

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: TUESDAY 23 JUNE 2020****REPORT OF: MR TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL COUGHLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR TRANSFORMATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND PROSPERITY****SUBJECT: COVID-19: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL - UPDATE****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Surrey County Council has a vitally important role in leading the local response to COVID-19, to save lives, protect the NHS, ensure our residents are protected wherever possible and crucial council services continue to operate in these unprecedented times.

As the national and local situation develops rapidly, the purpose of this report is to set out the latest Public Health information about COVID-19, and update Cabinet on the strategic and sensitive issues arising from the extensive response and recovery work going on across Surrey.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet are asked to:

1. Note the latest public health situation nationally and in Surrey with regard to COVID-19 and the latest information regarding the government's Test and Trace programme,
2. Note the financial support being provided to social care providers and Care Homes,
3. Note the support being provided to local businesses through a range of grants, guidance and signposting,
4. Note the activity underway across the county to restore and restart services, activities and the economy, as national lockdown measures are eased,
5. Agree a contribution of £200,000 to the Community Foundation Surrey Coronavirus Support Fund to provide additional financial support to the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector, match-funded where possible.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The county and council continue to face unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to response activity, attention is turning to the re-starting, restoration and recovery of services and day-to-day life, as lockdown measures are eased nationally.

The recommendations set out in this report ensure Cabinet are apprised of the work going on across the council to protect, sustain and support our residents and communities and the economy of Surrey.

Public Health Update

1. Further to the report on Surrey's response to COVID-19 to Cabinet on 26 May 2020, this information provides an update on the impact in Surrey and the activity underway across the county, following the declaration of a 'Major Incident' for the COVID-19 outbreak on Thursday 19 March 2020.
2. On 19 June 2020 the Government lowered the COVID-19 alert level from Level 4 to Level 3, which means that the COVID-19 epidemic is still in general circulation, however transmission is no longer high or rising exponentially, enabling a gradual reduction of restrictions and social distancing measures. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-from-the-uk-chief-medical-officers-on-the-uk-alert-level>). This is an extremely fluid situation, therefore up-to-date information about the current numbers of COVID-19 cases in the UK and Surrey can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>.
3. As at 16 June 2020, the total number of confirmed cases of Coronavirus worldwide (COVID-19) has reached 7,924,527 and the total number of deaths is 434,367 (World Health Organisation WHO). The first case of COVID-19 in United Kingdom was reported on 31 January 2020 and to date 6,866,481 people have been tested, of whom 296,857 have tested positive.
4. The latest data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) states that there have sadly been 47,387 deaths in England and Wales involving COVID-19. This figure is based on deaths in all settings between up to 5 June 2020 and includes cases where COVID-19 is suspected but no test has taken place.
5. In Surrey, the first death registered which involved COVID-19 was on 14 March 2020. Between 14 March and 5 June 2020 (the last day for which we have available data), we have sadly had 1,069 registered deaths involving COVID-19. Because residents can take up to 14 days or more to register deaths, these numbers could go up.
6. In Surrey the total number of confirmed cases is 2,975. At present, this means Surrey is ranked 6th out of 150 counties and unitary authorities in England for total number of confirmed cases. When we present this information as a proportion of total population however, this changes to 87th out of 150.
7. In May, the government introduced five tests as part of the plan for adjusting the lockdown. Since then the Prime Minister has announced further lockdown easing measures, including allowing groups of up to six people to meet outdoors and the formation of a 'support bubble' with one other household in certain circumstances. A series of measures have also been put in place in England from Monday 1 June in three core areas – schools, retail, and social contact, and from the 15 June people are being asked to wear a face covering on public transport. The message from the government is to stay at home as much as possible but to be alert and to adhere to social distancing guidance when outside.

Test and Trace

8. The NHS Test and Trace service was launched on 28 May 2020 as part of the government's recovery strategy. Its primary objectives are to control the COVID-19 rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of infection and save lives.

