

15 September 2020

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

UPDATE ON COVID-19 RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide the committee with a further update on COVID-19 recovery and resilience activities within the County Council and in partnership with Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

Information

2. As detailed in a separate report to the Committee, the County Council's response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic has continued over recent weeks while also progressing elements of recovery. During this time, steps have been taken to ensure that lessons from earlier stages of response have been captured and that resilience is improved in readiness for possible further rise in infections and deaths during the coming autumn and winter months.
3. The County Council's and LRF preparations for the winter months have been informed by the government's revised 'Reasonable Worst Case Scenario' (RWCS) Planning Assumptions. These were approved by the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) at the end of July and cover the period to end March 2021. The government has stressed that the RWCS is not a prediction of what will happen but a scenario that agencies should use as a basis for planning. Specific details from the RWCS have been made available to those colleagues and partners who lead local planning work for COVID-19 response and recovery. The overall picture (in this worst case scenario) is of a rising number of infections and deaths culminating in a second peak in early 2021. This would represent a difficult autumn and a challenging winter during which local and national interventions would be required to limit the impact on the NHS and on local authorities.

Debriefing the County Council's response so far

4. In addition to, and building, on the findings of the recent internal audit of the County Council's response (reported previously to the Committee), a debriefing exercise has been undertaken to consolidate understanding of lessons from the early parts of the response. Normally this would have involved a series of team or service area events from which key points are fed into discussions within the Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Group (RSEMG) for each department and the corporate 'Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board' (RSEMB). On this occasion, COVID-19 restrictions did not permit in-person meetings and so

these have been replicated by use of a survey. Colleagues were encouraged to complete a short survey as soon as possible but by no later than Friday 28th August. Managers were asked to consult with team members before completing a response or to share the survey with their team and encourage them to respond individually. Feedback from this will be tabled for discussion at departmental RSEMG meetings and a corporate telephone conference debriefing meeting will be arranged. Outcomes will be reported to the RSEMG in the form of a narrative report with accompanying draft Action Plan. These will be reported to the 3 November meeting of the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee.

Debriefing the LRF response

5. County Council officers involved in multi-agency aspects of the COVID-19 response have also had the opportunity to contribute to a police-led LRF debriefing process that was agreed at the 4 June 2020 meeting of the LRF Strategic Coordinating Group. Normal practice is for the LRF to conduct a post incident debrief whenever an incident results in a multi-agency response. It was agreed that because the incident had (at that time) been running for sixteen weeks, it would be beneficial to have an interim review so that learning could be captured to inform the continuing response. A survey was devised and was sent to around 800 individuals affiliated to the LRF. The LRF management structure for COVID-19 response is shown at Appendix A to this report.
6. At the time of writing, the final outcomes from the LRF survey have yet to be released, however Police representatives reported to the LRF meeting on 24 July that there were some recurring themes emerging from the survey. Also, that these will be included in a report to the LRF Resilience Working Group meeting taking place on 14 September. These themes include training and exercising, resumption of online exercises, use of Resilience Direct and how the LRF operates. The interim feedback indicated that responses are largely consistent and that most respondents judging that the multi-agency response was 'effective' or 'very effective'. The LRF Tactical Coordinating Group was seen as being particularly effective, while suggestions for improvement included proposals for avoiding duplication and repetitiveness.
7. It is pertinent to note that Nottinghamshire representatives (including the County Council Group Manager, Emergency Planning and Registration) contributed to two 'National C19 Foresight Group' Interim Operational Review events. The outcomes from these have been published and promulgated across the LRF.

LRF Recovery Work

8. The LRF Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) is now firmly established with the strategic aim to support Nottinghamshire communities, businesses and public services, to recover from the impacts of COVID-19. The group is also aiming to advance long term opportunities for better physical and mental health, tackling climate change, better health outcomes and founding a new, sustainable fast growing local economy. A partnership approach has been developed to promote cross-organisation and cross-border working to support communities to recover from Coronavirus. The recovery strategy is based on key themes of health and care; humanitarian and community; business and economy; and transport and infrastructure. The initial focus of the strategy is on immediate recovery with a view to longer term renewal across the City and the County. This is accompanied by an Action Plan that is being delivered by

partners working together through various recovery cells. The LRF management structure for COVID-19 recovery is shown at Appendix B to this report.

