

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT AND WELLBEING
CABINET MEMBER**

**PROMOTING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE AND SHIELDING EXTREMELY
VULNERABLE RESIDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet Member of arrangements made in accordance with the Scheme of Officer Delegations to promote community resilience and to identify and shield extremely vulnerable residents at risk from Covid-19.
- 1.2 To recommend that the Cabinet Member approves and endorses the continued promotion of these community resilience and shielding arrangements for extremely vulnerable residents for the duration of the Covid-19 outbreak.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In response to the emerging Covid-19 outbreak, central government issued daily instruction and guidance to the public and public bodies throughout the latter half of March 2020. Officer decisions under delegations to change a range of community functions and divert resources to supporting vulnerable residents have been communicated through the Council website and social media channels. This report focuses on the Council's ongoing arrangements for promoting community resilience and shielding extremely vulnerable residents.
- 2.2 Also during March 2020, the government announced plans to shield approximately one and a half million people nationally who were identified as extremely vulnerable to Covid-19 as a consequence of specific underlying health conditions. Locally, 4,621 residents are identified within the NHS Shield cohort. The expectation on local authorities was to make arrangements for people made extremely vulnerable through social isolation – both within this 'NHS Shield' cohort while national arrangements were implemented, and also within the wider population.

- 2.3 North Lincolnshire recognised that the NHS response would take time to implement and that there would be other residents of North Lincolnshire who may become more vulnerable by virtue of the social restrictions in place. As it has been made available, NHS data has been cross-referenced to local data to understand those who may become extremely vulnerable.
- 2.4 Many people in social isolation have support from family, friends and their wider community. The Council is championing these community-led approaches to meeting people's needs by togetherness, neighbourliness and acts of kindness through the #DoOneThingNL media campaign and creating opportunities for communities to be recognised for their efforts.
- 2.5 The North Lincolnshire Covid-19 contact channels went live on 21 March, with residents able to make enquires through the Council website, email or phone. Operating remotely in its entirety, over 1,700 residents have sought help with the majority of calls being resolved at first contact. Triage at first contact enables prioritisation of people whose circumstances could make them more vulnerable.
- 2.6 North Lincolnshire Council is focused on reaching residents who do not have support in place and connecting them to volunteers and groups within their communities. To build local capacity, the Council has launched a volunteer portal, attracting over 300 volunteers in the first three weeks. Most volunteers are being connected to existing voluntary and community groups, with a few being directly deployed to meet residents' needs – this approach is complementary to the national NHS volunteer scheme with local coordination mitigating the risk of duplication or omission of service. Additional services are being sourced from the voluntary community sector as required, focusing on community coordination, ensuring residents have access to trusted information, advice and guidance and befriending.
- 2.7 For people who are exceptionally vulnerable and for whom a community response would not meet their essential needs for food, medicine and social contact, the council has made provision for individualised interventions. In the first three weeks of operating, the North Lincolnshire shielding service has provided direct assistance to nearly 500 people by shopping for food, collection and delivery of medicine delivery and support with other essential items. A 'help to shop' response has been particularly valued by extremely vulnerable residents unable to leave their homes to shop for themselves.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member notes and endorses arrangements made in accordance with the Scheme of Officer Delegations, to promote community resilience and to identify and shield extremely vulnerable residents at risk from Covid-19.

- 3.2 The Cabinet Member approves and endorses the continued promotion of community resilience and shielding arrangements for extremely vulnerable residents, in accordance with the Scheme of Officer Delegations, for the duration of the Covid-19 outbreak.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Approval of the continued promotion of community resilience and shielding arrangements enables support and protection for extremely vulnerable residents for the duration of the Covid-19 by enabling access to food, medicines and social contact. Live caseload at time of writing is circa 100 households, anticipated to rise.
- 4.2 North Lincolnshire Council has long prioritised the protection of the most vulnerable in our communities. It is important to remain sighted on those at most risk against a backdrop of rising demand from: residents as their individual circumstances change; from the NHS referring people requiring a more personalised response than can be provided by the national programme; and, from other organisations signposting people to the Council. The local strategy addresses the need to protect the most vulnerable by championing the community response, engaging the voluntary and community sector, ensuring access to trusted advice and guidance for people needing it, making intelligent use of data from across organisations including the NHS, risk stratification and direct interventions.

5. FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (e.g. LEGAL, HR, PROPERTY, IT, COMMUNICATIONS etc.)

- 5.1 The reallocation of staffing is consistent with the policies of the Council, including the policy for the deployment of staff in emergency situations, drawing mainly from those community functions that cannot operate under current restrictions. It should be noted that these staff costs are predominantly met from income under ordinary operating conditions.
- 5.2 The assigned staffing resource for the fully functioning Shield operation based on current and forecasted demand equates to £423,791 per month. Other non-staffing costs such as supplies, personal protective equipment and agile IT equipment are also being incurred based on demand.
- 5.3 IT kit has been requisitioned in support of the expanded customer contact centre for Covid-19 enquires enabling 100% remote working.

6. OTHER RELEVANT IMPLICATIONS (e.g. CRIME AND DISORDER, EQUALITIES, COUNCIL PLAN, ENVIRONMENTAL, RISK etc.)

- 6.1 As the outbreak abates, scaling back of the shield approach in its current format will be concurrent with a new relationship with the

voluntary and community sector and a staged resumption of community functions.

7. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

7.1 A retrospective IIA will be completed; given the national direction, an IIA could not be completed ahead of officer decision making.

8. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

8.1 Cabinet members have been consulted and advised throughout the period when operational changes were necessary through officer delegations.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Cabinet Member notes and endorses arrangements in accordance with the Scheme of Officer Delegations to promote community resilience and to identify and shield extremely vulnerable residents at risk from Covid-19.

9.2 The Cabinet Member approves and endorses the continued promotion of community resilience and shielding arrangements for extremely vulnerable residents, in accordance with the Scheme of Officer Delegations, for the duration of the Covid-19 outbreak.

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