

24 January 2022**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH****UPDATE ON DELIVERY OF THE LOCAL OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT PLAN****Purpose of the Report**

1. To present the revised Local Outbreak Management Plan for approval by the Committee.
2. To provide an update on the establishment of the COVID-19 Response Service following approval by the Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) Committee on 14 June 2021.
3. To seek approval for changes to the establishment of the COVID-19 Response Team outlined in paragraph 12 to mitigate against the impact of recruitment difficulties.
4. To provide an update on the deployment of the Test and Trace Grant and Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

Information**Local Outbreak Management Plan**

5. The Local Outbreak Management Plan for Nottinghamshire County Council was first published in June 2020, following notification that upper tier local authorities would take on responsibility for the management of local outbreaks. The plan has subsequently been refreshed in line with changes to the Contain Framework guidance and approved by the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee in March 2021. The Plan has now been refreshed again to take account of further changes to the Contain Framework and revised Government policy.
6. The updated Local Outbreak Management Plan outlines how the local authority will discharge key elements of the local outbreak response in accordance with the national Contain Framework, including:
 - a. Outbreak management in higher-risk settings, communities, and locations e.g. care homes, prisons, hospitals, education, and homelessness settings.
 - b. Data and surveillance, including analysis of multiple data sources and local outbreak investigations to provide a clear picture of the local COVID-19 situation.
 - c. Community testing involving symptomatic, asymptomatic and surge COVID-19 testing in response to local outbreaks.
 - d. Contact tracing and enhanced contact tracing, in partnership with UK Health Security Agency teams to advise positive cases on self-isolation and trace their contacts.

- e. Engaging businesses, including good practice guidance on COVID-19 safety and managing outbreaks.
 - f. Support for self-isolation, such as advice and provision of essentials and financial support.
 - g. Support for vulnerable people and under-served communities, including the clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV,) including support during self-isolation.
 - h. Compliance and enforcement to engage, explain, encourage and enforce COVID safety and COVID-19 regulations.
 - i. Communications and engagement, including community resilience.
 - j. Interface with the vaccine programme, including plans to tackle disparities in vaccination take-up.
7. With the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, national strategy has changed over time. Since the end of November, Nottinghamshire County Council has mobilised targeted testing in response to the first case of omicron. During December and January, the Council has supported the implementation of Winter Plan B and has redeployed staff to mitigate workforce pressures in some services. The Council will continue to adapt its response in line with national strategy and local need. In the months ahead the Plan itself will also be reviewed to ensure it remains in line with the best evidence and latest policy.
8. The latest revision is presented in **Appendix A** for approval by the Committee.

COVID-19 Response Service

9. Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) Committee agreed to establish a COVID-19 Response Service at its meeting on 14 June 2021. The purpose of the service is to ensure that the Council can fulfil its responsibilities through the delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan. This will protect the health of people in Nottinghamshire from COVID-19, support people in Nottinghamshire to protect themselves and others and provide confidence and assurance to the public and stakeholders on local outbreak management activities.
10. The service includes a dedicated COVID Response Team within the Public Health division, supported by a range of services provided across the Council and by external providers. The service delivers a wide range of outbreak response elements including surveillance, testing, contact tracing, and management of outbreaks in high risk settings.
11. Recruitment took place during the summer and a comprehensive induction and introduction to outbreak management has supported staff to take up their new roles. This has also helped existing Public Health staff who have been deployed on COVID-19 response since early 2020 to return to their business as usual duties. Most posts are now filled, except for the Consultant in Public Health roles due to availability of suitably qualified individuals. Partial interim support is being provided through agency staff. There is also ongoing recruitment for some of the support services, such as emergency planning.
12. Following the outcome of recruitment, a number of changes are proposed to the staffing establishment to address gaps in workforce. These are:
- a. Establishment of an additional temporary, until September 2023, 1 FTE Outbreak Investigator (Band A) with an Environmental Health focus to replace 1 FTE Environmental Health Officer (Band F) because senior Environmental Health support was not available from district and borough council partners.

- b. Establishment of an additional temporary, until September 2023, 0.5 FTE Senior COVID-19 Response Service Manager (Band E) to replace 0.5 FTE Consultant in Public Health because of the difficulty in securing suitably qualified individuals.
 - c. Extension of the fixed term contracts of 2 FTE Apprentice Public Health Support Officers (Band B) from 24 months to 36 months to align with the timescales of the apprenticeship qualification.
13. The financial impact of these changes, when comparing against the staffing costs originally anticipated for the COVID-19 Response Service, is a net saving of £39,041 to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund and Public Health Grant Reserves.
14. A review to assess the current situation and likely ongoing need for the service will take place in Spring 2022.

