



Northumberland

County Council

CABINET

DATE: 23 JUNE 2020

COVID-19: NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL RESPONSE

Report of Mrs Daljit Lally, Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service)

Cabinet Member: Councillor Peter Jackson, Leader

Purpose of report

This report is to provide members with a full update on the impact of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic on the work of Northumberland County Council and to provide an overview of the Council's immediate emergency response from mid-March until the date the report is published.

The Coronavirus pandemic has required a strategic and operational co-ordinated crisis response by significantly shifting the focus of Council activities to support those residents who are most vulnerable. This has been done by the Council using its own resources, working with wider agencies, voluntary and community sector colleagues and also as part of the wider Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) public service response to the emergency.

Council services have been prioritised to support our most vulnerable residents, many resources, functions, plans, programmes and work have had to be reorganised and reprioritised on a regular basis (sometimes day by day) in order to ensure that Northumberland as a county has had a safe response and that the Council has been able to respond to a wide range of guidance and legislation.

This report provides members with a summary of the Council's response to the Covid-19 emergency and the implications for council services, as they are currently understood. Members are to note that this is an evolving situation which is rapidly changing therefore this summary is provided based on information known at the time and to the best of my knowledge.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- note the impact of the coronavirus emergency on Northumberland County Council
- acknowledge the work undertaken to date by the Council

- receive further reports on the work being undertaken by the County Council to develop a longer term resilience and recovery plan to ensure the ongoing delivery of statutory and key council services at this time
- invite the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to examine the recovery plans for the Council services areas within their remits, and make regular reports and recommendations to Cabinet on their findings.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is linked to all priorities within the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and as a Category 1 responder in line with the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), this encompasses the Council's response to ensuring the safety of its residents.

Key issues

Background

1. Coronavirus and our immediate emergency response

- 1.1 On 12 January 2020 it was announced that a novel coronavirus had been identified. The World Health Organisation (WHO) confirmed the name of the new coronavirus as Covid19.
- 1.2 Northumbria LRF initially stood up its resilience forum arrangements on 10th March 2020 in an attempt to understand the nature of the emergency response required and to share known information with other key partners and determine how best to mobilise resources and utilise expertise across the region. The County Council, as a Category 1 responder mobilised its Civil Contingencies Team and engaged immediately with Northumbria LRF on a regular basis.
- 1.3 The Prime Minister addressed the nation on 23 March 2020 and a national lockdown was announced during his address.
- 1.4 On 28 March 2020 it was agreed by all Northumbria LRF partners to declare a Major Incident and this was also declared for Northumberland as a County and a County Council as a key stakeholder and Northumbria LRF partner. A Major Incident remains declared at the time of writing this report.
- 1.5 Coronavirus has remained a live, national risk to the population during this time, there remains no vaccine or cure and therefore we are responding to a live ongoing issue which remains significant at this time.

2. Our Emergency Response

- 2.1 Upon convening of the Northumbria LRF in response to emerging significance of Coronavirus across the country and the world, the Council immediately mobilised its Emergency Community Assistance Plan (ECAP), Business Continuity Plans (BCP's), and convened an Emergency Committee. The Council's Emergency

Committee met on 17 March and 15 April 2020 and plans remain to stand up the Council's Emergency Committee at any time it is required. It is anticipated that a further Emergency Committee meeting will need to be held very soon.

2.2 From 16 March 2020, the Council stood up two tiers of operational and strategic leadership to support the Council's emergency response and these were:

- Covid-19 Executive Team (Gold Command): Chaired by Daljit Lally
- Covid-19 Business Interruption Management Team (BIMT) (Silver Command): Chaired by Stephen Holmes, Service Director: Adult Social Care

This ensured that the Council had a clear and accountable structured response and that we were resourced appropriately at a strategic level for responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic, interfacing with a strong link to the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) arrangements.

2.3 The Council's initial Covid-19 response required seven-day Gold Command crisis management support. However, although both Gold and Silver Command structures remain in place at this time, they have reduced in frequency, meeting at least twice per week in order to ensure that the Council's response is managed, recorded and planned appropriately across all areas.

2.4 A large part of the Council's response has focussed on providing support to residents, communities and businesses either delivering initiatives from central government or developing more local solutions to respond to local challenges through a wide range of innovative and collaborative means.

2.5 The Council has prioritised its Adults and Children's social care functions, and its related work with health and community partners to support those most vulnerable or potentially most vulnerable to the virus. This has required a significant amount of data analysis, engagement, direction and resources being provided across the county.

2.6 As a consequence of responding to COVID-19, services, resources, functions, plans and programmes have been re- and de-prioritised as the Council has responded to a rapidly changing and fluid situation that has included the regular provision of new guidance and legislation. National measures in place to stop the spread of Coronavirus have meant that some services have been altered, reduced or suspended based on the necessity and urgency for them to be provided.

3. Public Health Update

3.1 The term coronavirus refers to a whole family of viruses. This includes viruses responsible for a number of conditions ranging from the common cold to more serious conditions like severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) or Middle East

Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new strain that was discovered in 2019 and had not previously been observed in humans. COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mostly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another.

- 3.2 Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness. At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. WHO declared COVID-19 to be a pandemic on 11th March 2020 because of its global spread.
- 3.3 The current numbers of COVID-19 cases testing positive through 'Pillar 1' of the Government's testing strategy (NHS laboratories) in England and Northumberland can be found [here](#) (1031 cases as at 7th June 20). These are largely symptomatic care home residents, NHS patients and NHS staff (including some asymptomatic testing). The figures do not include positive cases identified through 'Pillar 2' testing (Regional Testing Units, Mobile Testing Units and testing through online portals).

Official sources of information on deaths at a Northumberland level from COVID 19 are available through the [Office for National Statistics](#) but there is a time lag with the data. The latest figures identify that 233 had died with a record of COVID 19 on the death certificate as at 22nd May 20. Local figures obtained through our own registration service indicate that 301 deaths have been registered in Northumberland in which COVID 19 appears on the death certificate (as at 5th June 20) of which a small proportion will not be Northumberland residents.

