

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**COVID-19 RESPONSE: CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 To outline the response to the Covid-19 outbreak across Children and Community Resilience (including Children's Social Care and Safer Neighbourhoods).
- 1.2 The response to date is set in the context of the business continuity governance arrangements described in the COVID-19 Response report on this agenda.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The Council's approach to its business continuity response to the COVID 19 outbreak and actions taken to implement government guidelines have been rooted in the values, principles and ambitions of the council plan, and furthered through the strong partnerships within North Lincolnshire, framed under the following priorities:
  - Keeping staff safe and well
  - Protecting vulnerable people
  - Protecting the local economy
  - Enabling communities to flourish
- 2.2 Across Children and Community Resilience, we continue to help and protect our children, families and vulnerable adults, prioritising the most in need, while we support and protect our workforce. Staff have continued to work hard and show incredible resilience, flexibility and innovation in our response to Covid-19. Staff when necessary have continued to work in the community.
- 2.3 Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 remains unchanged and we continue to work creatively to meet our statutory and regulatory responsibilities. This is evidenced through daily monitoring of our practice standards, with leadership and management oversight, scrutiny and challenge, leading to enhanced practice and future planning.

- 2.4 The Adoption and Children Act regulations provides flexibilities for the Council in meeting existing legal obligations during the pandemic. Overall our local position is that we will continue to maintain current practice arrangements, use virtually technology where permissible and adhere to timescales and practice standards wherever possible.
- 2.5 Our response to the most vulnerable adults continues with the Care Call service maintaining their work and with the Safer Neighbourhood Team undertaking business as usual within the current context and given parameters.
- 2.6 Key headlines in the Children's Social Care response to Covid-19 include:
- Most practice standards are being met, the quality of work remains high and outcomes achieved for children and families are positive
  - Virtual mechanisms are established for engaging with children, young people and families leading to positive and enhanced engagement and outcomes
  - Children in Care and Care Leavers have been supported and in the main, they have responded extremely well to the current restrictions
  - Partnerships remain strong and there continues to be evidence of strong partner contributions to assessments, plans and meetings at each stage of the child's journey
  - Key partnership meetings have continued virtually and there is evidence of enhanced engagement i.e. in relation to child protection conferences and partnership interface meetings. The Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding (MARS) Board has also met virtually and continues to have a line of sight on the safeguarding pathway
  - Maximised capacity across the social care system through reconfiguration of services and deployment of staff to specific functions maintaining our "offer to children".
  - There is a continued focus on collaborative working across services to children and education settings to ensure that vulnerable children are engaged in education
  - Local authority nursery provision has continued to remain open.
  - We have continued to help and protect, provide care and outreach services and build upon our sufficiency of both foster carers and adopters.
  - We have continued to undertake court work by means of a virtual process and Department For Education (DFE) has recognised this as "best practice"
  - Development of communication strategy to ensure a co-ordinated approach to sharing information and messages to children, young people, families, communities and professionals via a range of mechanisms and which includes "what to do if" you are worried about a child.

2.7 Key headlines in the Safer Neighbourhoods response to Covid-19 include:

- Safer Neighbourhood and Care Call staff are remote working and still responding to priority calls for service
- The Security Control Centre continues to function as normal, with demand being managed within existing resources. They are providing additional advice and reassurance to Care Call clients and there are focussed communications on those who have not made use of the service for some time
- The Security Control Centre continue to monitor and report issues arising from CCTV surveillance. They also continue to monitor and respond to fire and intruder alarms for council buildings, schools and private clients
- Neighbourhood Watch remains very strong in the area. Safer Neighbourhoods has maintained support and communications throughout Covid-19 and it has continued to flourish
- Counter Terrorism and Channel Processes remain in place with Channel Panel's now being held virtually as per national guidance from the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT)
- Other key partnership meetings have continued virtually i.e. the Anti-Social Behaviour Panel and Safer Neighbourhoods attend Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) triage and MACE to provide analytical assistance
- The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has continued to meet virtually and a CSP Operational Group has been established to oversee the CSP response to Covid -19 through a partnership focus on priority areas and vulnerable people.

### **3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 Cabinet are asked to consider the report and note the response made to date to the COVID-19 emergency and acknowledge that business continuity and emergency planning remain in place.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Currently business continuity across Children and Community Resilience is being maintained with overall moderate pressure.

4.2 The positive working practices that have been successfully embedded throughout this period will be considered and built on as part of planning for gradual emergence to a new normal.

4.3 Children, young people, families and vulnerable adults have, in the main, shown tremendous resolve and resilience in these challenging circumstances, leading to a period where many have shown, stability and positive outcomes. Our staff and those who work closely with us,

foster carers, carers and partners, have shown immense care and collaboration through this time.

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

5.1 Not applicable

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

6.1 Not applicable

7. **OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)**

7.1 Not applicable

8. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED**

8.1 Any decisions and actions taken have been done in consultation as appropriate.

9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That Cabinet notes the response to COVID-19 as outlined in the report.

DIRECTOR OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: Not applicable**