9. The RCG have developed a timetable of nationally influenced recovery events and have reviewed the readiness of agencies against this, including the cross agency preparations for recovery through the 'reopening of non-essential shops and the high street' and the reopening of pubs and the hospitality sector. The RCG also provides the forum for Government and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government briefings on national issues and initiatives and has a joint city and county council secretariat in place with Corporate Director level leadership from the City Council and County Council. Key work includes:
 - A PPE and logistics recovery plan is being implemented by partners, led through the LRF Logistics Cell.
 - Changes to licencing and uses of the pavement and public realm are being coordinated across partners through the local authority cell and specialist public realm group.
 - A rapid needs assessment has been developed under the Data Cell and is being completed by partners and cells
 - A review on the financial health of local government and other council tax funded bodies has been shared by the Finance Cell
 - The Partnership is providing support for recovery of individual agencies/organisations where there are wider needs or impacts arising from this, including a group supporting the reopening of our universities
 - As much as possible the RCG and Cells are trying to provide consistency in the implementation of initiatives across the different districts, boroughs and city to make measures and requirements as understandable as possible. Arrangements cannot always be the same and so cells are also co-ordinating with a Communications Cell to provide consistency of recovery messaging to the public and explanations where there are differences in approach across parts of the city and county.
10. Current work includes preparations for the forthcoming re-opening of schools, universities, and sports stadia, plus winter planning. The RCG is also developing a set of core measures to define what recovery looks like and an ongoing shared evidence base for recovery and renewal.

County Council Resilience Work

11. As previously reported to the Committee, the County Council's adherence to the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) provides the basis for resilience to major emergencies and business continuity incidents. Also, the County Council's Major Emergency Plan provides a strategic framework for the planning, preparation and response to major emergencies occurring in Nottinghamshire. Similarly, the County Council's Corporate Business Continuity Plan (Version 4.1, December 2017), provides a strategic framework for the planning, preparation and response to internal business continuity incidents.
12. During peak periods of the emergency, meetings of the Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board (RSEMB) took place on an approximately weekly basis, otherwise they have mainly been fortnightly. Similarly, departmental RSEMGs have met on a frequent and regular basis.

13. The Corporate Recovery and Transformation Group, led by the Corporate Director, Place, has established four subgroups covering Premises, Personal Protective Equipment, Finance and Workforce. These have produced Departmental Financial Strategies, Draft Business Cases for cross cutting transformation programmes an action plan to identify short, medium and longer term actions to support our future workforce.

Actions to enhance emergency preparedness and resilience

14. Members will be aware that the the Local Outbreak Control Plan provides the basis for responding to local clusters of COVID-19 cases (a separate report to this meeting of the Committee provides detail of this). It is important that the contents of this plan are familiar to a wide range of internal and external groups and individuals. It is also important that the content of the plan and people's understanding of it has been tested. For these reasons, a member of the County Council's emergency planning team led the planning and delivery of a multi-agency LRF exercise of the plan.

15. The exercise took place on 29 July 2020 and provided an effective test of the response principles of the local outbreak control plans for both Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City. Objectives of the exercise included:

- To identify lessons / gaps for informing future versions of the plans and to aid the drafting of incident management plans for specific high-risk settings.
- Raise awareness of the local outbreak control plans, and their links with incident management plans for specific settings.
- Increase understanding of the roles and responsibilities of organisations (in the context of outbreak management) and the Local Resilience Forum's COVID-19 groups / cells.
- Raise awareness of the local outbreak control procedures as detailed in the local outbreak control plans, including the cycle of health protection actions, the local outbreak response structure, triggers / notification, information / data flows, communications management, and cross-boundary working.

16. The exercise was held virtually, via MS Teams and consisted of two parts; an awareness raising session on the local outbreak plans and response structure, followed by a table-top exercise ran via facilitator led syndicate groups. More than 100 people participated in the exercise, with representation from 23 organisations. The draft report of outcomes from the exercise was provided to the County Council and City Council Directors of Public Health on Friday 21st August. This included recommendations and suggested actions for consideration.

17. Overall, the event highlighted the strength of partnership working within the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LRF, and how Public Health is integrated within this. The event has validated that an exercise of this scope and scale of participants can be carried out virtually to good effect. Delegate feedback has highlighted some opportunities for improvement for future virtual LRF exercises.

18. Another strand of work to enhance preparedness for future response has been the work to provide additional body storage capacity should local capacity be exceeded. Extra capacity was not required during the first wave of COVID-19 deaths, however a further peak might coincide with the winter months when deaths from other causes may peak at the same time.

This work has been coordinated by a City-Council led multi-agency group in which a member of the County Council's emergency planning team has played a prominent part.

19. The current focus of this work is to decommission a large capacity facility in Mansfield and to replace this with a smaller one to be established in the City. This is progressing well and is within the planned timescale for a move in September.

Other Options Considered

20. No other options are considered by this report.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

21. To provide Committee with the opportunity to engage with, and influence, the manner in which the Council should continue to work with partners to build resilience and learn lessons from the emergency response to the pandemic.

Statutory and Policy Implications

22. 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.