- 3.4 Early measures to manage the spread of COVID-19 were shaped by the national guidance and local plans for dealing with the early phases of a pandemic of influenza based on previous intelligence and plans.
- 3.5 As understanding of its epidemiology has developed, the UK government has introduced a range of measures more closely tailored to COVID-19. These have been based around a strategy of social distancing to reduce transmission to levels which can be managed within the surge capacity of health and social care systems. Other guidance and arrangements for reducing transmission include infection prevention control advice, guidance in the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and a wealth of guidance for specific sectors and settings.
- 3.6 The Government's testing strategy outlines how testing will be radically scaled up across 5 pillars of testing:

Pillar 1 - NHS swab testing for those with a medical need and, where possible, the most critical key workers. The criteria have changed over time and now includes all non-elective patients irrespective of symptoms and some asymptomatic testing. It also includes initial testing of symptomatic residents in care homes by Public Health England (PHE). These tests are undertaken in NHS laboratories.

Pillar 2 - mobile and regional testing units and the government testing portals. This is available for all other symptomatic individuals and includes the Whole Care Home Testing scheme for asymptomatic older person care home residents and staff launched 11th May which has now been extended to all other residential settings. These tests are undertaken in large centralised laboratories.

Pillar 3 - National antibody testing programme for NHS and care staff in England announced on 22 May 20 to determine if people have been exposed to COVID 19 in the past. There is no strong evidence yet to suggest that those who have had the virus develop long-lasting immunity which would prevent them from getting the virus again, or passing it on to another individual.

Pillar 4 - Surveillance testing to learn more about the disease and help develop new tests and treatments

Pillar 5 - National effort to build mass-testing capacity

- 3.7 Modelling, on which government strategy has been based, suggests that the current measures would suppress the number of new cases, and the most recent data on actual new infections and hospitalisations confirms that this is what is happening. The same modelling also predicts that, in the absence of a vaccine, the number of new cases will rise again soon after current measures are lifted. To avoid a resurgence of COVID-19 at levels which would overwhelm the NHS and social care system, it is anticipated that any partial relaxation of the current social distancing arrangements would need to be complemented by a return to, and scaling up of, testing and contact tracing. This is being implemented through NHS Test and Trace.

4. Local Public Health Response

- 4.1 The Director for Public Health, Elizabeth Morgan and her team have provided public health leadership on forecasting the profile of the epidemic in Northumberland to inform capacity planning across the organisation as well as leading much of the public health work with colleagues across the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The team has produced a wealth of guidance notes for various service areas as guidance has been produced nationally and continues to respond to numerous questions from within the Council and from wider stakeholders, particularly schools and local MPs.
- 4.2 A challenge for the health and care sector nationwide has been the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to ensure that health and social care staff, in particular, can protect themselves and those for whom they are providing care. The Council has taken an individual approach to explore as part of our shared procurement service with the NHS to obtain sufficient stocks of PPE to support the care sector in Northumberland during this crisis. This has been highly successful and has ensured that we have had local arrangements in place to make sure that any urgent needs for PPE could be met in a timely way. This has included publishing and updating local guidance on the use of PPE, quantifying our overall needs and overseeing the distribution of stock according to a prioritisation framework to conserve and make the best use of stocks. We have worked alongside local care providers to ensure that they have had sufficient stocks of PPE for their staff, stepping in where necessary, working with our Northumberland Fire

and Rescue Colleagues to make doorstep deliveries across the County, as requested, which has been very well received.

- 4.3 A regional testing group is working hard to develop a north east approach to testing which focuses NHS laboratory testing capacity on those for whom a prompt test and turnaround of results is more critical. Where possible, frontline health and social care staff are being funnelled into Pillar 1 testing but where this isn't possible, testing opportunities are available through the NHS 111 or the Government's testing portal.
- 4.4 Human Resources are continuing to work with Health and Safety and Public Health colleagues to ensure that we have robust guidance available to staff regarding testing to ensure that staff are swiftly referred for testing if required and supported accordingly with post test outcomes. The Director of Public Health has undertaken direct question and answer sessions for staff to answer key questions and to ensure that staff have a trusted source of the most up to date information available regarding the virus itself, PPE, testing and where to get further information. The Director of Public Health has also held workshops for Headteachers to offer support, reassurance and guidance on key issues which has been extremely well received.
- 4.5 The Council will have an important role to play in outbreak control as we continue to move out of lockdown. In common with all other local authorities, the Director of Public Health is developing a Northumberland COVID 19 Outbreak Control Plan which will focus on responding to outbreaks and incidents in high consequence settings such as care homes and schools; testing; ensuring that data flows are fit for purpose and that surveillance processes are adequate to inform local action on controlling the transmission of infection; ensuring support is in place for individuals and communities required to self isolate; establishing a governance mechanism through a new COVID 19 Outbreak Control Board and a member-led public facing engagement board.

5. County wide Civil Contingencies response (including LRF arrangements)

- 5.1 The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) delivers emergency planning regional co-ordination for Northumberland and the geography of the Northumbria Force area, ensuring the establishment of coordinated and effective multi-agency responses to COVID- 19.

5.2 Over 30 partners from the public, private and voluntary sector are involved in the LRF COVID-19 response. The LRF is overseen by the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) which was initially police led and is now chaired by LA Chief Executive (Paul Hanson from North Tyneside). The SCG has established a number of cells with relevant subgroups to deal with the far-reaching impacts of the coronavirus emergency. These cells are overseen by the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG), initially chaired by the police and now chaired by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

The cells are:

- Logistics Cell
- Excess Deaths Management Group (EDMG)
- Communications LRF Group (Cell)
- Data and Information Cell

5.3 The Council's Director of Public Health, and other senior officers within the Council (including the Fire and Rescue Service) play a full role in the county-wide emergency response with officers chairing or participating in most groups.

5.4 SCG meetings are now twice per week as we begin to move towards the implementations of the recovery phase. The Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) is being led by Henry Kippin (North of Tyne CA) and has begun the liaison with Local Authorities, Government, North East LEP etc to develop a framework for recovery for the region.

5.5 The County Council's Civil Contingencies Team have worked alongside the Northumberland Communities Together initiative in the early part of the emergency response to ensure that key logistics were in place and that the community response central team were able to facilitate the supply and transportation of food and medicines for those who needed it across the County.

