

Agenda Item: Urgent Item

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

CORONAVIRUS: SHORT TERM REFOCUSING OF COUNCIL ACTIVITY

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on initial work to support the Council's efforts to respond to the Coronavirus crisis within the context of developing Government guidance.
2. To seek approval to release initial staffing and financial resources to support the Council's response.

Information

3. The Coronavirus crisis requires a significant and immediate shift, for the foreseeable future, to the focus of County Council activities to enable the Council to respond effectively and support those who are most vulnerable, both with its own resources and as part of a broader public service response to the emergency.
4. The Corporate Leadership Team has led work in the last three weeks to consider how the Council might best respond. It is now the case that the Council needs to urgently prioritise its Adults and Children's social care functions, and its related work with health and community partners to support those most vulnerable to the virus. To this end, the following major programmes of work have been established, led by relevant Corporate Directors and the Chief Executive:-
 - Support for vulnerable adults – Director of Adult Social Care and Health
 - Support for vulnerable children and families – Director of Children's and Families Services
 - Community support and resilience – Director of Place
 - Support businesses and the local economy – Director of Place
 - Corporate resilience – Chief Executive
5. Work has also been undertaken to consider i) how the Council's broader service offer may best respond to the guidance emerging from Government on social distancing and self isolation, and ii) how available staffing and financial resources may best be redirected to support the priorities set out above.
6. With this in mind, it is proposed that in the following public facing service areas, and with effect from the week beginning 23 March, alternative delivery arrangements are developed that respect Government advice but enable some delivery/service user support to continue. This will result in significant changes to the following services, including the closure of premises for public access:-

- Youth service provision
 - Library service provision
 - Outdoor education provision
 - Adult and community learning provision
 - Day service provision
 - Country parks provision
7. More detail on specific changes will be communicated to the public and service users/customers in the coming days, so that the changes are widely understood.
8. Whilst it is anticipated that these services will continue in a revised form, the changes envisaged will be such that significant resources, including skilled and experienced staff, will be released to support the Council's core focus on the most vulnerable people and communities.
9. Other services will continue to operate on a "business as usual" basis, pending further review in the light of additional government guidance, and business continuity issues as the coronavirus outbreak develops locally. These include
- Highways maintenance
 - Household waste and recycling services
 - Children's centres
10. To further support the Council's response, it is proposed that a revenue fund of £1million be established immediately, to be directed at supporting the response of Nottinghamshire's communities to the Coronavirus emergency. This would be financed from the Council's contingency and it is proposed that the oversight and management of this fund be delegated to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.

Other Options Considered

11. None. The nature of the Coronavirus emergency is such that an immediate shift in the priorities of the Council is required. The Council must also comply with relevant Government guidance.

Reason for Recommendation

12. To support the Council's immediate and urgent response to the Coronavirus emergency.

Statutory and Policy Implications

13. 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

14. These are set out in paragraph 10 above.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Policy Committee:

- 1) Endorses the proposed revised service arrangements set out in paragraph 6 of this report, and
- 2) Approves the establishment of a £1million revenue fund to support communities to respond to the impact of Coronavirus and delegates authority to the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer for the fund's oversight and management.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS MBE

Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Derek Higton, Service Director, Place and Communities

Constitutional Comments (HD 17/3/20)

This decision falls within the remit of Policy Committee

Financial Comments (NS 17/03/2020)

The financial implications arising from responding to the Coronavirus are difficult to quantify at this stage. A number of Government announcements, in the Budget and over the last few days, indicates additional funding will be made available to the NHS and to Local Government to help them in responding to this emergency. In addition, there are service implications and it is possible that the Council will face additional costs and loss of income over the coming weeks. The £1 million funding as set out in paragraph 10 to support the communities will be funded from contingency.

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.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All