9. Local authorities are required to work with partners to build on existing health protection plans, to put in place measures to identify and contain outbreaks and protect the public's health, and specifically to develop a Local Outbreak Control Plan by the end of June.
10. A draft Local Outbreak Control Plan has been produced in collaboration with key stakeholders and will be further developed to address gaps; confirm roles and responsibilities; carry out capacity planning and identify funding implications. This will also include a communications and engagement plan; data and intelligence to support daily monitoring; and local testing capabilities.
11. Local authorities are also required to have a public-facing board led by council members to communicate openly with the public. The Surrey Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) has been established and held its initial meeting on June 18th. This board is chaired by the Leader of Surrey County Council and is a sub-board of the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board.
12. Additionally, a Health Protection Operational Group (HPOG), responsible for strategic oversight of health protection regarding COVID-19 has been established in Surrey and held its initial meeting on 15 June. Reporting to the LOEB, its primary roles are the ongoing development and delivery of the Local Outbreak Control Plan; to work with the relevant Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Cells; and make recommendations to the LOEB on allocation of resources.
13. National government funding of £300m is being provided to local authorities in England. On 10 June it was announced that the funding is based on the 2020/21 Public Health Grant allocation, and for Surrey County Council it will be £3,477,690 paid in one instalment in June 2020. Surrey County Council is one of 11 authorities that are part of the Good Practice Network (GPN), set up to share learning and best practice, under the auspices of the National Outbreak Control Plans Advisory Board.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

14. Ensuring that carers and other front-line workers are provided with sufficient and appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) remains a priority for the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).
15. Organisations providing front line services including care continue to signal a demand for PPE that exceeds supplies received from central government. The County Council has procured supplies on behalf of the LRF, including bulk purchasing in order to ensure stocks are in place in the short term, and obtained at a price which reflects better value for money. To date, £4.5m has been spent or committed on PPE and included in our Delta financial returns to government.
16. We now need to put in place a sustainable operation for the provision of PPE across the County, which is affordable on an ongoing basis, but that crucially looks to ensure that:
 - Stocks are in place to support providers in extremis, for example where they have immediate and short-term requirements for additional PPE
 - We are prepared for a 'second wave' or major outbreak within the County in relation to PPE provision
17. As part of this work, we will need to establish the extent to which the County Council's procurement expertise and consolidated buying power can be used to assist provision of PPE, and the areas to which the cost will ultimately fall upon the

County Council rather than providers or other agencies themselves. A recommended approach will be brought forward to July's Cabinet for approval.

Continued support via the community helpline

18. Customer Services continue to focus resources on helping vulnerable residents during the COVID crisis. The Community Helpline set up in March has handled over 8,500 calls, 408 online forms and 99,262 web visits to date, and is operational 7 days per week. Feedback from residents has been overwhelmingly positive. Staffed mainly by Customer Services, and working closely with District and Borough colleagues and the National Shielded Helpline, we are continually reviewing the nature of our offer based on the changing needs of our residents. The helpline will play a role in supporting the Test and Trace programme going forwards.

