

16 March 2021**Agenda Item: 5**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

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 (NCC) response to the coronavirus emergency. 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
3. The information contained in this report is correct at the time of writing but may have changed subsequently, due to the changing nature of the emergency and government guidance. Where this is the case, updated information will be shared with Members at the Committee meeting.

Support for Vulnerable Adults

Support to the Social Care Market

4. The COVID-19 outbreaks in care homes peaked in early January 2021 with 131 significant outbreaks; these have fallen steadily to around 40 outbreaks with just four that are considered significant at the time of writing. Containing the outbreaks has continued to be a main focus of work in the Adult Social Care and Health department and has been effected through the monitoring of work practices, use of testing, training and infection control support. Daily monitoring of care homes remains in place via a multi-agency taskforce and is coordinated through daily risk meetings.
5. During the pandemic the monitoring of the market has been focused on the safe management of COVID-19 procedures, with a specific focus on infection and prevention control, personal protective equipment (PPE), movements of staff, testing regimes and safe visiting guidance. During this time, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) also stepped down their regulated inspection regime. The multi-agency taskforce is now seeing an increased fragility of the social

care market, specifically in the care home sector. This is on a number of levels including an exhausted workforce, both mentally and physically; shortfalls in staff; increased complexity of residents' needs; increased turn-over of residents and changing government guidance. This is exacerbated by the nature of the care home market in Nottinghamshire, which is dominated by small localised care homes that do not have recourse to plentiful staff resources.

6. The impact of COVID-19 related absence on the care home workforce has been significant and this has required the Council to arrange a care home support service. This has been on stand-by since the beginning of January 2021 to support shortfalls in the care home workforce as they arise. The Council's Quality and Market Management Team has provided a flexible 7-day service to provide support to the care market outside of normal working hours. Strategically this work has been overseen by the Care Home and Home Care Cell of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), which is jointly chaired by a senior officer of the Council.
7. The vaccination rollout for Nottinghamshire care homes began at the beginning of January 2021 and was delivered jointly by vaccination teams, GPs and the Council and overseen by the strategic Care Home and Home Care Cell. In line with government guidelines the vaccination programme for the County's care homes for older adults was completed on 29 January 2021. Vaccinations will be made available for new staff and residents as they move into local care homes.

Social Care Workforce Vaccination Programme

8. The vaccination programme is prioritised according to the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) guidance, with the frontline social care workforce identified within the second priority cohort. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) defines which frontline health and social care worker roles are included. In Nottinghamshire, the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health is accountable for the implementation of the SOP, and an adult social care lead has been appointed to work in partnership with Health to ensure frontline social care staff are vaccinated according to the national requirements.
9. Those eligible include people working for local authorities, commissioned by local authorities and other providers where staff provide close personal care to those people most at risk in relation to COVID-19. In Nottinghamshire this is close to 10,500 people. The vaccinations for staff started in January 2021 and the vaccination rates compare favourably with rates across the Country. As at 1st March over 73% of the workforce has been vaccinated.

Inequalities and COVID-19 Vaccination

10. As data has shown a lower take up of the vaccine in some ethnic and socio-economic groups, information has been recorded on the take up of vaccinations in Nottinghamshire to drive targeted actions to address inequalities. Colleagues in Adult Social Care, Public Health and Health are working together to co-ordinate this work. This will include communication materials being made available in the relevant language and proactive work with faith and community leaders, building on experience with the flu vaccination programme. There will be targeted work to ensure that people with specific barriers to the vaccine such as disability, mental health or understanding, benefit from the vaccine. There is a consensus that the work on tackling health inequalities in a collaborative way should be continued and developed further once the pandemic response is over.

