding: local authority payments to small and medium businesses

44. The distribution of the government Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) scheme and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund (RHLGF) has been the responsibility of district and borough Councils. As of 31st May 2020, 90% of those eligible to receive a



grant had received payment. Out of a total £155,756,000 of Government support available for local businesses, over £130,885,000 has now been paid out by district and borough partners. Weekly updates, typically uploaded on a Tuesday are available online by visiting: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-grant-funding-local-authority-payments-to-small-and-medium-businesses>

#### COVID-19 Discretionary Business Grants Scheme

45. Further to Government guidance published on 13<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> May in respect of developing and implementing Discretionary Business Grants schemes (aimed at small businesses who were not eligible for the SBGF or the RHLGF, and including businesses eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)), the Councils across Nottinghamshire have worked together, through the LRF Finance Cell, to agree a scheme which is fair and consistent, and which reflects the criteria stipulated within the guidance. The D2N2 LEP were approached to ensure alignment and reduce duplication with other local discretionary business grants that may have been established across our LEP area.
46. This scheme and the grant application process has been published on the respective Council's website and we provide a link to their webpages on our site <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local/district-councils>. In accordance with the Government's guidance, the first discretionary grant payments have been received by eligible businesses.

#### Reopening High Streets Safely Fund

47. £50million of funding to reopen high streets safely was announced by Minister Simon Clarke of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG) on 24<sup>th</sup> May. This provides district and borough councils with additional funding to support business communities with preparing for the reopening of retail when scientific advice allows. It equates to around £738,292 across the seven districts/boroughs:
- Ashfield - £114,527
  - Bassetlaw - £104,654
  - Broxtowe - £101,458
  - Gedling - £105,213
  - Mansfield - £97,256
  - Newark & Sherwood - £108,976
  - Rushcliffe - £106,208

#### Economic Recovery Planning

48. D2N2 has convened two time-limited groups to coordinate and support the region's economic recovery.
- The Recovery Board is chaired by Jayne Mayled from the D2N2 Board. It comprises business, the public sector, education and skills, the Voluntary and Community Sector and will steer work to implement a recovery plan for the region.
  - The Analytical Group is drawn from the same sectors. It ensures efforts are based on the best possible understanding of the changed post-COVID-19 economy and provide strong evidence of what works in recovering from an economic shock.

49. The work of both boards will feed into the evidence base to refresh the Local Industrial Strategy and ensure that the short and medium-term recovery needs are factored into the longer-term ambitions for the region.
50. In developing our response, the LEP is working closely with our neighbouring LEPs and with the Midlands Engine to ensure issues are being tackled at the most appropriate geographical level, that we learn from best practice and avoid duplication.
51. At a national level, the LEP will continue to work with the LEP network to ensure we share best practice on approaches from other areas and feed in common issues to central government to influence future resources to aid recovery.
52. To assess the economic implications of the effect of COVID-19 on Nottingham and Nottinghamshire and help enable businesses affected by the crisis to resume trading as soon as possible, an Economy Cell has been stood up as part of the Local Resilience Forum structure. Chaired by Nicola M<sup>c</sup>Coy-Brown (Group Manager Growth and Economic Development), with Catherine Evans (Transformation Service Manager, Rushcliffe Borough Council) as the Vice Chair, the role of this cell is fivefold:
- To support the LRF COVID-19 Recovery Coordinating Group with issues relating to economic recovery.
  - To provide a link for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire into the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership.
  - To facilitate the impact assessments on the business and economy of the local area, linking in with the LRF COVID-19 Data and Information Cell and the D2N2 COVID-19 Analytical Group.
  - To review and interpret guidance, updates to legislation, and funding opportunities (in conjunction with the LRF COVID-19 Finance Cell) received from central government and consider local implications.
  - To develop and maintain an Economic Recovery Action Plan.
53. The inaugural meeting of the Economy Cell took place on 8<sup>th</sup> June, with representatives from all Nottinghamshire local authorities, Nottingham City Council and the D2N2 LEP.

## **Corporate Resilience**

### **Workforce**

54. The Council's workforce has responded positively to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many have been flexible in altering their duties, working hours and where they work from to ensure the Council can continue to deliver critical services to its most vulnerable residents.
55. It was considered important to capture the mood of how individual employees were feeling as part of our ongoing engagement with them. An employee well-being survey was therefore undertaken in late May to "check-in" and get feedback on how employees were feeling in the current emergency.

