



Cabinet

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Covid 19: Update Report

Report of the Chief Executive

Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough Wide Leadership Councillor S J Robinson

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. Following the report of the Chief Executive to Cabinet on 8 December 2020, this report is to update the Cabinet on the work completed as part of the Council's continued response to Covid 19.
- 1.2. The report is not intended to provide an update on the financial impact of Covid 19 on the Council; this has been provided in other reports to Councillors in September and November 2020, and a further update will be given to Cabinet in March 2021.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet notes the work of officers of the Council and partners in responding to and supporting the recovery from Covid 19.

3. Reasons for recommendation

- 3.1. This report provides an update on the current impact of Covid 19 and how this has changed since the report in December 2020. It sets out the response of the Council and partners to the pandemic.
- 3.2. The report is correct at the time of writing but as we have experienced, the situation can change quickly. It is important, therefore, that we remain flexible and responsive to these new challenges and the report reflects the need to do this.

4. Supporting information

- 4.1. Since the report in December 2020, there have been a number of changes to the levels of restrictions imposed locally and nationally. As the country came out of the national lock down in place in November 2020, all areas were then put into a new tier system, the tiers were consistent across the country to avoid confusion for the public and business owners.

- 4.2. Nottinghamshire was placed into tier 3 in December 2020. However, in the run up to Christmas, cases, particularly in London and the South East, increased rapidly. It is thought this is due to an identified new variant of the Covid 19 virus, which is more transmissible; therefore, more people are becoming infected.
- 4.3. The increasing trend in cases started to be seen in areas outside of London, as it appeared the new variant was spreading across the country. Nottinghamshire, like many other areas, moved to tier 4 between Christmas and New Year in response to rising cases and hospital admissions.
- 4.4. The table below sets out a timeline of these changes and an overview of the restrictions at each stage on both residents and businesses:

Lockdown restrictions since November 2020	
5 November	National Lockdown, for four weeks overriding the Tier 3 measures
Midnight on 2 December	The country comes out of national lockdown and Nottinghamshire enters new tier 3 : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal care services closed • All hospitality venues to close except for takeaway (including alcohol) • Non-essential retail remains open • No meeting indoors or outdoors (in private garden or public venue e.g. pub) with people from outside your household (unless in your support bubble) • Can meet with groups of six in outdoor public places • Leisure and sporting facilities e.g. gyms can reopen.
Midnight on 30 December	Tier 4 restrictions introduced and so changes to the above include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-essential retail must close • Leisure and sporting facilities e.g. gyms must close. • Can only meet one other member of a different household in an outdoor public space.
Midnight on 4 January	National Lockdown and so in addition to the above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government issues stay at home message • All schools close. • Hospitality venues – except for takeaway of food and non-alcoholic drinks only (alcohol can only be provided as part of a delivery)

- 4.5. In response to the announcement on 29 December 2020, that Nottinghamshire was moving into tier 4 staff took a number of immediate actions including:
- Contacted Parkwood and Mitie to ensure they had the arrangements in place for closing the centres and were informing customers;
 - Made arrangements with the Bingham Market Manager to switch the market (due to take place on 31 December 2020) to essential stall holders only;
 - Updated the High Street Ambassadors who were on patrol over the New Year period about the new restrictions and ensured their patrols were targeted to the right places in light of the new restrictions; and
 - Communications messages to residents about the new restrictions in place.

- 4.6. The closure of leisure centres for another extended period is a concern for the Council, as it will have a further impact on budgets. In addition, it is a concern for the health (physical and mental) and wellbeing of residents. Officers from the Council are in regular dialogue with Parkwood and Mitie to provide support where required. A funding application has been submitted to The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as part of the National Leisure Recovery Fund, to provide much needed financial support to our leisure centres. The National Leisure Recovery Fund seeks to support eligible public sector leisure centres to reopen to the public, giving the sport and physical activity sector the best chance of recovery to a position of sustainable operation over the medium term. The £100 million worth of funding is being managed and administered on behalf of DCMS by Sport England. An application was submitted on 8 January 2021, and the Council is currently awaiting the outcome of this bid.
- 4.7. The national lockdown, which began at midnight on 4 January 2021, meant some further restrictions on businesses but as we were already in tier 4 this was not as significant a change as was experienced in other areas. The main change was that businesses offering takeaways could no longer offer takeaway alcohol, this can now only be provided as part of a delivery. It is hoped this would stop any congregation of people in town centres.
- 4.8. The Council continues to provide support to local businesses and residents in the Borough in the response to Covid 19. A detailed update on this support was provided to the Cabinet in December 2020. Since then the Council has carried out some additional work including:
- A how to guide and video on click and collect to support local high street businesses to set this up;
 - Enforcement action where required by the Environmental Health Team;
 - Continued support for the Rushcliffe Business Partnership fortnightly networking; and
 - Temporarily moving West Bridgford Farmers Market to Bridgford Road car park to enable them to continue to operate.
- 4.9. In addition, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provided funding to Nottinghamshire County Council to assist vulnerable families with children and other vulnerable households, particularly affected by the pandemic. 80% of funding has been allocated to households with children and administered via schools, early years and further education setting.
- 4.10. The remaining 20% (£450k) was intended for households with no children and vulnerable individuals/couples who have been identified as being in urgent need. The Nottinghamshire allocation has been apportioned to each district.
- 4.11. Rushcliffe received £23,800 on 18 December 2020, which was passported out to established community groups and organisations who were able to assist with food parcels and other essentials supplies over the winter months. All funding must be used by 31 March 2021.