Support for Vulnerable Children and Families including Schools

Early Years, School and College Settings

11. Attendance at Nottinghamshire schools (onsite) has continued to be higher than the national average. There has also consistently been a higher than average number of children with Education Health Care Plans attending schools and a higher than national average number of children with social workers attending schools in the County. Figures from the 23 February 2021, while schools were closed to most pupils, showed 21% of children on the roll in the County were attending school onsite compared with a national average of 16%. The same attendance figures showed all schools in the County were able to provide at least the minimum amount of home learning. As of the 8 March 2021, all pupils were able to return to school and therefore most pupils should now be attending onsite.
12. The number of children attending school onsite was significantly higher during the lockdown period from 5 January to 8 March 2021, than during the first national lockdown in spring 2020. This was partially due to the expansion of the 'critical workers' categories by the Department for Education (DfE) and a decrease in home working by some employers. Most publicly funded schools were able to manage demand through strong engagement with parents and carers, but it remains that a small number of children of critical workers were asked by their school to access learning remotely as a result of individual school risk assessments. During the February half term holiday, schools were closed to all children.
13. The quality and quantity of remote learning has continued to be significantly higher than in the first national lockdown. Schools have been required to deliver the same curriculum remotely as they would if pupils were in school, with each pupil entitled to receive the equivalent hours of core teaching that they would have received in school. This included both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently.
14. Schools have continued to receive devices from the DfE to allow children to access remote learning. Schools have also taken up the offer of access to free data provided by commercial companies e.g. SIM cards from mobile phone companies and access to Wi-Fi hotspots. As of 14 February 2021, the DfE had delivered over 4,500 laptops and tablets to the local authority and over 23,000 devices to Nottinghamshire Academy Trusts. In addition, many commercial companies, district councils and individuals are making donations of computers and/or dongles directly to schools, which has been greatly appreciated by schools and the families they support. Whilst most primary and secondary schools are receiving their allocation of DfE IT devices, it remains that some schools do not have access to sufficient devices.
15. In January 2021, the Secretary of State for Education announced that, as schools were closed to most pupils, the DfE would reopen the national meal voucher scheme for children eligible for benefits-related to free school meals where schools could not offer food parcels or use local solutions. Most schools opted for the national voucher scheme as this seems to be the preference of most parents and reduces footfall on school sites. The Council's school catering team has been providing support to schools that chose to provide a Food Parcel for families. Some children will remain at home after the 8 March 2021. This will include those clinically extremely vulnerable children who are required to shield until the 31 March 2021 and those required to self-isolate having either tested positive for COVID-19 or identified as a close contact. Where these children are eligible for benefits related to free school meals, headteachers will continue to make school-based decisions around the provision of vouchers

or food parcels as appropriate. For all other children in school, the catering operation will resume as planned. Information about the service can be accessed at [Nottinghamshire School Meals | Nottinghamshire County Council](#).

16. The introduction of weekly lateral flow tests (LFTs) for primary staff is now in place. Information suggests that the number of pupils and staff testing positive was continuing to reduce by the end of February 2021. This is a positive step to contain the spread of the virus within schools. It is now possible for parents of statutory school aged children to order LFTs for use within the household and these tests can be accessed through the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>.
17. Publicly funded schools and other education providers have continued to overcome the challenges of the need for numbers of children and staff to self-isolate as the result of a COVID-19 case within schools. The national advice around the daily contact testing of children who have been a close contact of a person who has tested positive has changed. It is now the case that any close contacts must self-isolate for 10 days. Plans to test asymptomatic children in primary schools remain unknown at this time although the mass testing of secondary aged children is taking place as all secondary and special school aged children return to schools.
18. Some headteachers have experienced difficulty accessing out of hours support from Public Health England and/or the DfE. To support head teachers of maintained school over the weekend, the Nottinghamshire County Council education emergency phone number (24 hours) has been shared but has had minimal use to date.
19. Education services have continued to ensure a sharp focus on the wellbeing of headteachers, teaching staff and children through the “Wellbeing for Education Return” project, in partnership with Nottingham City Council colleagues. ‘*Headteacher Wellbeing Peer Support sessions*’ are now being offered to headteachers of maintained schools daily.
20. The next phase of the Wellbeing for Education Return project involves the development of a new website for young people, parents/carers and professionals providing information, advice and signposting to services for children and young people’s mental health across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City. The website production has involved education, health and social care professionals from both the city and county councils as well as young people, parent/carer and school representatives. The website is planned to launch in the summer term 2021.
21. School Governors have been supported and updated throughout the pandemic by education teams including the Council’s Governing Body Service. They have received bulletins to update them on the latest government and local authority guidance and information on how to fulfil their responsibilities remotely. Governors have been frequently reminded of their duty to continue with their governance responsibilities on a virtual basis and have received training through five free webinars during the period.
22. It has been confirmed that the National Tutoring Programme (NTP) will continue beyond the 2020-21 academic year. The delivery of the programme will be decided through a competitive tendering process run by the DfE. The Prime Minister has announced that there will be a further £300m available to schools for tutoring. The government has committed to working in collaboration with the education sector to develop, as appropriate, specific initiatives for summer schools and a COVID Premium to support catch up by 2024.

