

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

## **COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE**

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

- 1.1 To outline the latest position in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the:
- potential short term winter impacts associated with COVID-19
  - longer term implications as we respond to the fact that COVID-19 is likely to remain with us for the foreseeable future

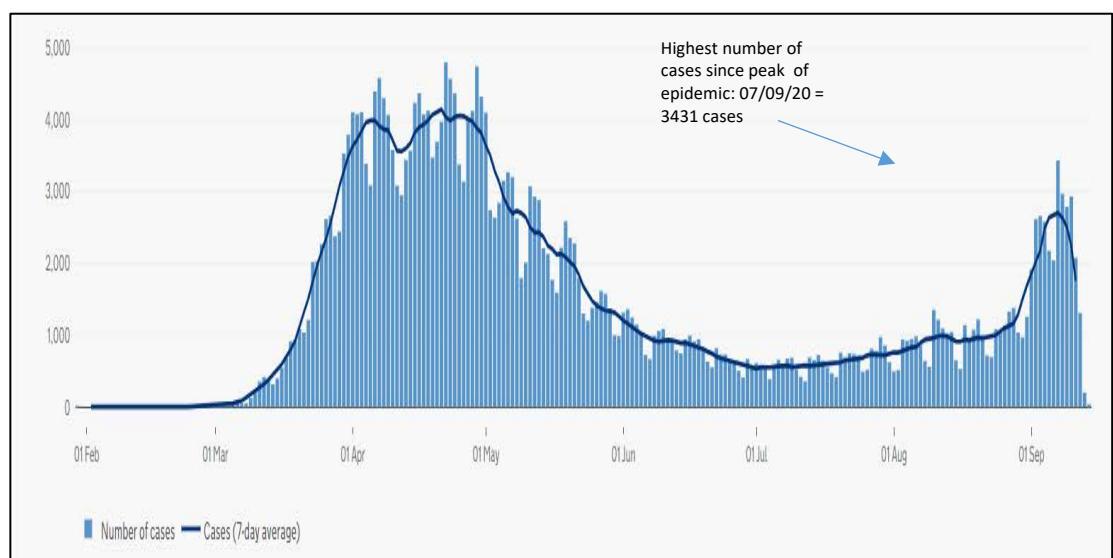
### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 In June 2020 Cabinet received an update on the council's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The update included details of the actions being taken to prevent and manage outbreaks in populations and settings. This work is ongoing and as a council we continue to work in partnership to deliver the following priorities:
- Keeping staff and the public safe and well
  - Protecting vulnerable people
  - Keeping our communities resilient and local economy protected
- 2.2 Three months on from the last update it is clear that we are still living with COVID-19 and this is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Government guidance and additional measures have continued to be published along with the launch of a new 'Hands-Face-Space' campaign to prevent the spread the of COVID-19 indoors this winter.
- 2.3 On the 17 September the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care made a statement to parliament setting out the government's plans to put us in the strongest position for this winter. The plans are set in the context of a continuing and concerning rise in cases. Measures being introduced include:

- strengthening targeted action in local areas where there are concerning rates of infection.
- Further investment in the NHS to support it during the winter months
- Extension of the Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund to help adult social care providers to reduce the rate of transmission

## Current epidemiology position relating to COVID-19

2.4 Nationally, the number of positive tests for COVID-19 have been increasing over recent weeks, which can be seen in the graph below.



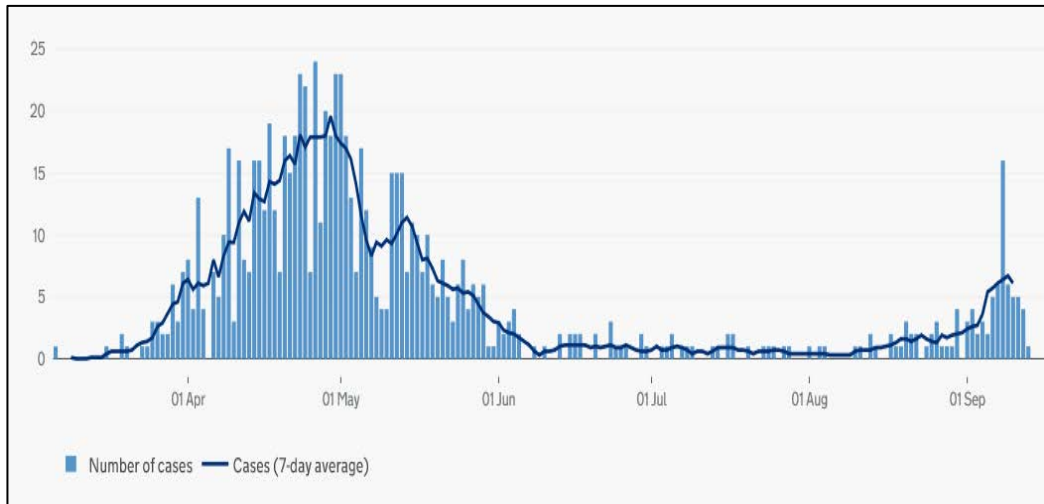
Number of positive COVID-19 tests (England)