Financial support to social care providers and Care Homes

19. The council has put in place an extensive range of financial support measures for Adult Social Care (ASC) providers to ensure market stability during this phase of the pandemic. The main offers of support include:
- Unconditional goodwill grant payments totalling £9m to all ASC providers that SCC commissions services from, equivalent to an extra 10% to cover additional costs providers are incurring in the period from April – June.
 - Home Based Care providers have received a 3-month payment in advance based on planned levels of care prior to the virus.
 - A 10% premium for all new home care packages supporting hospital discharges.
 - Services such as day care and outreach are being funded at previous levels even if the service is reduced or no longer being provided due to the pandemic.
 - The creation of a Joint Central Placements Team to efficiently source Older People nursing, residential and home-based care placements following hospital discharge across Surrey's whole health and social care system to support the new national discharge guidance.
20. On 13 May the government announced £600m of additional COVID-19 funding for ASC in the form of a ring-fenced Infection Control Grant. SCC will receive £19.2m of this funding. 75% has to be distributed to all care homes in Surrey that meet the grant conditions based on the number of registered beds in each home. SCC has greater discretion about how to spend the 25% to support infection control across Surrey's ASC system. Discussions are ongoing with the Surrey Care Association and other strategic partners about how to prioritise this funding to best effect within the remit of the grant conditions.
21. The Infection Control Grant is to be paid to SCC in two equal instalments. The first instalment was received on 27 May and 75% of this has been distributed to care homes as per the grant conditions. The remaining 25% will be allocated out imminently as soon as plans for how to spend this money have been confirmed. The second instalment is due to be paid in July and will be distributed in the same way to all providers that SCC has evidence to show are continuing to comply with the grant conditions.

Restart/restore activity

22. A multi-agency Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG), has been established within the Surrey Local Resilience Forum structure to coordinate the re-initiation and restarting of services and activities across the County in order to restore the

humanitarian, economic, environmental and infrastructure well-being, conditions and resilience of Surrey by:

- Restoring essential services that have been disrupted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated response measures (e.g. lockdown and social distancing)
- Ensuring the effective transition to a 'steady state', with clear responsibilities identified for the continuation of services
- Capturing longer term areas of possible 'regeneration and transformation' as well as lessons learned and referring them on to the relevant body/authority.

23. Examples of the work undertaken through a number of multi-agency, themed Sub-Groups, include:

Place, Travel and Transport

- The safe opening up of Community Recycling Centres and open spaces as well as restarting maintenance and improvement works on the highway,
- Planning and preparation around the opening of leisure centres, community centres, libraries etc.
- Promoting and enabling increased active travel through provision of additional space for pedestrians and cyclists (see below)
- Working with public transport providers around service capacity within the current restrictions, with 70% of commercial routes and 50% of supported routes back in operation (albeit at reduced passenger capacity due to social distancing requirements)
- Working to support homeless people in temporary accommodation, to prevent them from returning to living on the streets, including establishing a multi-agency working group to co-ordinate the necessary activity,

Active travel/Highways measures

24. The Government has established a £250m Emergency Active Travel Fund, with £225m for local authorities. The fund is aimed at supporting interventions that create a safer environment for walking and cycling, providing an alternative to public transport and enabling people to travel while remaining socially distanced.

25. Funding is being provided in two phases. Surrey's indicative allocation is £8.5m (£1.7m for phase 1 and £6.8m for phase 2). Funding allocations are indicative and dependent on the council demonstrating that it has plans which can be implemented quickly to support cyclists and pedestrians.

26. The initial phase of funding will be used for various smaller scale measures which could include closing roads to through traffic, segregated cycle lanes and improvements to footways. A comprehensive range of schemes is being developed by County Council Highway Officers, in consultation with Members, the relevant District/Borough Council and where appropriate Town or Parish Councils.

27. Priority schemes to enhance pedestrian facilities in Farnham, Godalming and Shere have already been delivered. Notwithstanding inevitable initial teething issues, the feedback has been positive. Later this month pedestrian/cycle improvements are due to be installed in Reigate, with other measures swiftly following across the County, with a focus on larger-scale, longer term schemes funded by the second phase £6.8million allocation.