23. There has also been a change to the allocation of the Pupil Premium payment to schools, which funds additional provision for vulnerable children and young people. The premium will be based on the October 2020 census rather than January 2021. This may have implications for some schools who have seen a significant increase in free school meal applications between October 2020 and January 2021.
24. The statutory Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests and teacher assessments planned for summer 2021 have been cancelled. In 2021, the early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile is not mandatory. However, school leaders and practitioners have been urged to complete it and provide the information to Year 1 teachers and parents where possible. Members are advised that there will not be a national data collection of primary assessments for 2021.
25. In January, Ofqual and the DfE ran a consultation on the proposal that GCSE, AS and A level grades in summer 2021 would be based on teacher assessment. The outcome of the consultation has not yet been published. As a result of the pandemic and disruption to schools, performance tables are suspended for the 2019 to 2020 academic year, and no school or college will be judged on data based on exams and assessments from 2020. For the 2020 to 2021 academic year, the DfE has confirmed that the department will not be publishing data based on exams and assessments from summer 2021 on school and college performance tables.
26. During the third national lock down all Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) early years providers have remained opened to all children, however some parents have chosen to keep their children at home due to safety concerns or parents being furloughed or working at home. There has been a reduction in the availability of school-led early years places, however there have been no childcare sufficiency challenges for parents and carers.
27. As previously reported, the percentage of eligible 2-year olds taking up their funded childcare entitlements reduced during the pandemic. In the autumn term 69% of 2-year olds accessed provision compared to 80.42% in autumn 2019. Take up rates for spring term 2021 will be confirmed after Easter, however, take up rates are expected to reduce because most school-led early years settings limited numbers in attendance.
28. School early years professionals have a supply of home testing kits. On 23 February 2021, the Prime Minister announced that all PVI settings, with the exception of childminders, will also now be sent home testing kits which has been welcome news for most providers. Central Government is currently exploring options for childminders. Early Childhood Services are working with colleagues in Public Health to support childminders with accessing community testing sites.

Vulnerable Children, Young People and Families

29. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) continues to operate an “urgents only by phone” service, due to a need to ensure there is sufficient staffing capacity to manage the numbers of enquiries received. All non-urgent safeguarding concerns can continue to be referred to the MASH via the online referral form or through email. Early indications suggest that during this lockdown the service is seeing a similar reduction in referrals to the MASH as that seen in the first lockdown in March 2020. This will continue to be monitored, particularly now that schools have reopened fully to all children.
30. During the third national lockdown, weekly “strengths-based wellbeing” calls to all families receiving early help or social work support have been reinstated.

31. On 2 February 2021, the DfE strengthened their advice stating that while schools were closed to most pupils from 5 January to 8 March 2021, children with a social worker were expected to attend school/early years provision (subject to public health advice), given their safeguarding and welfare needs. Early help case managers and social workers were in contact with schools to ensure that vulnerable children were offered a school place and parents / carers were encouraged to access school places for their children. In addition, for those vulnerable children unable to attend school and without access to a device, the local authority was able to allocate laptops and iPads through the DfE “Get help with technology during coronavirus” scheme.
32. In line with government guidance, all families open to children’s social care continue to receive some level of face to face contact following risk assessment, with appropriate social distancing measures and PPE if necessary.
33. In terms of staffing, there are higher numbers of staff either self-isolating or absent from work due to COVID-19 during this phase of the pandemic, with a recent COVID outbreak in one care setting. Contingency measures have been enacted to ensure the setting can continue to operate safely.

Community Support and Resilience

Community Support Hub

34. As reported to Policy Committee on 13 May 2020, the Nottinghamshire Coronavirus Community Support Hub went live on 23 March 2020 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.
35. The number of hits to the Hub website reduced gradually over the summer from a peak of around 1,000 a day down to as low as about 40 a day by mid-September 2020. This figure increased steadily with the second wave of infection and in the week commencing 4 January 2021 there were over two hundred hits a day to the Hub website. By February this had settled to approximately 150 hits a day.
36. As at 3 March 2021, 1,424 requests for support had been received since launching the second phase of the Hub, with the numbers of requests having reduced significantly over the summer and starting to increase again from early November. There are currently 284 voluntary groups, 153 individual volunteers, 87 charity organisations, 20 online community groups and 241 businesses offering support.