6. Corporate Emergency Response

6.1 The Council's Executive Leadership Team have had overall responsibility for overseeing the Council's emergency response to COVID-19. The Executive Team initially met daily and now twice weekly to receive updates from the chair of the Business Interruption and Management Team (BIMT) meeting and other directors on their services, provide leadership and decision making to protect critical services, address urgent issues and oversee communications with Members and staff. Data dashboards, action plans and templates have been developed to allow the Executive Team to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on Council activity and inform operational decision-making.

6.2 The BIMT, chaired by the Service Director: Adult Social Care and supported by the Civil Contingencies team, is co-ordinating the County Council's operational response to COVID-19 across departments in order to prioritise critical service delivery. The BIMT also connects the Council to the multi-agency response through the LRF. The group is attended by key Heads of Service and Directors across the Council, to report on the response, escalate issues of a strategic nature and receive actions to be undertaken departmentally. Other key stakeholders such as Active Northumberland have also been invited to the BIMT so the Council can utilise accessing Council premises as and when required to support its emergency response.

6.3 The BIMT has been responsible for managing the operational continuity of critical services within departments in line with established business continuity plans. It also has supported and ensured the completion of risk assessments in key areas which have been critical in terms of ensuring that we operate Covid-19 secure

workplaces, engage with our trade union colleagues and also provide ongoing support to services which may be challenged operationally with significant demands, changes to services and to adapting or resourcing their operational needs.

- 6.4 The BIMT has kept records of all key operational decisions and actions and the Corporate Risk Register has been updated to reflect the COVID-19 Programmes of Work.

7. Support for Vulnerable Adults - Coronavirus Legislation and Care Act Easements

- 7.1 The Coronavirus Act 2020 came into force on 31st March 2020. This legislation enables the relaxation of the need to comply with certain duties under the Care Act 2014.
- 7.2 The Government has issued statutory guidance on the Care Act Easements. These are designed to enable authorities to “prioritise the most pressing needs” among those to whom they would normally be under a legal duty of care. Accordingly Adult Social Care is able to ease its obligations if the workforce is significantly depleted, or demand on social care increased, to an extent that it is no longer reasonably practicable for it to comply with its Care Act duties (as they stand prior to amendment by the Coronavirus Act) and where to continue to try to do so is likely to result in urgent or acute needs not being met, potentially risking life.
- 7.3 Nationally, a number of authorities have had to use these easements but Adult Social Care in Northumberland has not needed to enact the Care Act easements. Instead, the expectation is that it is “business as usual” and the easements will be considered as required, dependent on service capacity and levels of risk experienced within services. Staff and people who use services will be informed as soon as possible if Care Act easements are to be implemented and the Council has developed a procedure for activating them and notifying the DHSC if required, including discussion with relevant parties.
- 7.4 In recognition of the pandemic and following guidelines from central government to manage the pressure on the health and social care system, it has been necessary to reshape Adult Social Care’s operating model in order to prepare to respond to predicted demand for support. The new operating model is not part of the Care Act easements.
- 7.5 There are a number of areas of service that have been altered to manage the key areas of demand anticipated:
- Support for people who would normally attend building-based day services (following the vast majority of parents and carers electing not to use the resource) so they can receive the support required in different ways and in their own home to minimise risk to their wellbeing.
 - Amended operating hours for critical services to 7 days a week 8am to 8pm to align with national guidance on supporting hospital discharge to maintain capacity in the NHS at all times.

- Implementation of a daily demand and capacity system to ensure clear oversight of critical teams where pressures are increasing so these risks can be managed quickly and effectively.
- Developed a Northumberland Communities Together initiative to provide front line support to the most vulnerable within our communities and supported the initiative with skilled and experienced staff from Adult Social Care teams who could engage across communities and support colleagues from the Voluntary and Community Sector accordingly.

7.6 On 15 April the government published a COVID-19 Adult Social Care action plan and following review of this document, the alternative operating model set out in this report is in line with this national plan.

In the build up to lockdown, the service reviewed all active cases, liaising with family members and service users to ensure the identified care plan was appropriate and where needed made changes to enhance or change the offer in accordance with family wishes.

7.7 Alongside the Care Act Easements, instruction was issued nationally on how local authorities would manage hospital discharge on a Discharge to Assess model. The aim is to support a patient discharge as soon as clinically safe to do so within 3 hours. In response to this, the Council worked closely with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to arrange the safe discharge of patients who had tested negative for Covid-19 only.

7.8 Staff supporting vulnerable adults across the County are working from home and remotely as much as possible to complete their needs assessments away from acute settings to adhere to social distancing and also to engage in a virtual way utilising technology such as Microsoft Teams and Google Meet.

7.9 A high proportion of services provided on behalf of the Council are delivered by independent companies including very small providers, right through to some national organisations with whom there are very positive, proactive and highly valued partnerships. This has stood the Council in good stead during the current pandemic. We also support people who have Direct Payments and arrange their own care either with individuals or organisations and who may well employ their own care staff.

7.10 When the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Council very quickly developed immediate engagement and communication with partners, in recognition of the pressure that this crisis presented. As such, providers are being paid for commissioned hours irrespective of delivery, as long as the provider works with the Council to best support the needs of residents. This gave providers reassurance about what their income would be to enable them to concentrate on providing their services to local people during these very challenging times.

7.11 In addition to this, providers are able to seek agreement for other additional costs on an individual basis reflecting the different circumstances that providers are in. These principles are to be reviewed at the end of June 2020.

- 7.12 A key concern is that staff sickness or caring responsibilities may mean that providers have concerns about their workforce capacity. A pool of council staff has been identified who could support such a crisis if this were to arise. The council has also recruited additional care workers to support the emergency response which has been well received across the county.

In order to ensure that our care homes and providers were receiving appropriate support and to make sure we could quickly identify where additional assistance might be required, we set up a team to contact providers on a twice weekly basis to chat through what help they may need

- 7.13 Senior Managers undertook an initial deployment exercise to align operational social care colleagues to the emergency response operating model. This in conjunction with a council wide skills audit has allowed the department to understand how best to mobilise colleagues within the Department to provide additional resources for critical front-line services and deploy staff accordingly.