56. The survey closed on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 with 2,761 responses received. This represents approximately 40% of the Council's workforce. 95% of employees who completed the survey responded positively to questions in relation to the Council's overall response to COVID-19; how the Council's overall response related to their role and how well informed they felt by their line manager. Satisfaction levels in relation to communication with and support from managers and colleagues were around 90%. There was an 80% satisfaction level with wellbeing information and support and having the tools to do their job. Overall 75% were satisfied with their health, safety and wellbeing whilst working during the pandemic.
57. Employees described feeling "protected", "supported" and "well cared for". Other comments included "the Council is a wonderful place to work", "thank you NCC for being family" and "I am proud to work for NCC".
58. Employees were most concerned about the wider economy, the economic wellbeing of friends and families and the financial/economic future for the Council. Although they felt more positive about the future for their individual roles and their service area/department. In response to this area of particular concern, the council has secured the offer of free financial advice sessions of up to 45 minutes duration for every employee; the detail of this support package will be rolled out to the entire workforce during June as part of our ongoing package of support.
59. More detailed work is being undertaken to identify whether groups of the workforce have experienced the current situation positively and to understand the reasons why this may be and to better understand the areas of concern.
60. The Council will ensure it makes best use of the valuable intelligence gathered as a result of this exercise with the more detailed feedback and overall responses informing the work on Recovery. It is likely further surveys will be used as a means of gathering additional information from a wide cross section of the Council's workforce as recovery work progresses.
61. Throughout the coronavirus outbreak weekly discussions have taken place with the recognised trades unions. This has provided a helpful forum to raise both strategic and operational issues which impact across more than one department. The normal employment relations mechanisms were suspended at the outset of lockdown but have now been reinstated. It is proposed to continue with the corporate discussions whilst reintroducing the more department focussed forums where the more detailed conversations about service recovery and future service changes can take place. The recognised trade unions have engaged positively throughout to hold the council to account in terms of how actions impact on the workforce.
62. Discussions have also taken place with the employee self-managed groups to ensure proper note is taken of the potential impacts of the situation on colleagues with certain protected characteristics. This includes black, asian and minority ethnic employees and employees with a disability or underlying health condition. Working with these support networks has resulted in very positive and constructive engagement. This has included considering the results of the Public Health England research in relation to "Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19" for different groups which is being used to inform

future risk assessments, planning and decision making in terms of supporting the Council's workforce move forward to whatever the new normal will be.

## Financial Implications

### *Initial Position*

63. As reported to Policy Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the current NCC Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is as set out below.

	2020/21 £m	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m
Net Budget Requirement	512.5	526.6	556.6	570.7
<b>Financed by :</b>				
Business Rates	116.4	118.5	120.7	123.0
Revenue Support Grant	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.1
Council Tax	355.4	367.9	380.8	394.1
Adult Social Care Precept	33.1	33.1	33.1	33.1
Collection Fund Surplus / (Deficit)	0.6	-	-	-
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>512.5</b>	<b>526.6</b>	<b>541.7</b>	<b>557.3</b>
<b>Funding Shortfall</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>13.4</b>
<b>Cumulative Funding Shortfall</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>28.3</b>

64. The County Council has always taken a prudent approach regarding its reserves, which are specifically set aside to meet future, or potential future, expenditure. The Council's position was therefore relatively robust with general reserves of circa £22m forecast as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

65. Within the general reserve are two amounts identified as being held for emergency funding totalling £3.6m. This amount has been included in the May MHCLG financial return as being available to fund additional costs in 2020/21, with the caveat that it would need to be reinstated over the life of the MTFS.

### *Additional costs and lost Income*

66. Work continues across all service areas looking at the additional costs and lost income. In many areas it is still only possible to make estimates of the likely additional costs.

67. Based on Government guidance around the monthly financial return to MHCLG, the initial work has been extended to assess the impact over the first 4 months of the financial year (April to July) of 2020/21, although clearly the impact is going to go on well beyond this date and some estimates include additional costs extending for some months beyond July.

68. The figures include an estimated 50% slippage or loss of savings proposals built in to the 2020/21 budget. Further work is being undertaken to review each saving proposal and to more accurately estimate the 2020/21 impact.

69. As requested by Government the NCC figures do not include the impact of any shortfall in Council Tax or Business Rates, this information has been provided by collection Authorities on behalf of all preceptors. An estimate of the possible impact on the Council is set out in paragraphs 77-80 below.