Third National Lockdown

37. The Hub continues to provide support to those in need and although the number of people seeking support has reduced, there has been a small increase since the third national lockdown was initiated on 4 January 2021.
38. As previously reported, the Council has initiated a review, with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partner organisations, of the various groups of people requiring support to re-affirm that we have identified and put support in place for all identified need. The initial high-level findings

on the assessment of these groups has been presented to the Humanitarian Assistance Group and action plans will be developed and implemented through the Community Support Hubs cell of the LRF.

Additional Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Cohort

39. Committee Members will recall that the Government placed responsibilities on the Local Authority to support those identified as clinically extremely vulnerable to follow government shielding advice. From March 2020 through to February 2021, the number in the County was approximately 35,000 residents.
40. During February 2021, and as part of a national modelling exercise, the government identified a further 19,300 Nottinghamshire residents that it believed were clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19, given what had been learned throughout the pandemic. The exercise was undertaken to assist in prioritising of vaccinations to those most in need. The government wrote to this new cohort, and once again has asked the Authority to provide assistance to support them to follow government shielding guidance.
41. To ensure this new cohort were aware of local support available through the Community Support Hub, a combination of text messages, phone calls and letters are being used to communicate the support available. Further, any of the new cohort who have registered as being in need of support with the government are being contacted directly and offered support.
42. At the time of writing, a relatively small and manageable number of this cohort have contacted the Hub and asked for support. As the Council's local communications have been received, the number of hits on the Hub webpage where residents can find access to local support, increased from 150 to over 600 per day.

Winter Planning

43. Another focus of planning has been on the various scenarios that may be faced over the winter months.
44. To support winter planning, the Council has worked with colleagues from a number of areas to develop a mapping tool that contains the details of flood risk areas, gritting routes and the geographical location of the clinically extremely vulnerable people that the Council has supported over the last year. This is available to LRF partners to allow partners to analyse and quantify the impact of a situation and respond accordingly. The Hub now has additional functionality that captures and provides an analysis of the current situation for the network of food banks and other food-related organisations across the County.
45. During the recent flooding event, resulting from Storm Christophe, the mapping tool played a central part in allowing us to quickly identify Clinically Vulnerable and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents that we have been supporting over the last year that were living in the affected areas. This drove some targeted communication activity to ensure that these residents were aware of the risk and prepared and that LRF partners had a clear understanding of their support needs in the event of an evacuation.
46. County Council officers made calls to over 300 residents and identified specific needs that would have had to be met by the partnership in the event of an evacuation. The intelligence gathered through this allowed the emergency services to have prior knowledge of what issues they would be facing on the ground.

Nottinghamshire Community Fund

47. Nottinghamshire Community Fund was launched on 31 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.
48. In response to the third lockdown being introduced, the fund was re-opened in January 2021 with a balance of £257,000 and will remain open until the end of March 2021. As at 3 March 2021, a total of 317 projects have been funded to a value of £877,771.

Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies

49. On 10 July 2020 the County Council was allocated £858,285 by the Government, in order to support people struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19. As at 3 March 2021, 67 awards to voluntary/community organisations and district/borough council partners have been made, with a value of £579,362. Further work to assess funding applications and distribute funding continues.

Support for Business and the Local Economy

50. In September 2020 the COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan 2020-2022 was launched. Since then, Members have received two progress updates; one in November 2020, the other in January 2021. In the intervening 127 business days since the Action Plan was set in motion, over £14,286,500 of new money has been secured to help stimulate the economy and directly impact the residential and business community of Nottinghamshire.
51. As we rebuild Nottinghamshire's economy together, and in lockstep with Government Budget 2021 announcements, the five themes of: people, business, visitor economy, infrastructure and place, remain a constant. Key highlights as at 16 March 2021 (including summaries from 3 March Budget statement, with its additional £65bn of measures, setting out how the country will recover from the coronavirus pandemic) are illustrated below. For the time being, digital connectivity is included within several themes. However, given the new-found relevance and wide acknowledgement of the importance digital services, there are plans to present this theme separately in the future.