8. Support for Vulnerable Children and Families including Schools Early Years, School and College Settings

- 8.1 The government announced that schools would close from the 23rd March 2020 but would still provide places for vulnerable children or children whose parents or guardians are key workers. The vast majority of schools in Northumberland have remained open for these children. Some schools have relocated pupils and teaching staff to nearby 'Hubs' – groups of schools which have been supported to work together to ensure all eligible children have a school place.
- 8.2 Northumberland's special schools are working together to ensure that provision is available for children and young people with an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan. They are providing support to local schools and services and have also used the hub model on occasion. Special School Leaders are working closely with health and social care partners to identify and support their most vulnerable pupils to ensure they are receiving the required services they need where they can't access these via school.
- 8.3 On 30th April 2020, the Secretary of State issued a notice to be in force from 1st May to 31st May 2020 to modify the duty in section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to secure special educational provision and health care provision in accordance with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans. The notice means that local authorities and health bodies must use 'reasonable endeavours' to discharge their duties, considering for each child and young person with an EHC plan what they can reasonably provide in the circumstances. Additionally, from 1st May to 25th September 2020 statutory timescales for EHC needs assessments and plans have been modified. Where it is not reasonably practicable to conclude an action within the statutory timescale because of COVID-19, the local authority will not be penalised but will have to complete the process as soon as reasonably practicable. This has now been extended to the end of June 2020

- 8.4 Staff from the Education teams have been supporting Headteachers and negotiating school places for vulnerable pupils and children of key workers.
- 8.5 The number of pupils attending school has varied. A snapshot during term time on the 29th April, shows that 1223 children attended school; 798 were children of key workers; 306 were vulnerable children and an additional 119 had an EHC plan. The actual number is likely to be higher, due to not all schools returning data.
- 8.6 Preliminary data for Northumberland suggests that a higher proportion of vulnerable children may be attending school in the County than the national average and the number has increased since the start of the summer term. However, a significant number of vulnerable children are still not in school. Work continues between schools and local authority services to contact these children and assess their welfare. The number of vulnerable children seen by schools has been varied.
- 8.7 Many schools have developed their practice in order to support vulnerable families. This has included delivering free school meals and regularly contacting or visiting children they consider most vulnerable. School leaders have worked together to ensure that free school meals were distributed and/or collected by families who needed them.
- 8.8 £5,435,057 of funding from Northumberland County Council was allocated to Ofsted-registered Early Years settings to enable them to continue to provide free childcare for critical workers who currently access a funded place. On the snapshot date of 29th April, approximately 202 early years settings were open providing childcare to 418 children of key workers and 69 vulnerable children.
- 8.9 Northumberland's Further Education (FE) Institution, Northumberland College has been closed since 23rd March 2020.
- 8.10 All families receiving early help or social work support have been risk-assessed to determine the level of support required. Risk levels will determine whether visits are face-to-face or via phone/videoconference. All families are receiving at least weekly contact.
- 8.11 There have been no significant issues in terms of staff absence, most staff are working remotely. There has been a flexible use of staff usually deployed within universal services, including Youth Workers and Children's Centre Workers, to support vulnerable children, young people and families to ensure that critical services continue. Robust arrangements are in place to monitor staffing levels and agree where necessary the emergency deployment of staff.
- 8.12 There has been a significant decrease in Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) enquiries and resulting social work assessments. There has also been a corresponding decrease in requests for early help support. However, this has not resulted in major changes to children with active social care plans, with a slight decrease in numbers of children in need but an increase in children on child protection plans since schools closed. The number of children in care has increased during the lockdown period. This is in part due to children not leaving the system as opposed to more children coming into care. Courts have been operating on a limited

basis in relation to care proceedings and therefore children's plans have not progressed and adoption hearings have not taken place. The impact of this is being considered nationally as well as regionally.

- 8.13 The Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 came into force on 24th April. The Regulations temporarily amend 10 sets of secondary legislation relating to children's social care to support services manage the coronavirus outbreak. The changes are intended to support services to try and manage the increased pressure on children's social care and cases of staff and carer shortages arising from illness due to coronavirus. The Children Services Teams have not enacted the available easements. Instead, the expectation is that it is "business as usual" and the easements will be considered as required, dependent on service capacity and levels of risk experienced within services.
- 8.14 One area where there is potential for easements to be considered is in respect of needing to increase the number of available foster carers. This relates to the significant prospect of hidden harm being uncovered at the end of lock down period and therefore more children potentially needing local authority care. The amendments to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations (2010) remove the requirement for temporary foster carers to be a 'connected person' to a child. i.e. a relative, friend or other person connected to the child, therefore permitting the recruitment of "non-connected" volunteer temporary foster carers. Should the Department assess that this easement is required, this decision will be taken by the Executive Director for Adults and Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

9. Northumberland Communities Together

- 9.1 Northumberland Communities Together went live on 18th March and is accessible over the phone, via the Council website or by email.
- 9.2 NCT provides a real-time online database, accessible to all partners, which enables residents in need of support to input their postcode and requirements and be 'served up' with a list of local groups and organisations able to meet those needs. The aim being that those with less complex needs could 'self-serve', and find their own support, without the need for further help.
- 9.3 Since launching the service over 5,000 enquiries have been received and over 1,000 residents have registered to support volunteering activities across the county. NCT is able to connect people to support with access to food, medicines and other practical and wellbeing support. Where matches for help cannot be immediately made, the request is passed onto district or borough partners who use their knowledge to find support for the person requesting it.
- 9.4 Current activity is as:

Current number of shielded residents : 18,200

The hub activity update is noted below (to 26th May)

- Total number of enquiries received **5049**
- Total Number of enquiries received May (to 26th) **2238**
- Referrals/enquiries received (20th - 26th May) **665**
- Total number of outbound calls made **8229**
- Total number of volunteers registered **1,011**