70. The anticipated additional pressures and loss of income for the County Council will be updated through the normal financial monitoring processes and regularly reviewed by the Financial Resilience Group (see paragraphs 82-83). It is anticipated that a further financial return to Government will be required mid-June. The summary table below sets out the estimated additional costs by Department as at 15<sup>th</sup> May 2020 as submitted to MHCLG.

#### **Additional Costs by Department (15/5/20)**

	<b>£'000</b>
ASC&H	12,690
C&F	12,750
Place	10,054
Chief Executives	8,835
Savings at risk	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>48,329</b>

#### *Government Funding*

71. An initial tranche of £1.6bn of additional funding was announced in March 2020. The NCC share of this was £22.3m and this was received in late March.

72. A second tranche of a further £1.6bn for Local Government was announced on 20<sup>th</sup> April. This allocation is based on a per capita basis, and there is a 65:35 split between county and district authorities. The NCC share of this is £14.6m and was received on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

73. The Government has also announced a further £600m to support infection control in care homes. The NCC share of this is £11.4m, however it should be noted that this must be passported to care homes based on Government criteria and cannot be used to fund additional costs.

#### *Cashflow position*

74. Significant additional costs are being incurred over and above that envisaged in the 2020/21 budget. In addition, every effort is being made to ensure suppliers are being paid early in line with Government guidance.

75. The April precept from District Councils and Business Rates payments were received in full by the due date. The Government Social Care grant funding due in April, May and June was paid in full in April. The initial allocation of additional Government funding of £22.3m was received in March with the second amount of 14.6m received in May.

76. The estimated borrowing requirement for 2020/21 (identified as part of the budget in February) will be drawn down early to ensure cash balances remain high. Following the

ongoing review of the impact of additional costs on the 2020/21 budget, additional borrowing may be required.

### *Council Tax*

77. The February 2020 Budget Report established the amounts due from District Councils at £388m in 10 instalments. Once set these are legally binding and any delays mean that NCC can charge interest on the overdue amount. In normal circumstances Districts would pass over the scheduled amounts and any over or under collection would be corrected in the following financial year.

78. Districts have raised concerns that if there were to be a significant reduction in collection rates, they would be unable to make the payment unless they received support from Central Government. District Councils have reviewed April collection rates and have assessed the likely impact on collection during 2020/21. Overall the NCC share of the shortfall is estimated to be circa £8m, although this figure will be regularly updated as each month's collection data is reviewed.

### *Business Rates*

79. Government funding has been made available to fund Business Rates Relief for certain categories of business, however there is a concern that other businesses will simply not be able to pay amounts due. The estimated impact on NCC based on April's collection rates is £2m. As with Council Tax this will be subject to regular review.

80. There may be an ongoing impact on both Council Tax and Business Rates of a reduced tax base due to e.g. slowdown of new housing developments, reduction in physical premises required by businesses.

### *Overall Financial Impact*

81. The estimated extra costs, potential Council Tax and Business Rates reductions, additional capital financing and capital receipts shortfall could result in an additional budget requirement in 2020/21 of up to £70m. Funding received to date totals £36.9m with NCC funding of £3.6m identified to date.

### *Financial Resilience Group*

82. A Financial Resilience Group consisting of senior finance staff, key Departmental Service Directors and Legal Services has been established to assess the impact of additional costs and lost income arising out of the COVID-19 crisis on the MTFS of Nottinghamshire County Council.

83. The Group will review all aspects of the financial impact and will report regularly to Corporate Leadership Team and to Members and Committees. The Terms of Reference for the Group are set out below

- To review all ongoing, routine spend by NCC and identify any savings or cost reductions that might be available to offset additional costs.
- To undertake a review of the reserves held by NCC and identify any that could be utilised to fund additional costs if required.

- To review the capital programme and capital receipts forecast and assess the impact on the revenue budget.
- To review the cashflow position of NCC and ensure sufficient balances are available to fund additional costs.
- To identify and review any other areas which may impact on the MTFS (tax base, move back to 'business as usual' etc.)
- To update the NCC MTFS for the short and medium term and provide regular updates to CLT and Members on the financial implications.
- To complete the monthly MHCLG DELTA financial returns on additional spend.
- To review revised ways of working arising out of the emergency and identify good practice that should be retained.

