

## **NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **CABINET**

## **COVID-19: UPDATE AGAINST THE MID-TERM RECOVERY PLAN**

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

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the Council's progress responding to COVID-19 as set out in the mid-term recovery plan.
- 1.2 To present an overview of the most recent legislative requirements that have been introduced and guide the local response.

### **2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 In March 2020, the council was required to establish business continuity arrangements in order to respond to the COVID-19 global pandemic. As COVID-19 continues to be a significant issue the council continues its focus and operating environment on this, while concurrently planning for recovery.
- 2.2 The local response to COVID-19 is set within a range of legislative regulations that have been introduced. The two key ones being the Coronavirus Act 2020 and Health Protection (England) Regulations 2020. Government guidance and new regulations continue to be issued, with a summary of the most recent key requirements set out in appendix 1.
- 2.3 In June 2020, the North Lincolnshire COVID-19 recovery and renewal framework was presented to Cabinet. Building upon this saw the development of mid-term recovery plan which was approved by Cabinet in December 2020. Both of these have been framed around the priorities set out in the North Lincolnshire Council Plan and provide a framework for minimising and mitigating impact from COVID-19 across North Lincolnshire.
- 2.4 The changing nature of COVID restrictions requires a flexible approach to switching between response and recovery and adapting as the situation changes. Currently national restrictions are in force and this along with the local position and intelligence is shaping current activities.
- 2.5 Our priorities for mid-term recovery are:

- Keep people safe and well,
- Protect vulnerable people,
- Enable communities to be resilient,
- Protect and enable the local economy,
- Well led council.

2.6 Appendix 2 provides a summary of progress against the next step actions under each priority set out in the mid-term recovery plan, along with any new areas of focus arising out of the changing environment.

2.7 Whilst the actions set out for December 2020 to March 2021 are ongoing and remain broadly the same the environment both nationally and locally continues to change. Therefore during February and March 2021 the focus for the council will be:

- Preparing for emergence from national restrictions and gradual re-opening and recovery
- Championing vulnerable groups to support partners in ensuring equality of access to the COVID-19 vaccine as the priority groups are progressed
- Leading the development of community testing for critical workers and targeted areas
- Ensuring the financial position of the council is sufficiently robust to withstand the ongoing impact of the pandemic and next phase of recovery on renewal
- Developing with regional and sub-regional partners, plans and priorities to secure national levelling up funding for the area that supports local economic recovery and renewal.
- Build on the arrangements for brokerage of volunteering that has been developed during COVID-19 as part of renewal and promote the strategic importance of the VCS as a vehicle for increasing community connectedness.

2.8 The Council, as an organisation continues to remain resilient and sustainable as it recovers from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. To continue to meet the needs of residents and our strategic ambitions we are focusing on the following:

- Continue the development and transformation of the council as an agile organisation
- In consultation, develop the right blend of home and office working and use of remote meeting technologies as part of governance arrangements
- Expansion of digital responses for the public and improving public engagement
- Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on demand services and future service delivery models.
- Maintain excellent working relationships with partners
- Accelerating our ambitions for a greener more sustainable

environment

- Work with our regional partners to continually assess the economic impact of Covid-19
- Enhance data, intelligence and needs assessment to better understand impact for our residents.

2.9 There are opportunities that support renewal through national schemes for re-build and economic bounce back where capital investment could stimulate growth and local prosperity, however the local capacity to delivery will need to be re-assessed against the priorities of the council and to ensure critical services continue to protect the most vulnerable, who are more likely to be impacted on from the effects of the pandemic.

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

3.1 Cabinet is invited to note the contents of this report and support the continued delivery of priority actions.

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

4.1 A continued focus on the priorities and actions set out in the mid-term recovery plan enable the council to provide an effective local response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

5.1 Resources associated with the council's response to the COVID-19 and the delivery of the mid-term recovery plan continue to be monitored and managed.

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

6.1 A council-wide approach to assessing and monitoring the implications and risks associated with COVID-19 has been adopted with mitigations being implemented as necessary in accordance with the legislative framework.

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

7.1 Not applicable.

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

8.1 Ongoing consultation and collaboration with a range of national, regional, place partners and other key stakeholders is integral to our local response.