- 4.12. Following consultation with the programme manager at Nottinghamshire County Council, RBC Executive Management Team, partner organisations and relevant community groups funds were allocated on 21 December 2020, to those listed in the table below:

Community Group	Location	Amount
The Friary	West Bridgford	£2500
Meet, Greet & Eat	West Bridgford	£2500
Cotgrave Community Kitchen	Cotgrave	£2500
Bingham Helping Hands	Bingham	£2500
East Leake Parish Council	East Leake	£2500
	Total	£12,500

- 4.13. Demand will be evaluated at the end of January 2021, to allocate the remaining funding up until the end of the financial year. If funding is not allocated, it will need to be given back but it is intended that all funding will be allocated by the end of March 2021.
- 4.14. The Council's revenues and finance teams continue to be very busy processing and paying grants for businesses. This has included paying different grants for periods in tier 3, tier 4 and now the national lockdown and specific grants for 'wet pubs'. Since November 2020 lockdown, the Council has paid out £7.2m in grants (65% of funding) equating to 3,143 in grants paid.
- 4.15. Details of the grants available for the national lockdown both mandatory and discretionary schemes are available on the Council's website.
- 4.16. Patrols by the High Street Ambassadors are targeted based on discussions with Nottinghamshire Police and local intelligence received. For the last few weeks, their focus has been on parks and open spaces particularly Rushcliffe Country Park, which is particularly busy at weekends. Other areas of focus have been farmers markets (West Bridgford and Bingham), Radcliffe on Trent Skate Park and West Bridgford town centre.
- 4.17. Business compliance with the guideline has been high with a few exceptions. Where there have been issues identified, the Council has worked closely with Nottinghamshire Police to take the appropriate action quickly.
- 4.18. The Council continues to maintain a high level of service delivery since the start of the pandemic, shifting resources where required. To date, the direct impact of Covid 19 on the Council in terms of staff sickness or those self-isolating has been, of the approximately 260 employees:
- 15 staff have tested positive for Covid; and
 - 74 staff have self-isolated to date (this includes those that isolated and continued to work and those who did not work as their role did not enable them to work from home).

This is an increase since the report in December 2020, of six staff who have tested positive and 18 staff who have had to self-isolate.

Track and trace and vaccination centres

- 4.19. Since the last report in December 2020, the mass vaccinations programme has begun across the country. This is predominantly being delivered at doctors' surgeries and hospitals. There are, however, some mass vaccination sites (none located in Rushcliffe) and some smaller community based sites. One of those is Gamston Community Hall, which is now a local vaccination centre. Whilst the NHS runs the facility, the Council was involved in the initial set up.
- 4.20. In addition, as well as the testing sites (one is sited at Rushcliffe Arena) work is ongoing with partners to identify possible lateral flow testing sites.
- 4.21. The Council continue to help support individuals who are self-isolating, who are on low incomes and cannot work from home, with £500 payments from government funding. The funding is until 31 January 2021, and at the time of writing 260 applications received, 93 payments have been made, amounting to £46,500 (from funding of £56,500).

5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection

This is an update report on the work done since December 2020, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. For the different areas of work, officers and Councillors considered different options as required. The response and recovery will continue to be flexible to be able to respond to changes in regulations.

6. Risks and uncertainties

Covid 19 in itself creates much risk for the Council both in its ability to deliver its Corporate Priorities and the impact on the Council's budget.

7. Implications

7.1. Financial Implications

The financial impact of Covid is being reported through the Council's normal financial and performance reporting processes with a further update due to both Corporate Overview Group and Cabinet in February and March 2021, respectively.

7.2. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications associated with this report; decisions have been taken in accordance with the Constitution.

7.3. Equalities Implications

The pandemic has had a disproportionate economic impact on some people including young people. This impact is being considered in the recovery work, with activity being targeted across Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire and the wider D2N2 area as required.

7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

While the pandemic has had an impact on crime and disorder, most notably an increase in reports of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour in some parks/open spaces, there are no crime and disorder implications associated with the contents of this report.

8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The response and recovery from Covid 19 is in place to ensure we maintain the quality of life for our residents.
Efficient Services	In response to Covid 19, staff have had to be redeployed to ensure essential services for our residents could be maintained. The pandemic has had a significant impact on Council budgets and, therefore, a review will be required of service delivery across the whole Council to support further efficiencies.
Sustainable Growth	The pandemic has had a significant impact on our businesses and, therefore, a package of support (from national and local government) has been put in place to support those businesses who have been impacted the most. We will continue to work with our partners to support our businesses to survive the pandemic and grow as the economy recovers.
The Environment	The focus of recovery is supporting a green economic recovery. This includes for the Council adapting the way it works, e.g. continued working from home, but also supporting our businesses to change the way they work too.

9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet notes the work of officers of the Council and partners in responding to and supporting the recovery from Covid 19.

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Background papers available for Inspection:	Report to Cabinet May 2020 Report to Cabinet November 2020 Report to Cabinet December 2020
List of appendices:	