### **Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Update**

84. The Local Resilience Forum partnership delivers emergency planning for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, ensuring the establishment of effective multi-agency responses to COVID-19. A number of LRF cells and their subgroups are working to deal with the far-reaching impacts of the coronavirus emergency. In the absence of a vaccine, the nature of the COVID-19 crisis is such that response action is likely to be necessary over a long period. The LRF groups are:

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| • Humanitarian Assistance Group | • Data and Information Cell               |
| • Logistics Cell                | • Discharge Cell                          |
| • Excess Deaths Cell            | • Care Homes and Home Care Cell           |
| • Finance Cell                  | • Health and Social Care Escalation Group |
| • Communications Cell           | • Health Care Capacity Group              |
| • Local Authorities Cell        | • Transport and Infrastructure Cell       |
| • Economy Cell                  |   |
| • Local Outbreak Cell           |   |

85. In tandem with the response effort, the LRF Recovery Co-ordination Group is starting work on recovery and renewal planning. The group will oversee the work of partners, assess the impact of the coronavirus emergency and agree a recovery action plan that encompasses the economic, social and community aspects of recovery. This plan will co-ordinate the efforts of partner organisations and work with communities to address needs and wherever possible to 'build back better' and enhance resilience in communities. It is likely that these efforts will be managed under the same categories and by the same cells as the response effort, as the response and recovery work initially run side by side.

### **Corporate Response, Recovery and Transformation Structures**

86. The Risk Safety Emergency Management Board (RSEMB) reporting into the Corporate Leadership Team continues to meet regularly to oversee the Council's response to the crisis. Work is ongoing to ensure capacity within services and that all the Council's operations comply with relevant government guidance and protect services users and staff.

87. A Corporate Recovery and Transformation Group (CRTG) has been established to ensure that the approach to the recovery process is cross cutting and integrated, both within the authority and in collaboration with the LRF.
88. The purpose of the CRTG is to generate and monitor a forward-facing corporate recovery and transformation plan, oversee the safe reopening of services and premises and ensure that current and emerging government guidance is followed. This group works side by side with the Financial Resilience Group (see paragraphs 82-83) to ensure that the Council's financial position is protected as we move forward.
89. The group will ensure that wherever possible the recovery process is used as a springboard into transformation to move the Council forward. This means having oversight of retaining and developing the innovations that have been successful during the COVID-19 emergency, as well as developing a new transformation model in line with the insights that have been gained through the Phase 1 work delivered by Newton. It is proposed that the work of this group is overseen by the proposed [COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee](#).

#### Council Premises

90. A Property and Premises subgroup of the CRTG is meeting twice weekly. The group includes officers from across the Council looking to guide and support the reoccupation of Council properties, both the central office estate and the operational portfolio, in a consistent manner ensuring that all reoccupation is timely and compliant with Government guidelines.
91. The group will ensure that buildings are safe to use with adaptations, social distancing measures and hygiene policies and regimes in place. Staff will be consulted and all users fully informed about the safe use of Council buildings. For Council office space, services are being consulted to align service needs with the social distancing requirements in the available workspaces, as well as to reflect the changing approaches to service delivery that have developed during this period. For operational premises managers are developing plans to operate services in line with government guidelines and making the necessary physical adaptations to services to operate safely.

#### Reopening of Services

92. In order to adhere to government guidance on social distancing and release Council resources to support COVID-19 priorities, many public-facing service areas have faced disruption or closure. Plans are being made for many of these services to reopen in step with national government guidance and with social distancing and safety measures in place. Services are considering the adaptations that need to be made to the way they operate and the facilities that they use in order to maintain the safety of staff and service users. The current status of these services is outlined in the table below.