People

Budget 2021

- A new set of United Kingdom (UK) schemes called "help to grow". This will include projects to support people get management training and train small business in digital skills
- Minimum wage to increase to £8.91 an hour from April
- The Universal Credit top-up of £20-per-week will continue for a further six months
- £19m announced for domestic violence programmes; £40m for victims of 1960s Thalidomide scandal; £1.65bn for vaccine rollout
- On income tax, the threshold for paying the basic rate will rise to £12,570 next year. For higher-rate payers, the threshold will be £50,270. Both rates will stay the same until 2026
- A planned increase on alcohol duties will be cancelled to keep the cost of living low

PEOPLE: HIGHLIGHT OF TARGETED ACTIVITY AND INTERVENTION	NEW MONEY SECURED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The transfer of Council Levy funds to its Apprenticeship Training Agency to support the employment of further apprenticeships, with a focus on supporting Looked After Children, Care Leavers and other vulnerable groups of young people and adults. 42 applications received. 34 apprenticeships approved (this includes 17 apprenticeships in adult care in residential homes and enablement teams across the county). 21 business supported.	Levy transfer value of £356,500 (i.e. 10% increase since last reported to Members)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The new employment and skills portal continues to support those that are working, furloughed or looking for a job. The portal brings together information to help people access the support they need. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Work is now underway with the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2 LEP) to develop an online portal for careers and pathways to communicate current offers across careers, education, information, advice and guidance to Nottinghamshire residents and employers. This centralised gateway will unlock potential by targeting support to young people aged 16-24 through tailored provision, including live local market information data, employer student brokerage, post 16/18 course search, opportunity directory, employer profiles on growth sectors and key industries and student referrals to relevant practitioners. The platform will be called START in D2N2 and will support the roll out of careers hubs across Nottinghamshire.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council-owned Futures have been successful in securing the European Social Fund Healthy Work (Well for Work) contract worth £8.2m through new and match funding across the D2N2 area. The Council, primarily through the Adult Social Care hub and the Growth and Economic Development team, will work with partners to support the effective delivery of the roll out of this provision across Nottinghamshire.	(in the region of) £2.1m
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The winners of the Council's Nottinghamshire Outstanding Achievement 4Uth Awards 2020 have been announced. The plan remains to invite all the 2020 4Uth awards winners to an event later this year, to recognise their achievements in person. For more information about the awards, the winners, or the nominees, please visit www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/4uth	
<p>Supporting young people across the County who are at risk of long-term unemployment, who have seen a decline in the right roles due to COVID-19 or have faced increased competition for jobs as they embark on their future career, is a significant priority for the Council.</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unfortunately, the application to the Youth Futures Foundation Development & Impact Grants Programme was unsuccessful. The Youth Futures Foundation received over 330 applications for the Development and Impact Fund of which they were able to fund around 25. The Council is	

<p>among a great number of organisations doing amazing work and is disappointed with this outcome. There remain further opportunities to work with Youth Futures Foundation across three main priority areas: Building Capacity, Creating Opportunities and Systems Change.</p> <p>☑ The Council has successfully applied to be a local representative for the Government's new Kickstart scheme, a £2 billion national fund which it is hoped will create high quality job roles for residents aged 16 to 24.</p>	
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Business	
Budget 2021	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The furlough scheme - which pays 80% of employees' wages – which was due to close at the end of April, will be extended until the end of September 2021. Employers will be asked to contribute 10% in July and 20% in August and September. However, the terms and eligibility criteria will change • A further 600,000 self-employed people will be eligible for help as access to grants is widened • The 100% business rates holiday in England will continue from April until June. For the remaining nine months of the year, business rates will still be discounted by two thirds, up to a value of £2m for closed businesses, with a lower cap for those who have been able to stay open • The VAT registration threshold will remain at £85,000 until 2024 • The 5% reduced rate of VAT will be extended for six months to 30 September followed by businesses with profits of over £250,000 will be taxed at the 25% corporation tax rate 	
BUSINESS: HIGHLIGHT OF TARGETED ACTIVITY AND INTERVENTION	NEW MONEY SECURED
☑ In January 2021 Policy Committee approved the delivery of a £10,000 programme of activities to help Nottinghamshire's businesses maximise the contracting opportunities available via national infrastructure projects and larger scale contracts	
☑ In partnership with the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, in February 2021 Policy Committee approved allocating £26,250 from the Council's European Union Transition funds to support Nottinghamshire businesses during 2021 with specialised workshops, a virtual Nottinghamshire International Trade Conference; and the establishment of a Nottinghamshire International Trade Forum.	