- 9.5 To ensure a joined-up approach, where people have approached the Hub who are already open to Adult Social Care or may have care and support needs, or are active to children's social care, any increased needs are picked up and responded to by the allocated key worker.
- 9.6 A key role played by NCT is in supporting the Government's Shielded programme to protect and support clinically extremely vulnerable people. The NHS has identified in the region of 1.5 million people across the country and contacted each directly. Details of those people are shared daily with NCT who have been in regular contact with those people in the shielded cohort who need support. There are over 18,500 Extremely Vulnerable People in Northumberland, with over 13,000 of which are receiving some support or contact from the Government and local schemes including Northumberland Communities Together.
- 9.7 The coronavirus emergency has led to an unparalleled level of support from the voluntary and community sector and individuals, which has been essential in enabling NCT to operate and effectively support individuals and households in need of help. A longer-term objective is to take the unprecedented opportunity that has occurred to try and retain as much as possible of the new volunteer capacity that has come forward to build new relationships between the Council, communities, volunteers and the voluntary/community sector.
- 9.8 The plan is to maintain the excellent work undertaken by NCT and to focus this on ensuring that our ongoing engagement with communities is more powerful in the future.
- 9.9 NCT has worked to ensure that residents classed as extremely vulnerable and needing to shield have access to a sustainable food supply during their self-isolation, including supplying food parcels to those with limited or no financial means.
- 9.10 Funds have been made available to local charities and community organisations that are delivering essential services to vulnerable residents impacted by COVID-19, including access to food, medicines and support with well-being.
- 9.12 The Community and Voluntary Sector are a crucial partner in responding to the coronavirus emergency and will continue to play a vital role in the recovery phase. Many community organisations will have been adversely affected by the crisis and a piece of work will be undertaken to assess the financial resilience of the Community and Voluntary Sector going forward.
- 9.13 In Appendix 1 there is a summary of some of the data collected from the Northumberland Communities Together initiatives which members may find useful.

10. The Northumberland Business Hub and support for the Local Economy

- 10.1 During the COVID period, key aspects of the local and national economy have been significantly affected. Northumberland has already identified some key sectors which have been affected including culture, tourism, small businesses and retail.
- 10.2 Work is being undertaken by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership and the North of Tyne Combined Authority as well as ourselves to understand the full impact on local businesses and the economy.
- 10.3 Within Northumberland the number of unemployment claimants has risen 64% from February to April. There are 10,945 people claiming unemployment benefits, the last time Northumberland saw this level of claimants was 1996.
- 10.4 Northumberland is leading its own economic recovery programme however there has been a partnership created across the Northumbria LRF area led by North of Tyne Combined Authority and the LEP to support ongoing recovery on a regional basis. This work is being led through the LRF RCG (Recovery Coordination Group) and the Councils economic regeneration team are ensuring that they are well positioned to take advantage of any key recovery initiatives that Northumberland may benefit from in the future.
- 10.5 The distribution of the government Small Business Grants Fund (SBGF) scheme and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Grants Fund (RHLCGF) has been the responsibility of the County Council. As of 2nd June, the council has paid out £84m in grants to 7,457 businesses across Northumberland.

In addition to this the Council was allocated £4.6m from the government as a Discretionary Grant Fund aimed at some of the small and micro businesses within Northumberland which were not eligible for either the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund. This Discretionary Grant Fund widens access to support businesses who are struggling due to the Coronavirus shutdown but are unable to access other grant funding.

- 10.6 £1.5m has also been secured from the North of Tyne Combined Authority to support business and community response and resilience activities, including additional business support and grants targeted at areas businesses have highlighted, such as packages to move businesses online, employability and skills programmes to support individuals who have been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions to move back into work and a tourism stimulus package to support a sector which has seen considerable impact in recent months.
- 10.7 The County Council is preparing a detailed Economic Recovery Plan whilst we await further information from Government about the national programme of economic recovery. The Northumberland County Council Economic Recovery Plan will be phased recognising that the speed of economic recovery will vary across different sectors of the County's economy but the plan will reflect this and be tailored accordingly.

10.8 Recovery from the impacts of COVID-19 for Northumberland as a county is likely to be a complex and long running process that will involve many agencies and participants. This is particularly true given the uncertainty around what response will be required as and when the number of cases in the community fluctuates over the coming months and the extent of the impact of the virus is truly known as it is recognised by the Council that we may only be at an early stage with planning our recovery.

11. Culture, Arts, Leisure, Heritage and Tourism

11.1 The Council recognises that the sectors of Culture, Arts, Leisure, Heritage and Tourism play a vital role in the wellbeing and enrichment of living within Northumberland. These sectors also provide a number of longstanding and wide range of employment opportunities for residents across the county.

11.2 All Culture, Arts, Leisure, Heritage and Tourism organisations since 23rd March 2020 have had a period of zero or very limited activity and the Council has aimed to offer support to these organisations wherever possible.

11.3 The Council has worked with Active Northumberland, who are an independent leisure charity providing leisure services for the Council to provide financial support and share resources including the use of Council leisure buildings as part of its emergency response. This has been a positive partnership and is recognised as such by the Council.

11.4 The Culture, Arts, Leisure, Heritage and Tourism sector will need significant support as part of the Council's wider recovery programme and work has commenced on supporting the reopening of attractions with safe social distancing and forum engagement and leadership from the sector as part of the Council's response to recovery planning.

12. Climate Emergency/Change Impact

12.1 The Council recognises that there has been a significant impact on the county's carbon emissions given the reduction of road traffic since lockdown was introduced on 23rd March 2020.

12.2 The Council recognises that its own impact on the reduction on the county's carbon emissions by utilising technology has played its part and intends to retain some key aspects of this in relation to its longer term service planning, particularly by utilising virtual meetings wherever possible and not having staff travel in cars/vehicles throughout the county.

12.3 As part of the Council's recovery planning, the Council will continue to focus on securing new government investment in low carbon renewable energy and wider sector support for the county.

12.4 The Council also recognises that the employment market may be heavily influenced by the impact on such changes to virtual working practices and travelling

behaviours and there may be a need to retrain its own staff as well as those who may live within the county to support new sectors.

13. Corporate Infrastructure and Resilience

13.1 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

13.1.1 The new ways of working made necessary by COVID-19 have resulted in a number of pressures on our ICT systems. Members of the ICT Team have worked hard over a number of weeks, improving resilience and access to new ICT applications with great success.

13.1.2 The roll-out of the Microsoft Office 365 applications, that had been planned before the COVID-19 emergency, has been partially accelerated (so individuals can use Teams) and partially paused (for staff to remain utilising the Google applications) to allow dispersed staff to work collaboratively with their colleagues. The Microsoft 365 full roll-out application now needs to be reviewed to ensure that it will meet the longer term needs of all staff with our revised new ways of working.

13.1.3 The number of staff working from home or remote locations increased rapidly to over 2,500.

13.1.4 Social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter have been made available on Council devices to provide further communication channels for employees.