2.5 Whilst the data shows a marked increase in recent weeks, it should be noted that there are several factors that are influencing this trend.

2.5.1 At the start of the pandemic mid-May, the UK was mainly testing just hospital patients, meaning that community cases were less likely to have been tested. Estimates by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine<sup>i</sup> consider the actual figures to be much higher, factoring in community cases.

2.5.2 By contrast mass community testing was introduced during May, which will have resulted in more positive cases being identified. This also includes target testing at priority sites, which will result in high rates of positivity

2.6 In line with the national trend, North Lincolnshire's cases have been increasing over the last few weeks, as the graph below shows. The highest increase has been during the week starting 7<sup>th</sup> September, resulting in 37 cases.



Number of positive COVID-19 tests (North Lincolnshire)

- 2.7 Cases are being monitored on a daily basis to screen for epidemiological links which may identify potential clusters or outbreaks.

### Winter Considerations.

- 2.8 In addition to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases, the winter season causes a number of additional complexities that may test operational capacity. These factors include:
- **Cold weather:** which can cause excess deaths. Even moderately cold weather (an average temperature of 5–8°C) can result in increased illness and higher death rates.
  - **Seasonal Flu:** Flu epidemics have a major impact when they occur. This year we have included additional cohorts for the flu vaccine programme and it is critical that our eligible population takes this up to protect themselves and those around them.
  - **Adverse weather disruption:** heavy snowfall, may result in additional demand for resources to support our vulnerable residents and help with business continuity.
- 2.9 The above factors can have a significant impact on the capacity of frontline health and social care services, as it can cause an increase in workforce absence due to sickness or the need to take time off work to care for others. In addition, pressure on acute services, including delayed treatment can have an impact upon the wider health and social care system.
- 2.10 Work is currently ongoing to look at possible winter scenarios and to identify appropriate planning arrangements. This includes discussions with neighbouring authorities around mutual aid opportunities to ensure we can respond to any major outbreaks and that we work in collaboration to agree measures which will protect our residents.

2.11 Throughout the pandemic the role of local authorities has continued to evolve. Moving from an initial operating model focused on responding to the crisis and ensuring effective business continuity, into a reopen and recovery phase and going forward in the longer-term to a council that is centred on:

- In our community leadership capacity working with partners to transition into the 'new normal'
- Preventative activities and management of local outbreaks
- Working with government and businesses to drive economic recovery and growth
- Keeping council services running and adapting to the changing environment where necessary

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

3.1 That Cabinet note the information in the report and recognise that COVID-19 is likely to remain with us for the foreseeable future and will require the council to continue to adapt in order manage the impacts associated with COVID-19 at a local level.

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

4.1 The information contained in this report can inform both mid-term and strategic planning and prioritisation of resources.

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

5.1 Financial implications associated with the councils COVID-19 response and recovery are being monitored and managed on an ongoing basis.

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

6.1 Implications and risks associated with COVID-19 are being monitored constantly and mitigations being implemented as necessary.

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

7.1 Not required

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

8.1 Ongoing consultation with a range of partners at a national, regional and local level is integral to our approach for managing the COVID-19 situation in North Lincolnshire.

## 9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 That Cabinet notes the contents of this report and recognise that COVID-19 is likely to remain with us for the foreseeable future and will require the council to continue to adapt in order manage the impacts associated with COVID-19 at a local level.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Church Square House  
SCUNTHORPE  
North Lincolnshire  
DN15 6NR  
Author: Penny Spring  
Date: 17 September 2020

---