23. The emergency response raised by the Council, both as an organisation in its own right and through its extensive partnership working under the LRF, has impacts and implications in most, if not all, of these respects. The nature of these impacts are too many and varied to be detailed here, but all should be specified through the more detailed and targeted reports the Committee is likely to receive as its agenda develops over the coming months.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That members consider whether they require any further actions in relation to the issues contained within the report.
- 2) That members agree to receive further updates at subsequent meetings.

Derek Higton
Service Director, Communities and Place

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Rob Fisher, Group Manager Emergency Planning Management and Registration

Constitutional Comments (KK 02/09/20)

24. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the COVID 19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 03/09/2020)

25. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

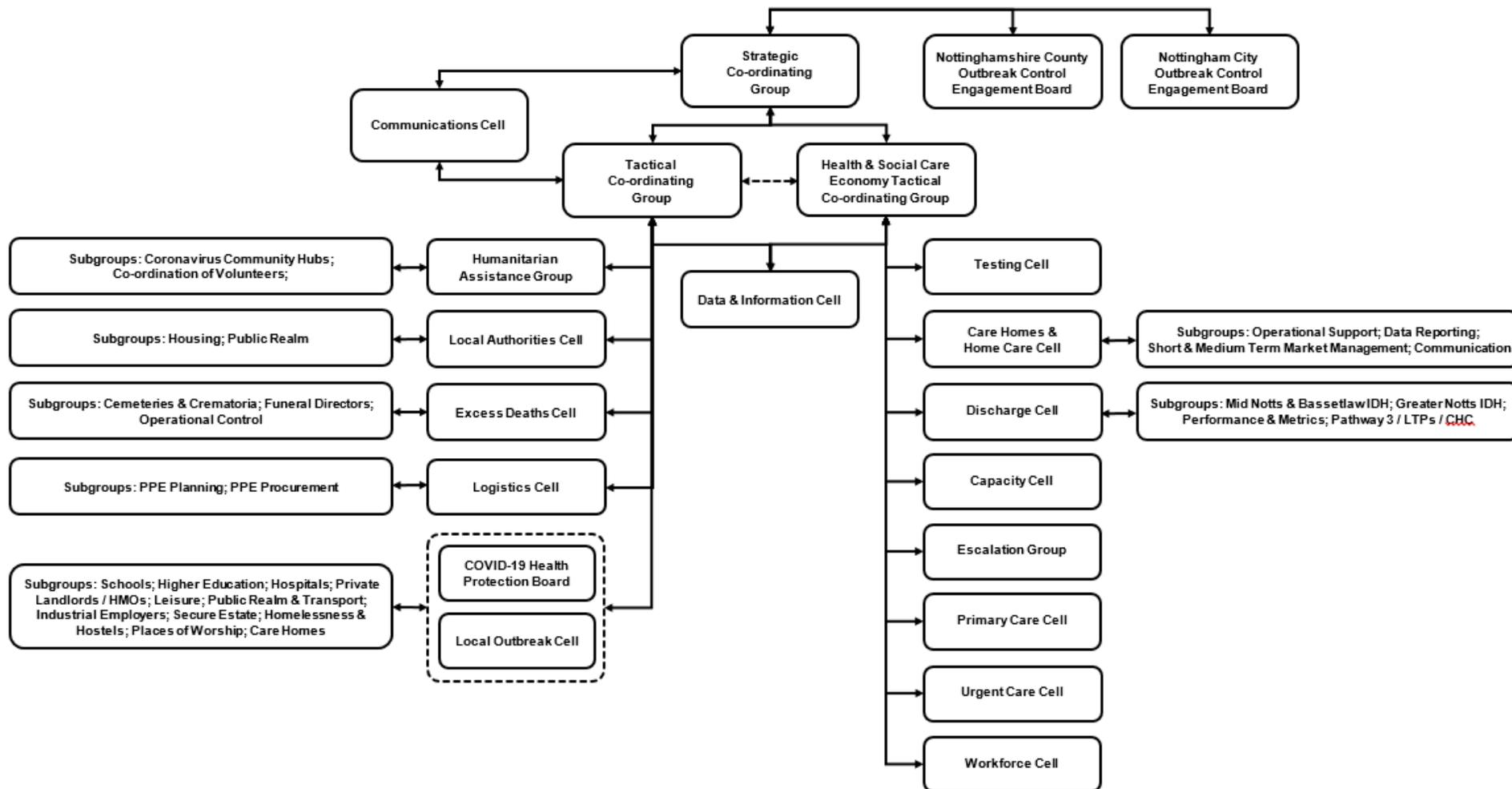
Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

LRF Covid-19 **RESPONSE** Structure



LRF Covid-19 RECOVERY Structure