13.2 Human Resources

13.2.1 Vital to the ability of the Council to focus its efforts on delivering services differently and protecting the most vulnerable has been the willingness of the Council's workforce to adapt and respond to a fast-changing environment.

13.2.2 A range of training packages have been developed to ensure colleagues are adequately prepared to work remotely, undertake a range of different duties to assist with maintaining capacity in a number of critical services.

13.2.3 At the outset of the pandemic, a comprehensive suite of guidance and support measures were developed, adapted and extended to ensure employees and their managers have the appropriate information and support to make the necessary changes required in our response to the COVID-19 emergency. This covers the translation of nationally produced guidance into locally applicable processes and an expanded employee health and well-being support package focussing on mental as well as physical wellbeing together with a continued connection to the workplace.

13.2.4 The Council has shared information and materials with partner organisations including and responded to external approaches for advice and guidance where appropriate. This has been reciprocated and has enabled local employers to share information, avoid duplication of effort and wherever possible present a consistent approach across the county.

13.2.5 Regular engagement and communication has been maintained with trade union colleagues who have remained supportive and helpful in recognising the need to do things differently during the current crisis whilst maintaining appropriate levels of the health and safety of our workforce and their members.

13.2.6 Managers and teams have been advised on and provided with new ways to keep in touch during the period of the emergency, as the potential for some staff to become isolated whilst working from home has increased. Many teams have developed innovative and creative approaches to ensuring staff members are supported effectively and are able to continue to support each other. The Chief Executive has written to all staff regularly and produced a wide range of communications to update and reassure staff.

13.2.7 Several communications have focussed on key “bitesize briefings” including promoting support such as psychological support, our 24-hour counselling help line, financial wellbeing support and many others. A range of additional tools, information, training and support on mental health issues has been made available to staff to supplement the existing materials. This includes signposting staff to new materials as they are being developed by organisations such as Mind, CNTW NHS Trust and other organisations specialising in this field. Particular attention is being paid to supporting staff with bereavement, in either a personal or work context, with additional tools and materials. Virtual support for staff worried by Coronavirus is also being made available to staff in a wide variety of forms.

13.3 Communications

13.3.1 A wide range of communications have been developed to ensure that the Council’s residents, employees, members and partners - are kept fully informed about services and changes that affect them and their families directly or to support them by sharing how they can access trusted local and national information, practical support and advice.

13.3.2 Building on the success of Northumberland Communities Together, the Council has also highlighted and shared across all its channels, positive news about individuals, groups and communities supporting others at this time.

This is not limited to but has included:

- social media: publishing updates and stories from the Council and guidance from trusted sources, as well as public celebrating staff continuing to work on the front line. This has led to increased levels of positive engagement with our residents, and the overall audience on all our main social media channels has greatly increased.
- creating the Coronavirus web landing page (northumberland.gov.uk/coronavirus) which links to other related pages.
- maintaining communication with members and the workforce through the crisis to keep them informed and support the shift to remote working.

14. Finance and Budget Position

- 14.1 The finance functions have continued to operate throughout the COVID-19 emergency, with staff moving to home working as far as possible. Key financial services (such as payment of staff, suppliers and benefit claimants) have all continued to operate, with minimal disruption to service provision.
- 14.2 In addition, a number of additional measures have been implemented (at pace) in order to support the COVID-19 response. Support packages to businesses have been provided, through the application of additional business rates reliefs (over £38m) and payment of business grants (over £84m to date). Through the Council Tax Hardship fund, reductions of up to £150 have been made to the bills of Local Council Tax Support claimants, reducing the bills for nearly 18,000 households and removing over 12,000 households out of Council Tax entirely.
- 14.3 To support the liquidity of suppliers, the Council also moved to immediate payment terms, so that supplier invoices are paid immediately once approved (rather than the usual 30 day payment terms). The Council is also working with key suppliers who may be at risk from the COVID-19 crisis, to provide 'supplier relief' in line with relevant Procurement Policy Notices.
- 14.4 The Council continues to assess and closely monitor the impact of COVID-19 on its own financial position, with regular detailed updates provided to the Economic Recovery Board, in addition to normal budgetary control and reporting measures. So far the Council has received 2 tranches of additional financial support from Government, totalling £19.1m. The Council is seeking further tranches of financial support from Government to help support the financial position. The Council will continue to review its financial plans and the level of savings required to ensure delivery of a balanced budget position.
- 14.5 The statutory deadlines for publication of the Statement of Accounts for the 2019/20 have been extended, reflecting the significant additional challenges in their preparation posed by COVID-19. The deadline for publishing draft accounts is now 1st September (extended from 31st May), and the final accounts deadline is now 30th November (extended from 31st July). Work on the accounts is now well underway, and the Council is well placed to meet the new publication deadlines.

15. Democracy, Meetings and Decision Making

- 15.1 An operational decision was made to cancel all Committee Meetings until further notice for health and safety reasons as the situation was declared a pandemic. The Council awaited clarification from Government in the form of primary legislation that the current statutory requirements for Council meetings would be lifted to allow virtual meetings to take place, and statutory guidance in the form of Regulations to confirm the details of how these would be required to operate.
- 15.2 The Coronavirus Act contains provisions conferring power on the Secretary of State to make Regulations in relation to Local Authority meetings. These powers were brought into effect from 4 April under new Regulations. These new flexibilities may only be used in relation to meetings taking place before 7 May 2021.

- 15.3 The Regulations permit “virtual” meetings to take place, where members can attend and vote remotely by electronic means. The Regulations also require that both public and press are able to hear any virtual meetings and if practicable to see them. Where members of the public are permitted to attend and speak at meetings then facilities must be available for them to hear the meeting and to contribute.
- 15.5 Work has been undertaken to explore and test the options available for virtual Committee meetings and live streaming of any meetings to ensure they are accessible by the public and press. Discussions have taken place with Group Leaders to ensure that any arrangements are pragmatic, workable, in line with the Council’s Constitution and reflect the Council’s political balance. Guidance for Democratic Services Officers, Chairs and members is being developed alongside additional support to meetings from Democratic Services and ICT colleagues to assist with the technical aspects and to ensure smooth running of meetings.
- 15.5 Training has been provided on a 1:1 basis by ICT colleagues if elected members have needed them.
- 15.6 The regulations also remove requirements to hold annual meetings within the usual statutory timescales, or at all. Consideration is being given to the practicalities of holding an annual meeting virtually by using the technology now available and being tested.
- 15.7 Work has been undertaken to review the work programmes for all Committees to identify any potential urgent and important decisions required before the summer. Where a decision is required consideration is being given to determine the most appropriate route for decision making. This includes:
- Utilising the existing scheme of delegation to senior officers.
 - Use of the Urgency Procedures set out within the Constitution which give the Chief Executive the power to take all necessary decisions in cases of urgency, following consultation with Group leaders
 - Consideration of whether a virtual Committee meeting is required.
- 15.8. The Chief Executive has been keeping all members updated with developments in relation to the response to COVID-19 on a regular basis by briefings to elected members.