Visitor Economy	
Budget 2021	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 5% reduced rate of VAT for tourism and hospitality will be extended for six months to the end of September • £400m to help arts venues in England re-open 	
HIGHLIGHT OF TARGETED ACTIVITY AND INTERVENTION	NEW MONEY SECURED
☑ At its 14 December 2020 meeting, this Committee agreed to mobilise an extensive public relations campaign to launch the food and drinks sector business support toolkit, involving	

some of Nottinghamshire's prominent growers and producers to help with the promotion. Plans underway to initiate aligned to the Governments easing of lockdown 'roadmap'.	
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Place	
Budget 2021	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Midlands Airport announced as one of the eight United Kingdom Freeports • Newark and Mansfield announced as part of the new wave of Town Fund deals • The stamp duty cut will continue until the end of June, with the nil rate band set at £250,000 • The first round of the £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund (£4bn available for England and £800m for communities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) will be available to local areas to help tackle regional inequalities • To help professional sport and grassroots football re-open £300m and £25m respectively 	
PLACE: HIGHLIGHT OF TARGETED ACTIVITY AND INTERVENTION	NEW MONEY SECURED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aligned to the East Midlands Development Corporation, partners in the region bid for a Freeport to bring additional powers and tools to improve the economy as we build back better from COVID-19. At its January 2021 meeting, Policy Committee gave approval for the Leader to sign a letter of support for the 5 February 2021 bid submission.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Department for Transport (DfT) allocated Funds towards the County Council's Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 proposals	£2.18m
<p>The Warm Homes Hub programme is now being rolled out across the County. The fund is split into three broad categories: new gas heating systems for urban homes and communities, non-gas solutions for rural homes and communities, and specific energy efficient/health related solutions.</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A refreshed marketing and communications strategy has been launched, with new applications being received. To date 24 households have benefited from first time central heating (67% increase since last reported to Members) with a further 52 installations in the pipeline. A further 837 households have been supported against the 1,000 households target. Encouragingly, this support has achieved 60% of its target level of savings for residents. The health/heating aspect of the programme has continued, supporting residents to access £593,319 benefit gains, with a further £293,940 to be confirmed	£4.3m
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme to retrofit an additional 100 homes	£1m

Infrastructure	
Budget 2021	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new UK Infrastructure Bank will be setup to replace the fact that, post-Brexit, we can no longer make use of the European Investment Bank. The bank, hopes to encourage £40bn spending on infrastructure, initially supported by £12bn in capital investment 	

INFRASTRUCTURE: HIGHLIGHT OF TARGETED ACTIVITY AND INTERVENTION	NEW MONEY SECURED
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Investment underway as part of the Government's 'Getting Building Fund' on the new 5G Enabled Digital Centre in North Nottinghamshire and the Lindhurst Development, Mansfield	£3.6m
<p>On 10 February, the Council's Policy Committee received a report updating Members on the Council's continued success of delivering world-class digital infrastructure through Nottinghamshire. Thanks to the buy-in from the leadership of the council, Nottinghamshire has cemented its position in the top three most digitally connected counties in the United Kingdom (UK), through its range of strategies, policy initiatives, investment, and funding.</p> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Just shy of 1,000 gigabit-capable connections have been delivered. Having started from a zero baseline, today 17.42% of premises (both homes and businesses) can access gigabit speeds	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1,654 premises (a mix of residential and business addresses) are set to receive gigabit-capable connectivity as a result of the 'Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme'.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The Council's education, learning and skills division has established a special project to manage emergency education-related working during the pandemic. This special project has seen the Council working closely with schools, the Department for Education, and other partners to coordinate the despatch of laptops, handheld devices and routers to targeted children and young people across the County	
	£14,286,500