8.2 Engagement with the workforce continues and members of the North Lincolnshire Residents Panel have also been surveyed on the impact of the COVID-19, with the results being used to help shape our response and recovery priorities.

8.3 There are no conflicts of interests associated with this report.

## 9. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That cabinet note the recent government guidance and requirements that underpin our local response.

9.2 That cabinet note the progress update in respect of the mid-term recovery plan and support the continued delivery of the priority actions.

### DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

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Date: 14 January 2020

## Appendix 1 – Summary of recent new legislative requirements and guidance

Guidance	Summary
Rapid asymptomatic testing for staff in primary schools, school-based nurseries and maintained schools. (18 January 2021)	Following the launch of rapid asymptomatic coronavirus testing in secondary schools and colleges, staff in primary, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools are also being offered the opportunity to take part in regular asymptomatic testing.
Care Home Visits DHSC (Updated 12 January 2021)	Sets out guidance for those who are involved in planning to enable care home visits including advice on establishing a visiting policy, taking decisions for residents, delivering safe visiting with and without testing and information on visiting in exceptional circumstances such as end of life.
Ofsted Plans: January 2021 (12 January 2021)	Ofsted's return to inspections in 2021 will happen in phases, with no graded inspections for education or social care providers planned before the summer term.
UK COVID-19 vaccines delivery plan (11 January 2021)	Sets out the government's plan for supply and deployment of covid-19 vaccines by the NHS. To date 3 vaccines have been approved for use in the UK. The plan sets aim for 15 Feb 2021 to have offered a first vaccine dose to the top 4 priority groups with top 9 priority groups (32m people) being vaccinated by Spring 2021. The plan sets the aspiration for everyone to be within 10 miles of a vaccination site with 2 million doses being delivered each week. The plan recognizes the important role of local authorities and commits to ensuring data is shared and support is provided to enable local authorities to engage with communities.
COVID1-19 alert level (4 January 2021)	Following advice from the Joint Biosecurity Centre the UK alert level was moved from Level 4: a COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation; transmission is high or rising exponentially to Level 5: as level 4 and there is a material risk of healthcare services being overwhelmed.
National Lockdown: Stay at Home Guidance (4 January 2021)	Rising case rates nationwide resulted in new national restrictions being introduced. The guidance set out a requirement to stay at home and not leave home expect where necessary to shop for necessities, go to work or provide voluntary services if this cannot be done from home, exercise, meet support or childcare bubbles, seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness or risk of harm and attend education of childcare for those eligible. All education (primary and secondary schools) is to be delivered remotely until half term in February, except for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. Early years settings remain open and HE provision is to remain online until mid Feb except for all future critical worker courses. The guidance sets out activities, venues and business that must close and which can remain open. The regulations cover the period until the end of March 2021, although the position will be reviewed every two weeks with easing of restrictions if the situation improves
Designated settings for people discharged to a care home. (16 December 2020)	Guidance on the designated settings scheme for people discharged from hospital to a care home with a positive coronavirus test.
Business Evictions (9 December 2020)	The business eviction ban has been extended until March 2021 and a review of commercial landlord and tenant legislation has been launched
Lateral flow testing of visitors in care homes (8 December 2020)	Sets out how care homes and visitors can prepare for visitor testing with lateral flow devices (LFD's)