16. Council Services and Openings

- 16.1 In order to adhere to government guidance on social distancing and release Council resources to support COVID-19 priorities, all of the public-facing service areas other than County Hall are currently closed, however we have recently opened
- Country parks
 - Some public car parks
 - Household Waste and Recycling Centres

16.2 A summary position for the Council's frontline key services currently operating as at 31st May 2020 is outlined in Appendix 1 (appended to this paper).

17. Corporate Recovery Planning

17.1 As an organisation, we are working to establish and deliver a Council specific "Operational Recovery Plan" which will encompass a number of workstreams, including: -

- Safe access to premises
- Safe re-opening and operation of Council services"
- Communication of safe working practices (including Health and Safety) with staff
- Governance
- Finance and resources

18. Conclusions

18.1 This paper provides a summary of the Council's work to date on its Covid-19 response. There has been a significant amount of work undertaken and the likelihood is that there is a significant amount of work still to be undertaken given that we are likely to be living with the Coronavirus for some time.

18.2 Further updates will be made available to Cabinet members on our operational response as required and elected members may contact the Chief Executive or any of the Executive Directors for information in relation to any of the specific areas as outlined within this document.

19. Recommendations:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- note the impact of the coronavirus emergency on Northumberland County Council
- acknowledge the work undertaken to date by the Council
- receive further reports on the work being undertaken by the County Council to develop a longer term resilience and recovery plan to ensure the ongoing delivery of statutory and key council services at this time
- invite the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to examine the recovery plans for the Council services areas within their remits, and make regular reports and recommendations to Cabinet on their findings.

Appendix 1

As at 31.05.20

<u>Front Line Services</u>	<u>Current status</u>	<u>Comments</u>
ADULT SOCIAL CARE		
Adult Social Care Safeguarding Older People Adult Mental Health Services Learning Disability Services Residential Care Services	The service continues to provide support and care for adults, their families and carers.	No public facing community or day services are running. Day Services closed from 23rd March 2020.
CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE		
Children's Services Safeguarding Children with Disabilities Children in Need Early Help	The service continues to provide support and care for children, their families and carers.	Children's Centres have been closed to the public but early help has continued to be offered agilely.
Youth services	Youth services have continued to offer interventions and support across the county	Resources have been offered both virtually and physically
Fostering and adoption	Fostering services have continued to operate as BAU but reconfiguration of available resources has taken places needs have arisen	The service has taken advantage of easements in terms of recruitment and numbers in placements.
SCHOOLS AND OTHER PROVIDERS		
	As of 4th June, 164 schools and other providers were open, of which 66 were opening to a wider range of children. 3220 children were in attendance, of which 1279 were in the eligible age groups. 1941 were children who had previously attended schools as they were either classified as	The expectation is that approx. 40 schools will open to more children during w/b 8th June and approx 20 schools will open wider in w/b 15th June, including most secondary schools. Some schools have yet to confirm their opening date. Schools have been supported extensively

	vulnerable, having an EHCP or a child of a key worker. Throughout the 'closure' period, around 150 schools have remained open to vulnerable children and those of key workers, with approx 1000-1500 children attending each day.	with both HR and H&S issues to support the wider opening.
CUSTOMER SERVICES		
Contact Centre Customer Services Centre	The Contact Centre remains operational and is working on supporting NCT. All Front facing Customer Services Centres remain closed.	Weekend services have operated for NCT and this has included outbound calling to support residents who may need assistance at this time.
LIBRARIES, TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES, ARCHIVES		
Libraries Tourist Information Centres Archives	Libraries were closed from 23rd March 2020. Online, digital services are still available. Libraries and Archives staff have been redeployed to support the registrars service, community hubs, newly developed befriending and doorstep library service.	Digital emphasis being focused upon. Government guidance is that libraries are to remain closed.
LEISURE FACILITIES		
Leisure Facilities (operated by Active Northumberland)	Remain closed as per government guidance but working in partnership with Active Northumberland to utilise sports centres for communities hub and support any staff who wish to volunteer for NCT.	Consideration being given to government guidance and what the implications for reopening may mean in the future. Significant financial support provided by NCC to support Active Northumberland at this time.
COUNTRY PARKS AND OPEN SPACES		

Country Parks and Open spaces	Four Country Parks were re-opened to the public in May with communications to support social distancing. No play areas or cafe provision opened on site.	
Grounds maintenance	Operating	Some infrequent interruptions in activity when we need to reallocate staff to kerbside collection work to cover for sickness and leave.
CAR PARKS AND PUBLIC TOILETS		
Car Parks	Following risk assessments we reopened 41 of our car parks on 22 May, and a further one on 6 June.	Remaining car parks kept under review, with a likelihood of opening now retail restrictions are being relaxed
Public toilets	Toilet facilities in the country parks re-opened on 5 June.	A programme for the early re-opening of toilets across the county has been developed.
HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS		
Housing	Housing Management functions have been maintained with support provided to all tenants over the age of 70 and those identified who may be vulnerable. Support has also been made available to all tenants experiencing difficulties with rent payments. Repairs and maintenance services, other than emergency repairs were suspended, including statutory gas testing. The latter was re-introduced on the 11 May.	The service has introduced a specific workstream to address outstanding gas servicing and is actively looking at how to introduce an expanded repairs service and the recommencement of the housing lettings process.
Homelessness	The service met the	There are increasing