Corporate Resilience

Workforce

52. As previously reported, the Workforce Resilience and Recovery Group continues to oversee the Council's work on internal communication and engagement, employee health and well-being, reward and recognition and smarter working to ensure that the Council is prepared for whatever the future of work becomes as a result of the pandemic's impact. Regular discussions continue with the recognised trade unions and the self-managed groups to provide a forum to raise issues and share information relating to the pandemic.
53. A number of Council employees are volunteering to support the rollout of the vaccination and lateral flow testing programmes in a variety of roles. The Council continues to facilitate its priority workers receiving the vaccine. In line with current national guidance, all members of the workforce are strongly encouraged to take up the offer to be vaccinated when they are contacted to do so. This is the best means of mitigating the ongoing risk presented.
54. There is a continued focus on the health and wellbeing of the workforce and the overarching support package has been re-positioned to make it more accessible for employees. Work continues to understand what support people require and the Council continues to add to what is available where new support measures are identified. Employees are also being reminded

of the importance of using their annual leave, where possible, to ensure they receive rest and recuperation from the intensity of the current way of working particularly for frontline workers.

55. The work undertaken early in the pandemic on emergency redeployment has been refreshed to ensure all roles are filled as effectively as possible. Recent emergency deployments have been made to ensure the smooth distribution of lateral flow testing kits can be delivered. The Council continued to support colleagues who are undertaking their work roles and educating their children at home while capacity in schools was reduced. The Council's flexible working approach, recently recognised in our Timewise accreditation, is a key enabler in this respect.

Council Premises

56. As previously reported, the Property and Premises Recovery Group continues to meet weekly. The group includes officers from across the Council looking to guide and support the safe use of Council premises during restrictions, both the central office estate and the operational portfolio. This group is overseeing the response to the third national lockdown to ensure buildings are operating in line with restrictions or close where necessary.

57. Council offices have remained open for staff who cannot work from home. During the third national lockdown, managers are working with staff to ensure that wherever possible those that can work from home do so.

Recovery Planning

58. A COVID-19 Recovery Framework is being prepared for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting. This framework will consider potential scenarios the Council could face in the coming months depending on the evolution of the virus, the success of control measures and the roll out of the government's roadmap for exiting lockdown. The intention is to map the steps the Council will need to take to continue to respond to the pandemic for the remainder of 2021, as well as the measures to be taken to recover from the organisational and societal impacts of COVID-19 in the context of the Council Plan 2021-25. The framework will show how the Council's learning from the pandemic will be captured and embedded into future ways of working.

Disruption to Services

59. 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. The current status of these services is outlined in the table below.

Service	Status
Youth Services	<p>Open access Youth Work provision ceased to operate during the third national lockdown. As the Youth Work offer is regulated, and classed as an essential service to support young people and to provide a safety net for those most in need, the service has continued to deliver youth work to young people most in need through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online Youth Work and virtual 4Uth offer• Outreach and Youth Work Intervention within local communities• 1:1 youth work intervention• Youth work from our Young People's Centres to support groups of young people. This will be for a bubble of up to 15 young people plus

	<p>Staff and will be for specific groups of young people who have been invited and booked into the youth work session.</p> <p>The Youth Service delivers a term time only operating pattern for its universal provision and will be on its fixed closure from 1st April 2021 and will return on 17 April 2021. The current operating model will continue for at least the first week of return.</p> <p>The Youth Service will remain responsive to an evolving situation, and operating plans will be refined as the circumstances and guidance change.</p> <p>In addition, the Youth Service is also coordinating the DfE funded Holiday Activity and Food programme during the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays.</p>
Library Services	<p>From 4 January 2021 libraries have been closed in line with national regulations. Click and collect, home delivery and mobile library services are continuing. Access to computers for essential purposes is being provided by appointment at seven sites. It is currently anticipated that most libraries will reopen from the 12 April 2021 offering browsing, computer access and information services.</p>
Outdoor Education Services	<p>Outdoor education centres and residential centres are currently closed for overnight stays and day visits for schools. The DfE will be reviewing this guidance for school visits in mid-March for an anticipated restart for day visits and residential visits at points during the summer term. Activity Clubs are being offered for the Easter Holidays at the Mill Adventure Base, alongside support to the Holiday Activity and Food programme.</p> <p>An innovative programme called “Virtual School Adventures” is currently being offered to schools.</p>
School Swimming	<p>The School Swimming Service will be in a position to partially reopen during the week commencing 15 March 2021, with at least eight pools available to use. It is currently anticipated that the service will open completely for all schools on 19 April 2021. In-school water safety sessions will be offered to those schools who cannot access swimming until after Easter.</p> <p>The recommencement of bridging clubs and babies’ sessions will be reviewed during the summer term.</p>
Day Services	<p>During the third national lockdown Day Services has continued to offer a transitional service which is a blend of building based services, outreach services and virtual support. This service is providing vital respite for carers and opportunities for adults to engage in activity outside the home.</p>
Country Parks and green spaces	<p>As outlined in the Government’s COVID-19 Roadmap, from the 29 March, restrictions on outdoor social contact will change, allowing either six people or two households to meet outdoors. Until then, Country Parks and their car parks remain open, with limited facilities, for local exercise purposes only. In line with government guidance, to help prevent the spread of coronavirus cases, Nottinghamshire residents are being encouraged not to travel outside of their immediate local area, i.e. their town, village or part of the city in which they live, to visit any green space sites or public attractions, including Country Parks.</p>