Covid-19 Vaccinations – A guide for social care staff (7 December 2020)	The guidance sets out information for social care staff about why it is important to have the covid-19 vaccination, who can and cannot have the vaccination and how to access it.
Asymptomatic testing in schools and colleges (5 December 2020)	Sets out the approach for rapid result testing in schools and colleges to help identify asymptomatic cases. The testing is to be made available to all members of staff and all pupils and students in schools and colleges.
Additional COVID-19 local authority enforcement powers (4 December 2020)	On 2 December 2020 additional powers came into force to support local authorities take action against premises that do not comply with COVID secure rules. The new tools consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coronavirus Improvement Notice (CIN)</li> <li>• Coronavirus Restrictions Notice (CRN)</li> <li>• Coronavirus Immediate Restrictions Notice (CIRN)</li> </ul>
The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020 (2 December 2020)	Introduced a framework of three Tiers of restrictions, with different tiers applying to different areas/regions. This is to ensure that the right levels of intervention are made in the right places to manage COVID-19 outbreaks and help to suppress the virus and keep the R rate below 1. At the point of national lockdown being introduced in January 2021 North Lincolnshire had been placed in Tier 3 along with the other Humber authorities.
Visits out of Care Homes. (1 December 2020)	Sets out guidance for residential settings for older people and adults of working age on how visits out of a care home can take place, the role of the provider in supporting outward visiting and the need for individual risk assessments.
COVID Winter Grant scheme (23 November 2020)	The guidance introduced the COVID Winter Grant Scheme to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials.
COVID-19 Winter Plan (23 November 2020)	Set out the government's programme for suppressing the virus, protecting the NHS and the vulnerable, keeping education and the economy grouping and providing a route back to normality.
Roll out of lateral flow tests to local authorities. (13 November 2020)	Sets out details of the rollout of rapid turnaround lateral flow tests to local authorities to enable increased testing of priority and high-risk groups in local communities on a weekly basis.

# NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COVID-19 MID-TERM RECOVERY PLAN

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS (January 2021)

**North  
Lincolnshire  
Council**

[www.northlincs.gov.uk](http://www.northlincs.gov.uk)

Enhance digital technologies in order to deliver our council priorities

Keep People Safe and Well

- Reduce the spread of COVID-19 through whole system preventative approach

Protect vulnerable people

- Protect the most vulnerable in our communities from the impact of COVID-19

Enable communities to be resilient

- Enable communities to shape the recovery landscape

Protect & Enable the local economy

- Protect the economy through strengthened business support
- Enable jobs protection and creation
- Stimulate growth through capital investment and infrastructure

Well led Council

- Maintain a focus on workforce wellbeing
- Ensure financial resilience and sustainability
- Ensure effective business continuity through prioritisation of key services and functions

Value added through partnerships



- In response to the increasing transmission rates the government introduced National Restrictions on 4 January 2021, necessitating response and recovery to operate simultaneously. Our approach is rooted in the values, principles and ambitions of the council plan and our response focuses on key priorities to ensure the Council remains resilient throughout the crisis and sustained through the recovery and renewal.
- As well as responding to the implications of national restrictions, the council continued to keep services running and adapting to the changing environment, led the prevention and management of local outbreaks and work with businesses to drive economic recovery and growth and worked in partnership with NHS to enable the successful commencement of the vaccination programme to the priority groups.

## Priority

## Overview of progress

Keeping People Safe and Well: **Reduce the spread**

### Safe working practices

- Proactive preventative actions continue to be applied in order to maintain safe working practices and suppress the virus - Continued to operate working from home arrangements and limited access to office environments.
- Continuous review and risk assessed use of PPE for those working in the community and in people's homes.
- In contrast to previous restrictions, the new restrictions afforded more opportunities for the council to continue an offer to residents in support of health and wellbeing. Specifically, access to open spaces, measures to support digital inclusion and access to literature through 'click and collect' is permitted. While community facilities across adult learning, sport, leisure and culture functions were directed to close, a digital offer is facilitating some continuity in the community offer. Council facilities and working arrangements remain Covid-secure, allowing functionality permitted by national guidance to support the health and wellbeing of resident.

### Outbreak management

- Management and prevention outbreaks continues to be a priority focus area and progress is reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board on a monthly basis. The schools, care homes and high risk business have responded well to identification, control and mitigation of outbreaks across the settings. Learning and best practice continues to be shared across sectors.

