

## **Report to Cabinet**

**Subject:** Covid-19 – The Council’s Response

**Date:** 18 June 2020

**Author:** Director of Health and Community Wellbeing

### **Wards Affected**

Borough wide

### **Purpose**

To provide a comprehensive update to Cabinet on the action taken by the Council to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision.

### **Recommendations**

#### **THAT:**

- 1) The steps that have been taken by the Council to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.**

## **1 Background**

1.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented global impact and a significant impact on the local economy, our residents and communities and the council itself. The Council’s response to the challenges presented by the virus has been outstanding and is detailed in Appendix 1 to this report, alongside a Response infographic at Appendix 2. The focus has been on coordinating the immediate response to the pandemic and ensuring support to the most vulnerable in the borough, the safety of staff and continuation of essential public services. It is clear that this response phase is likely to continue for some time, however progress is being made to plan for the recovery of the borough’s economy and businesses, residents and communities, as well as the Council which is subject to a separate report on this agenda.

- 1.2 It is important to note that there is a risk of further spikes in cases which would trigger a return to lockdown measures. If this should happen, the Council will need to reactivate the Incident Management Team (IMT) Response group. A flow chart which sets out the process to be followed in the event of a return to restrictions and need to reactivate the IMT Response is documented at Appendix 3.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Executive note the steps that have been taken by the Council to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic as set out in the detailed report at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 It is clear from the report that across the Council, the response from Officers who have had to work in different ways in challenging circumstances and cope with increased and new demand, whilst striving to continue to provide excellent service to our residents has been outstanding. Members should also recognise the significant contribution from a number of officers who have been seconded from their substantive roles to support the IMT and response activity.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 An alternative option would be not to provide a comprehensive report on the Council's Emergency response and to simply rely on the daily Cabinet updates and weekly emails to all Councillors to form the briefing to the Executive. However given the unprecedented significant impact on the council and the volume and breadth of activity carried out, it is important that this is captured in one comprehensive document.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no financial implications directly arising out of this report. A summary of the projected financial impact of Covid-19 in 2020/21 is contained in the report at Appendix 1. The financial impact is expected to be significant with additional expenditure and income reductions forecast to be in the region of £3.9m. To date funding of £1.2m has been received from Government to cover some of the Covid-19 related costs. It is also anticipated that some of the budget impacts will continue beyond the current financial year. As part of the proposed Reset Strategy (an item elsewhere on this agenda) a detailed report updating the current annual budget position and the Medium Term Financial Plan will be provided to a future meeting of Cabinet.

## **5 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

6.1 There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report, however equalities implications were considered when individual decisions to close facilities or restrict/suspend services were made. In addition, it is noted that throughout the pandemic there have been emerging trends in equality impacts for minority and vulnerable groups. These trends have led to disproportionate and often disadvantageous outcomes for some groups of people. Some of the affected groups include:

### Ethnicity

Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19 and are particularly vulnerable to both the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. Information published by the Office for National Statistics and Institute of Fiscal Studies indicates that the impacts are not uniform across ethnic groups, with Covid-19 hospital deaths among the black Caribbean population three times higher than the white British group.

### Gender

Women are more exposed to Covid-19 through greater presence in health and care occupations, while men have suffered from a higher death rate; women are at greater risk of domestic violence during lockdown. The institute of Fiscal Studies has also reported that mothers are more likely to have lost their jobs or been furloughed and are spending more time on household responsibilities than fathers.

### Age

Older people are more vulnerable to Covid-19, particularly those with serious medical conditions, and have been more affected by the social effects of self-isolating during the response phase. Research carried out by the Office for National Statistics shows that nearly three-quarters (6.4 million) of people aged 70 and over in Great Britain are worried about the effect that Coronavirus is having on their life; with over two-fifths (2.9 million) of them saying their mental health has been affected and half (3.3. million) reporting that their access to essential items like groceries and medication had been affected.

### Disability

Those who rely on care and those with serious medical conditions have been particularly affected. The Office for National Statistics has reported that nearly two thirds of disabled adults say Covid-19 related concerns are affecting their well-being; and disabled adults were significantly more likely to report spending too much time alone. Children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities

(SEND) have been particularly affected by schools closing and the difficulties for them receiving the support they need.

### LGBTQ

The LGBT Foundation has identified a number of impacts on the LGBT community. LGBT people are more likely to be socially isolated; some trans and non-binary people have had medical treatments and operations cancelled; LGBT people are also more likely to have poor mental health, issues with substance abuse and more likely to experience domestic abuse.

### Poverty

The economic impacts of Covid-19 will affect the poorest families hardest, and the clear link between poverty and health conditions mean the virus will also medically affect the poorest disproportionately.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 There are no carbon reduction/environmental sustainability implications directly arising from this report, however it is noted in Appendix 1 that the Covid-19 lockdown has involved a short term reduction in local NO<sup>2</sup> emissions possibly due to reductions in travel and reduced energy use at Council buildings.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Gedling Borough Council's Covid-19 Emergency Response  
Appendix 2: Coronavirus – The Council's Response Infographic  
Appendix 3: Covid-19 Second Wave: GBC Response Mobilisation Process

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 None.

## **10 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 10.1 To ensure that the Executive is fully briefed on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by: Chief Financial Officer**  
**Date: 9 June 2020**

**Approved by: Monitoring Officer**  
**Date: 9 June 2020**