	<p>expectations set out by Dame Louise Casey to provide support and accommodation for rough sleepers and those threatened with homelessness. We were able to increase the housing available to support the initiative and reduce the use of temporary accommodation.</p>	<p>numbers of people, many with complex needs, presenting to the service. Additional pressures may arise from the reintroduction of evictions associated with rent arrears.</p>
<p>REGULATORY AND LICENCING</p>		
Regulatory	<p>Public Protection is the regulatory body for the Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations and has established arrangements with Northumbria Police to share information, investigate complaints and provide advice to businesses. Overall to date, levels of compliance have been high and no formal enforcement action has been taken.</p>	<p>As lockdown restrictions are eased, including the re-opening of non-essential shops, there will be an additional demand on services and enhanced need to provide advice and support to businesses to ensure regulatory compliance and reduce the risk of the spread of infection.</p>
Licencing	<p>General licensing services have been maintained and advice provided to businesses to ensure regulatory compliance. Specific areas of work have also been undertaken in respect of caravan parks</p>	<p>The service, with support from Legal and Democratic Services are planning to host the first virtual Licensing Hearing</p>
Enforcement	<p>Broad range of statutory services have been maintained at a reduced level, but due to social distancing requirements it has not been possible to carry out investigation and enforcement. There has been an increase in the number of fly tipping</p>	<p>Reopening of HWRC's has had a positive impact and service currently reviewing arrangements to undertake inspection and enforcement activities.</p>

	complaints and accumulations	
Trading Standards	Broad range of statutory services have been maintained at a reduced level, including support for livestock markets to allow continued trading as part of the food chain and businesses seeking to change their production range - ie Gin distillers to sanitisers. There has been a significant increase in the number and type of scams	
Environmental Health	Broad range of statutory services have been maintained at a reduced level. All programmed inspection activities have been suspended due to businesses either being closed or an inability to maintain social distancing requirements. There has been an increase in complaints associated with ASB and statutory nuisance, including noise and smoke.	There will be a need, pending advice from the Food Standards Agency, to review the preparation and delivery of the annual Food and Feed Plan. Arrangements have been introduced to respond to high risk complaints.
REGISTRARS, CORONERS AND BEREAVEMENT SERVICES		
Registrars	Birth registrations and weddings have been suspended since 23rd March. The process for death registrations has been adapted to a telephone registration service which has been well received by residents.	NCC is participating in a virtual birth registration pilot and many weddings have been postponed until 2021.
Coroners	The Senior Coroner and Acting Senior Coroner have	The Council is currently recruiting to the role of

	been fully involved in the Council's emergency response to Covid-19 and have sat as part of the BIMT arrangements, providing advice throughout.	Senior Coroner as the current Senior Coroner has announced he will retire in September 2020.
Crematoria	The Council has actively worked with its staff and partners including Funeral Directors and Mortuary Services to ensure that they are up to date, aware of PPE requirements and that we have had sufficient crematoria capacity throughout the emergency response period and on a continuing basis.	The Council are exploring ways to support families who may wish to have a post-funeral memorial service or commemorative approach to marking the passing of loved ones going forward
Cemeteries	As above in relation to cemetery burial capacity. Cemeteries have remained open throughout the county.	
TRANSPORT/RIGHTS OF WAY/HIGHWAYS		
Road repair and maintenance, and small schemes	Design services operating as normal. Road repair work now 80% operational	All work except emergency repairs initially ceased. We have developed Covid-safe working practises and progressively bringing all operations back on stream. Intention is to be 100% operational by mid-June. Projects will take longer to deliver due to the safe working practises.
Rights of Way	Operating normally.	

School transport	<i>Operating</i>	Funding support has been given to providers during lockdown. With reopening of schools we are bringing capacity back on stream, although anticipate challenges ahead due to the need to maintain social distancing on vehicles.
PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT		
Planning Decisions	Virtual planning committees running from 2 June	x2 meetings of SPC will be held per month
Enforcement	Normal activity resumed	
Local Plan	Phase 2 session due to start Sept	Negotiations with PINS underway to hold virtual sessions
WASTE MANAGEMENT		
Household waste recovery centres	All sites have now been reopened.	Initial high demand has slackened and we are increasing the range of items that can be taken as 'downstream' operators start to reopen
Kerbside collections	These have operated as normal and continue to do so.	
Fly tipping	Collection services have continued as normal	There was a significant increase in levels for the first 10 weeks but this has now reverted to normal. Plans being developed to reduce this significantly in hot spot areas

Bulky wastes service	Have re-introduced a reduced service	Social distancing measures mean that we have to restrict the size and weight of items that can be collected
Street cleansing	A limited street cleansing service has been operating	

Implications

Policy	Strategic policy implications have been considered in relation to the Council receiving policies from the Central Government and also developing policy locally.
Finance and value for money	The Council has robust records relating to financial expenditure for Covid-19 related activities and these are being reported in line with reporting structures locally, regionally and nationally. The Council has received additional funding for Covid-19 however the longer term financial implications for the Council are currently being considered.
Legal	Legal advice has been obtained from the Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer throughout the Covid-19 response.
Procurement	Procurement support has been provided by the Council's Shared Procurement Service including support for the sourcing and purchase of additional PPE.
Human Resources	The Council has operated within its existing policies and procedures as part of its Covid-19 response and has worked with trade union colleagues to develop new policies, procedures and protocols where appropriate.
Property	Property regulations have been adhered to throughout the emergency response with additional support provided for Facilities staff in relation to cleaning regimes as per any additional guidance received.
Equalities	(Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Risk Assessment	Risk Assessments have been undertaken for a wide range of Council related activities and these are held centrally for reference purposes.
Crime & Disorder	The Council has maintained regular contact with Northumbria Police throughout the Covid-19 emergency response, paying particular attention to national policy including lockdown arrangements, travel and any anti-social behaviour/crime issues which have been managed locally.
Customer Consideration	Northumberland Communities Together and our Contact Centre/Customer Services colleagues have worked closely to ensure that we have a responsive service available to our residents at all times, particularly those in need and who are vulnerable.
Carbon reduction	The Council has continued with its climate change work during the emergency response and this will be monitored.

Health and Wellbeing	This paper is relevant to the health and wellbeing of our residents and our staff and the Council's Director of Public Health has been involved in the Council's emergency response throughout.
Wards	All

Report sign off

	Name
Monitoring Officer/Legal	Liam Henry
Service Director Finance and Interim S151 Officer	Chris Hand
Relevant Executive Director	N/A
Chief Executive	Daljit Lally
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Jackson

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