### Safe places and enforcement

- Covid prevention assistants have been appointed and are undertaking proactive work on an intelligence led basis to ensure communities are safe
- Public protection team continue to undertake assessments and enforce regulations as appropriate, in close partnership working with Humberside Police

### Test, Trace, Self-Isolate

- Financial support to help eligible people to self-isolate continues to be paid and the scheme has been extended to the end of March 2021.
- Local contact tracing arrangements are in place and are operating well with a contact rate of circa 95%

Priority	Progress update and actions
Protect vulnerable people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upper tier councils were also required to make arrangements for residents who are clinically extremely vulnerable and without support to access food, medicine and other basic needs. The local enabling approach builds on the experience of shielding during the previous periods of national restrictions and 'tier 3' requirements. During this time, the council has enhanced its handling of data and intelligence to identify and support those people who may be most vulnerable.</li> <li>• Following latest guidance in respect of testing in the community and testing critical workers the DPH is setting out a response for Public Health England. Some care homes have commenced lateral flow testing with staff and visitors.</li> <li>• Where possible rough sleepers continue to be offered temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• The council has worked in partnership with NHS to enable the rollout of vaccinations to priority groups (over 80's, care home residents and staff and front line health and social care staff).</li> <li>• In light of national restrictions being introduced a renewed focus on wider vulnerable groups and communities has been initiated, with a particular focus on encouraging communities to look out for and support one another.</li> <li>• The Winter Grant has been introduced: Free school meal vouchers were supplied to eligible families for the Christmas holidays and financial support for vulnerable households and families with children continue to be paid with the majority of applications being for white goods, followed by food and utilities</li> <li>• Needs of vulnerable children and adults identified, risk assessed and met</li> </ul>
Enable resilient communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership working with the voluntary and community sector has been further strengthened, enabling a 'community-first' response to ensuring people stay safe, well and connected throughout the period of national restrictions</li> <li>• North Lincolnshire Community Champions were recruited from December to enhance the understanding of public health messages within communities as the pandemic develops. Community Champions receive up to date information regarding Covid-19 on a weekly basis, along with ideas on how to support people within their communities who may be more vulnerable at this time. In return, Community Champions inform the council about what is working and what more might be done to prevent the spread of Covid-19.</li> <li>• Following a successful bid by the council and our voluntary and community sector partners to government, a grant of £397K has been awarded to broaden and enhance the North Lincolnshire Community Champions approach. The grant is to support a range of interventions with residents who are most at risk of Covid-19, helping to build trust and empower at-risk groups to protect themselves and their families, including residents of ethnically diverse communities.</li> <li>• Joint commissioning arrangements between the council and the CCG have been created to enable the recruitment, brokerage and development of volunteering across North Lincolnshire, led by the voluntary and community sector alliance.</li> </ul>

Priority	Progress update and actions
Protect the economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local/national restrictions grants continue to be paid to eligible business and discretionary business support grant were also distributed during December.</li> <li>• A further discretionary grant scheme is being developed to support local economic recovery.</li> <li>• A new national restrictions grant has been introduced of up to £9,000. Almost 90% of eligible local business received this grant w/c 18 January 2021 amounting to £4.3m</li> <li>• Newsletters and hosted Webinars to share learning from managing outbreaks continue alongside provision of information advice and guidance regarding COVID-19 support schemes such as Jobs Retention Scheme</li> <li>• Future High Street Fund bid received provisional approval. Towns Fund bid is under consideration by government, although work has commenced on the urban park (towns fund accelerated funding)</li> <li>• Kick start scheme programme bid made to Department of Work and Pensions/Minister of Housing, Communities &amp; Local Government. If approved the scheme will provide up to 63, 6 month work placements for 16-24 year olds. The council will act as broker for local businesses and organisations who have already expressed an interest to be part of the scheme.</li> <li>• Local economy projects have continued to timescales such as the Northern Roundabout, part of Lincolnshire Lakes.</li> </ul>
Well led council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internally, the 5 ways to wellbeing is being promoted as an integral part of our Workforce Wellbeing strategy.</li> <li>• Financial impact of covid-19 continues to be monitored and any new allocations are responded to as necessary.</li> <li>• The council continues to prioritise business as usual of its operations and responds and adapts flexibly to overcome any pressures and issues as they arise. The vast majority of council services and functions continue to be provided with limited disruption and where national restrictions have been applied, a range of on-line mechanisms have been made available, from on-line fitness to virtual museum and art exhibitions.</li> <li>• The council has maintained robust governance arrangements and decision making continued on all executive and non-executive functions, including Planning Committee and Licensing Committee.</li> </ul>