<b>Service</b>	<b>Status</b>
Youth Services	Youth work staff are supporting young people within Children's Social Care settings, including residential homes and in supporting placement stability. Youth work with the most vulnerable young people will be prioritised but plans are being developed to reopen open access youth services when possible and in line with government guidelines.
Library Services	Libraries are currently closed. Planning is now underway for a gradual reopening of libraries and archives from 6 July 2020. Libraries will be operating with a reduced service and buildings will have limited capacity to ensure customer and staff safety.
Outdoor Education Services	Outdoor education services are currently closed. Plans are being developed to reopen these services when possible and in line with government guidelines
Day Services	While premises are closed to service users, all day services continue to offer support and contact families on a regular basis. Services are presently engaged in premises recovery planning, considering how we can re-open our buildings offering a socially distanced, safe service with appropriate risk assessments and in line with government guidelines.
Country Parks and green spaces	Car parks have reopened at all country parks. Visitor facilities remain closed at all sites. Sites will open in line with government guidelines and once all safety measures can be put in place.
Children's Centres	Services continue to offer targeted support for vulnerable children and further face to face work at centres is under review and will recommence in line with government guidance and risk assessments of the premises.
Recycling Centres	All 12 recycling centres in the county have reopened, but sites are operating reduced hours and strict restrictions are in place.
Registration Services	Prior to the beginning of June, all registration services were suspended except for the registration of still births and deaths (which could be completed by telephone). From 1 <sup>st</sup> June, the government has permitted the registration of births and has amended guidance to minimise the face-to-face elements of the process. In view of this, a phased approach is being taken to re-opening main offices for this service, to be followed by the offer of appointments for notices of marriage. Plans are also being developed in readiness for government announcements regarding the resumption of civil marriages at registration offices and Approved Premises.
Music Teaching	A virtual offer is now available, including digital teaching. Physical services will be resumed in line with government guidance to schools and in liaison with individual schools.
Education Library Service	The service is now in the process of resuming, and is reopening in line with demand from schools and government guidance to schools.
Inspire learning study programmes	Young people continue to be supported to complete vocational courses on site and remotely.

Inspire learning adult education programme	A range of online programmes are currently being provided. Planning is underway for the service to resume face to face teaching in September following government guidance.
Council operated Local Bus services	Following the lockdown NCC reduced the service provision from 17 routes to focus on 2 key routes with a reduced service and for the rest of the routes introduced demand responsive transport (DRT) whereby the public book transport the day before. A full resource plan is being worked up to bring the local bus service back to pre-lockdown levels in line with demand and adhering to emerging government guidance on safety measures.
Council Bus Stations	A full recovery plan for reopening has been drafted, based on known Government advice. Mansfield has been open throughout but with reduced operating hours. Newark and Worksop bus stations have recently reopened. Retford remains closed.
Highway Maintenance (Revenue)	There are a number of services which NCC and Via EM Ltd. have continued to deliver either fully or partially throughout the current public health emergency. Where services have previously been suspended these have now been restarted, and with social distancing guidelines being followed.
Highway Maintenance (Capital)	Where jobs have been halted or deferred, work will recommence as soon as reasonably practical in line with government guidelines. A highways capital programme update report is planned for Communities and Place Committee. The construction of the Gedling Access Road has continued throughout, principal contractor Balfour Beatty has taken steps to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed on the site.
School Crossing Patrols	School crossing patrols will recommence in line with the reopening of schools. Discussions will be had with schools where a patrol cannot safely operate.
School Bus Services	School buses will be provided with appropriate safety measures in place, in line with the phased reopening of schools.

## Other Options Considered

93. The nature of the Coronavirus emergency is such that the Council has reviewed its priorities and use of resources to address the most critical needs of Nottinghamshire's residents. The Council must also comply with relevant Government guidance and meet its statutory duties as required during the emergency.

## Reason/s for Recommendation/s

94. To update members on the Council's ongoing response to the Coronavirus emergency and recovery and renewal plans.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

95. 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**

96. The financial implications are set out in paragraphs 63 – 83

## **Human Resources Implications**

97. The HR implications are set out in paragraphs 54 - 62

## **Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications**

98. The safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults is at the centre of decision making around operating models and reopening of services in Children's and Adults services and services continue to operate with the same standards of care.

## **Implications for Service Users**

99. While there continue to be many disruptions to services through the Council's response to COVID-19, the aim has been to maintain the welfare and safety of all services users at all times.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 1) That members consider whether they require any further actions in relation to the issues contained within the report.
- 2) That members agree that further reports will go to the proposed COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee.

**Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts MBE**  
**Leader of the Council**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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### **Constitutional Comments (EP 29/05/2020)**

100. The Policy Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. If Committee resolves that any actions are required it must be satisfied that such actions are within the Committee's terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments (KRP 29/05/2020)**

101. As set out in the report there continue to be significant additional costs associated with the work being undertaken to maintain the welfare and safety of service users. There also remains significant uncertainty about the final costs of the additional support being provided. Additional Government funding has been allocated to all Local Authorities, although at this stage it is not certain that all additional cost will be fully funded.

### **HR comments (GE 29/05/2020)**

102. The implications for our employees will vary on the service areas they work in. As mentioned previously, we will continue to engage with them directly and through their representatives to ensure they have a voice in the future service plans, the management of risk and how work is undertaken in future.

### **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