

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

## **Covid-19 Response: Business Development**

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

- 1.1 To outline the response to the COVID-19 outbreak across Business Development.
- 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 the vulnerable
  - enabling communities to remain resilient
  - protecting the local economy
- 2.2 National advice and guidance has been incorporated into the local response as it has become available. The enactment of the Coronavirus Act 2020 has led to certain relaxations of statutory requirements and the introduction of new powers and statutory instruments. Many council functions have been sustained throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, notably through pre-existing and novel online facilities, however some face to face functions were suspended towards the end of March 2020.
- 2.3 Teams across Business Development have demonstrated great resilience and flexibility during the COVID 19 outbreak, supporting both functional business continuity and the council response to national programmes such as Shielding and Business Support Grants. We have made swift adaptations to systems, processes and professional practice to enable business as usual to continue to

ensure organisational assurance in respect of welfare and safety of the workforce.

## 2.4 Key headlines in Business Development functions response to Covid-19 include:

### **Keeping Staff Safe and Well**

- Promoting good hand and respiratory hygiene through on-line videos, newsletters and TopDesk
- Enabling all staff who can work from home, to work from home with robust policies and procedures
- Organising specialist equipment from offices to be delivered to staff at their homes where they have a reasonable adjustment in place to enable them to continue working safely and comfortably
- Ensuring all staff have undergone a Display Screen Equipment assessment with their manager and that adjustments have been made to their work environment where necessary
- Supporting managers and staff with self-isolation and providing guidance on how we can support staff who are at risk to self-isolate.
- Providing live information on our staff portal including Frequently Asked Questions, wellbeing resources, risk assessments, links to the council's website and YouTube channel. This is accompanied by a regular newsletter for all staff informing them of updates.
- Developing #TeamNL Live staff communication channel to enable staff to keep in touch, share good news stories, on-line quizzes and videos on a less formal setting
- Undertaken a staff wellbeing questionnaire resulting in 81% of respondents feeling connected with their team and colleagues, 79% feeling healthy and well at work and 82% would recommend North Lincolnshire as a good place to work. Further details are on the staff portal.
- Supported critical workers who cannot work from home to follow strict social distancing guidelines.
- Developed a COVID19 Community Response, consisting of a Risk Assessment for staff working in the community, prioritisation of the issue of PPE to ensure people are safe, well and protected
- Developed a robust local and regional staff testing procedure that includes all staff and their families who are Asymptomatic/symptomatic.
- Established a bank of 300 staff volunteers to deploy into critical posts should we experience staff shortages
- Established a targeted recruitment taskforce again to deal with any staff shortages in critical areas
- Developed flexible working patterns to assist staff with childcare and caring responsibilities

### **Protecting the Local Economy**

- Continued to provide an indoor market for essential food items that is COVID compliant and safe for both traders and customers

- Increased capacity in Economic Development to support businesses to access government grants, loans and furlough interventions.
- Maintained the delivery of an improved planning service including the virtual planning committee.

### **Enabling Communities to Flourish**

- Strengthened the capacity of the Communications Team and in April, the council's reach on Facebook was up by 200% compared to January, reaching 817,000 views.
- Launched the 'do one thing' campaign and since mid-March it has grown by 1,200% compared to the previous 12 weeks of the year making us a trusted source of information.

### **Protecting the most Vulnerable**

- Developed the I-hub at pace to support the Shield project and deliver the Shield Management Dashboard.
- Supported Adult Services and Public Health to deliver a Care Home Dash Board.
- Joined 61 datasets to support those residents shielding and manage demand.
- Re-organised Registrars to deliver an agile and online service for the registration of deaths from April 1st.

## **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 Business continuity across Business Development continues to be maintained.

- 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.

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

- 5.1 Any changes to staffing have the appropriate delegated decisions in place.

## **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 Staff have been consulted on any changes implemented throughout the business continuity phase and we will continue to engage with staff through the relevant well-developed mechanisms e.g. workforce engagement partnership, workforce surveys.

8.2 Regular meetings are being held with the recognised Trade Unions throughout this period to keep them up to date and consult with them as appropriate.

**9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report None**