

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Finance Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee
25 June 2020

<u>Report Title:</u>	Coronavirus Pandemic Update
<u>Submitted by:</u>	Chief Executive
<u>Portfolios:</u>	Corporate and Service Improvement, People and Partnerships; and Finance and Efficiency
<u>Ward(s) affected:</u>	All

Purpose of the Report

To provide the Committee with a Covid-19 update in terms of the issues arising and actions taken within the service areas that fall under the Committee's remit.

Recommendation

That the Committee receives the report and offers feedback to Cabinet

Reasons

To provide the Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise actions undertaken to date and the proposals for the next phases of recovery.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Coronavirus pandemic is the greatest single risk to the health and wellbeing of this country since the Second World War. In February 2020 the Council established an Incident Management Team to plan the Council's response, ensuring that support to local residents and businesses was provided, that Council services were maintained, and the welfare of officers and members protected.
- 1.2 Informal Cabinet has been regularly briefed on the work being progressed, including a daily briefing with the Leader. The approach adopted is based on existing business contingency arrangements which have put the Council in a good position to respond rapidly and effectively.
- 1.3 The Incident Management Team interfaces with a range of groups which have been set up countywide to co-ordinate the response to the pandemic, including the Strategic Coordinating Group, and working groups on mortality management and vulnerability.
- 1.4 Cabinet received a report on the Council's response work at its meetings on 22 April and 20 May. The 22 April report focused predominantly on the initial impact of the pandemic on Council services, and its immediate response to the pandemic. The 20 May report provided an update on those matters and outlined the work streams in the Council's "Back on Track" recovery programme following the (then) recently announced government recovery strategy.

1.5 The two Cabinet reports are available as background documents.

2. **Issues**

2.1 Insofar as the service areas within the remit of this committee are concerned, issues arise in the following areas:-

- Financial Impact
- People and Organisational Development
- Health and Safety
- Customer and Digital Services
- Legal and Democratic Services

2.2 Appendix 1 deals with each topic in more detail.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 That the Committee receives the report and offers feedback to Cabinet.

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 So that there is an opportunity to scrutinise the Council's response to the CV-19 pandemic and to offer feedback to Cabinet on the same.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 Not Applicable.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 There are no such implications arising directly from this report. Addressing the impact of Coronavirus locally has involved adjustment to some service provision. When making such changes there are a number of legal and statutory implications to take into account. These are all appropriately factored into decision taking by the Incident Management Team.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 There are no equality implications arising directly from this report. Members will, however, note the particular emphasis placed on supporting vulnerable people in the Council's response to the pandemic.

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 The Council's General Fund balance as at 31st March 2019 was £1.548m. Careful monitoring of the financial position will be required over coming weeks and months leading to prompt corrective action where necessary to ensure that reserves are not exhausted and the Council remains in a position of being able to deliver a balanced budget position in the current financial year and beyond.

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 There are a number of risks associated with the Pandemic and the Council's response to it. These are discussed in more detail in Appendix 1.

10. **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

10.1 There are no such implications arising from this report. Any direct implications for sustainability and climate change are discussed, where relevant, in reports dealing with the implementation of specific measures that give rise to the same.

11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 This report does not relate to a Key Decision.

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

12.1 Cabinet Resolutions of 22 April and 20 May.

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1 – Discussion Paper – CV-19 implications for the Finance, Assets and Performance Scrutiny Committee

14. **Background Papers**

14.1 Cabinet reports referred to:-

<https://moderngov.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=118&Year=0>