	Country Parks and Green Space arrangements will be reviewed and managed in accordance with the Government's staged approach to the relaxation of restrictions.
Children's Centres	<p>All 17 main Children's Centre sites remain open Monday to Friday and satellite sites open to host targeted face to face appointments and support groups. Only prearranged appointments and group sessions are provided on site with activities also being undertaken outdoors and in family homes where it is safe to do so.</p> <p>All buildings are now COVID secure and this has enabled external partners to also provide clinics and targeted services on site including midwifery clinics, health screens and assessments, and social care contact work.</p>
Recycling Centres	All 12 of the Council's recycling centres for household waste currently remain open. However, during the third national lockdown residents are encouraged to only visit if it is essential.
Registration Services	Main Registration Offices are open to the public for urgent and essential functions only. In-person registration of birth and notice of marriage appointments are available on a limited basis under COVID-safe conditions. The registrations of still births and deaths continues to be permitted by telephone using easements under the Coronavirus Act 2020. Until 29 March 2021, marriage and civil partnership ceremonies are only permitted under exceptional circumstance such as in cases of imminent terminal illness. The Government's roadmap envisages that (if all goes well) after 29 March ceremonies can take place with six guests, and that the figure would rise to 15 from 12 April and to 30 from 17 May.
Music Teaching	Services continue to operate in agreement with individual schools.
Inspire learning study programmes	From 8 March 2021 young people are able to access the study programme face to face.
Inspire learning adult education programme	A full range of courses currently being provided online. Face to face and blended courses will be programmed for the 2021 autumn term.
Archives	Online enquiry, research and reprographic services remain available. Visit to archives are currently suspended. It is currently anticipated that bookable visits will recommence from 13 April 2021.

Other Options Considered

60. 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 for Recommendations

61. To update members on the Council's ongoing response to the Coronavirus emergency.

Statutory and Policy Implications

62. 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

63. All Local Authorities are required by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government to report the forecast financial impact of the COVID-19 emergency on a monthly basis. The most recent submission, DELTA 10, was submitted at the end of February 2021.

64. The additional pressures on the 2020/21 budget are offset by the main COVID-19 grant allocations received from Central Government, and a range of additional specific grants and allocations to offset lost income. The latest details on the impact on the 2020/21 budget are included in the report to Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee on 15 March 2021 and the impact on 2021/22 was reported to Full Council on 25 February 2021.

65. An updated MTFS for the years 2021/22 to 2024/25 was included in the report to Full Council on the date noted above.

66. Reports setting out the latest forecast position, including the impact of COVID-19 on income and additional costs, will continue to be presented to Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee on a monthly basis.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

67. 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

68. While there continues to be some 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) That Members approve and endorse the continuing efforts of services to ensure effective service provision during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) That Members consider whether they require any further actions in relation to the issues contained within the report.
- 3) That Members agree to receive further updates at subsequent meetings.

Derek Higton
Service Director, Place and Communities

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Derek Highton, Service Director, Place and Communities, T: 0115 9773498

Constitutional Comments (EP 01/03/2021)

69. The COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report. If Committee resolves that there are any further actions required it should ensure that such actions are within its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (KRP 05/02/2021)

70. As noted in the report the full financial implications of COVID-19 are reported to Finance and Major Contracts Management Committee on a monthly basis.

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