Test and Trace Grant and Contain Outbreak Management Fund

15. Government funding to support the mitigation and containment of local outbreaks of COVID-19 has been allocated to local authorities through the Test and Trace Grant and Contain Outbreak Management Fund. Nottinghamshire County Council has received £29,479,916 through these two grants to date. District & Borough Councils have received individual allocations based on MHCLG's COVID-19 relative needs formula, which is governed by the same authorised purposes and reporting mechanisms.
16. ASCPH Committee approved a resource plan for the Test & Trace Grant on 14 September 2020 and initial allocation of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund on 11 January 2021. Total spend relating to the two funds to date is:
- a. 2020/21 full year spend is £5,311,448
 - b. 2021/22 year to date spend is £3,772,571
17. At the time of writing the paper, the full forecast spend for 2021/22 is: £6,389,813
18. The funding for the COVID Response Service is part of this financial plan. The full costs for the service over two years is £6,480,277, which is broken down as:
- COVID Response Team Costs: £3,494,357 (Annual Cost: £1,747,178)
 - Support Services (including 8.8 FTE staff): £2,985,920 (Annual cost: £1,492,960)
- The costs attributed to the COVID-19 Response Service to end March 2022 is £1,620,069.
19. Other examples of areas of spend in 2021-22 include:
- a. Development of a county-wide homelessness team to address current gaps in services to homeless and rough sleepers and provide community-based support for those disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.
 - b. Digital support and equipment has been provided to individuals with social care support packages to allow them to access on-line support where their usual formal and informal

support, such as day services and contact with friends and family were suspended during to COVID

- c. Development of the Food Community Fund, working with the Food Insecurity Network to assess project applications to build community resilience to food poverty through a focus on sustainable measures, building on existing community food assets and expanding provision.
 - d. Market surveillance and inspections at retailers to ensure PPE, hand sanitisers and test kits being sold were compliant across the County.
 - e. Additional support is being given to the Domestic Abuse Helpline which has seen an increase of demand for support to female survivors of domestic abuse during the pandemic.
20. A full breakdown of spend is included in **Appendix B** which meets the authorised purposes for the grant, including use on testing, contact tracing, support for vulnerable groups, compliance and enforcement and vaccination.
21. At the end of December 2021 Local Authorities were notified that that unspent monies from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) could be carried forward into the 2022-23 financial year. Full guidance on the latest provisions is expected early in the New Year. The utilisation of the grants are governed by specific conditions, which are outlined in Appendix B. In addition, there have been several complimentary funding streams, such as Infection Control Fund and Practical Support Payment Fund. Due to the need to recruit to the COVID-19 Response Team, only 6 months of the expected service costs are allocated to the Grant in the current financial year. Service costs from April 22 – September 23 is expected to be in the region of £4,860,207
22. The extension on the use of the Contain Outbreak Management fund to March 2023 will include the 2022-23 service costs for the COVID-19 Response Service. The County Council is forecasting £6.69 million expenditure to cover the cost pressures associated with responding to future outbreaks during 2022-23. This forecast is currently under review and expected to increase significantly due to continued service impacts of the pandemic.
23. In summary, the current position for the Contain Outbreak Management Fund is:
- a. Total fund received by Nottinghamshire County Council - £29,479,916
 - b. 2020/21 full year spend is £5,311,448
 - c. Total amount spent and committed by end March 2022 - £6,389,813
 - d. Total amount committed in 2022-23 - £6,689,664
 - e. Current forecasted uncommitted Contain Outbreak Management Fund £11,088,991. This amount is expected to decrease as per the review of pandemic impacts across services.
24. As agreed in June, Public Health Grant reserves will be used to underwrite the additional costs of the COVID-19 Response Service between April and September 2023, if required. This has been factored into the PH Reserve spending plan accordingly mitigating any additional financial risk for the council.

Other Options Considered

25. No other options were considered as this is an update report.

Reason for Recommendation

26. A sustainable COVID-19 response service model is required to continue to deliver on the commitments outlined within Nottinghamshire's Local Outbreak Management Plan.

Statutory and Policy Implications

27. 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

28. The financial implications are included in paragraphs 13 and 16- 24 of this report.

Human Resources Implications

29. HR implications are included in paragraphs 10-13 of this report.

30. The proposals have been shared, for information purposes, with the relevant recognised trade unions.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That committee:

- 1) Approves the revised Nottinghamshire County Council Local Outbreak Management Plan.
- 2) Receives an update on the establishment of the COVID-19 Response Service following approval by the Adult Social Care and Public Health (ASCPH) Committee on 14 June 2021.
- 3) Approves the changes to the establishment of the COVID-19 Response Team outlined in paragraph 12 to mitigate against the impact of recruitment difficulties.
- 4) Receives an update on the deployment of the Test and Trace Grant and Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

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Constitutional Comments (AK 20/12/2021)

31. This report falls within the remit of Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee under its terms of reference

Financial Comments (DG 20/12/21)

32. All costs are covered by the COMF and Test and Trace Grant within the financial year 31st March 22, but costs in future years, if the grant is unable to be carried forward will be met from the Public Health reserves.

HR Comments (WI 23/12/2021)

33. Recruitment to the newly established posts will be on a fixed term basis, for the duration as outlined in the report and in line with the Authority's recruitment procedures. The Authority's managed service contract for agency provision will be utilised where necessary.

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.

- Sustaining the Delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan. Report to Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee (14 June 2021.)
- Local Authority Test & Trace Grant Resource Plan. Report to Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee (14 September 2020)
- Contain Outbreak Management Fund. Report to Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee (11 January 2021)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All