Economy and Retail

28. Having regard to national schemes of support for businesses and those administered regionally through the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Districts and Borough Councils have been responsible for administering:
- c£206m of grants available to Surrey businesses, via the Small Business Grants Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund.
 - c£179m of 100% business rates reliefs to the Retail, Leisure, and Hospitality sector as well as Nursery provider's throughout Surrey.
 - c£10.3m of Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund, to accommodate certain small businesses previously outside the scope of the business grant funds scheme.
29. District and Borough Councils have also received grant funding to help meet COVID-19 pressures, some of which will have indirectly benefited businesses, such as £12.2m non-ring-fenced emergency funding (with decisions made locally on how best to meet pressures arising from COVID-19) and £1m for measures to assist re-opening high streets safely, to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers.
30. In addition, the Economy and Retail Sub-Group have worked with the Place, Travel and Transport Sub-Group to plan and coordinate the re-opening of non-essential retail from Monday 15th June and continue to do so in respect of those further sectors of the economy re-opening no sooner than 4 July, e.g. leisure, hospitality, etc.
31. The Group are also liaising with local businesses, business associations, DWP and the Surrey LEPS to develop an emerging understanding of the levels of unemployment across the County and in key sectors (e.g. aviation) as well as identifying growth sectors and liaising with education, skills and training providers with the aim of better matching future training opportunities with areas of need.

Health and Social Care

32. Comprehensive and well-established Recovery groups and activity within Surrey Heartlands and Frimley are leading partnership work across the Surrey health system, which, while much response activity dealing with Covid-19 continues, has focused in the immediate term on the following:
- Restoration of services including the use of independent sector hospitals for additional capacity as demand expressed for cancer treatment and urgent surgery is continuing to increase towards pre-Covid-19 levels,
 - Increasing confidence of and encouraging residents to seek medical support when required to ensure timely diagnosis, whilst encouraging those that can self-manage or receive appropriate support from a pharmacy etc to do so.
 - Addressing the increase in mental health referrals in both adults and children, particularly from those in crisis for the first time.
 - Developing a partnership between care homes and linked GPs, as well as virtual ward rounds.

Community, Voluntary and Faith sector (CVFS)

33. The CVFS Sub-Group have been contributing to the development of a broad Community Impact Assessment that will enable the assessment and analysis of the impacts and implications of Covid19 in different population groups, as well as by

theme (e.g. mental health,) and geographical location, so recovery actions can be more effectively targeted.

34. The Sub-Group are also:

- addressing capacity issues within the community, voluntary and faith sector and providing support, as well as linking new volunteers to appropriate groups providing support to the community, e.g. foodbanks and telephone befriending.
- working on how to harness the increased community spirit and large numbers of new local support groups established.
- liaising with faith leaders around the longer-term emotional and psychological impacts of bereavement and the most appropriate community memorials.

35. Work supporting Children and Younger People is being managed through existing and well-established multi-agency partnership arrangements – work areas include schools, domestic abuse, provision of services for vulnerable children and young people, looked after children and CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).

County Council assistance for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

36. Since the onset of the pandemic, voluntary, community and faith groups have faced significant challenges. The demand on their services has increased whilst many of their key income generating avenues have been depleted, placing them in a difficult and unsustainable position. To help the sector, the council put together a package of support including a three month rent free period for VCFS tenants in council buildings and the establishment of a Hardship Fund (grants of £5,000 and over) to support organisations experiencing financial hardship.

37. The level of demand from the VCFS for the Hardship Fund has not been as high as first anticipated. At the time of writing the panel has received 33 applications, 15 of which have been successful with a total of £228,602 awarded. The smallest amount of funding requested was for £5,000 with £70,542 being the largest. Funding has been awarded to support groups that have suffered a loss of income due to the suspension of fundraising activities, or tenants not being able to pay rent. It has also been awarded where a group has seen an increase in demand, including where this was a previously unmet need, and to meet costs associated with working from home as a result of social distancing measures.

38. The SCC Hardship Fund will close at the end of June and thought has been given to how best to support the VCFS over the longer term. It is difficult to predict exactly what the long-term impacts of COVID-19 will be, but following ongoing conversations with the VCFS and an initial impact assessment, it is clear that it remains a challenging environment, and that fundraising and income generating avenues continue to be impacted with expected further pressures due to the likely recession.

39. The Community Foundation Surrey (CFS) have established a second phase of their own Coronavirus Support Fund. They are recognised across the sector and Surrey as a leading and well-established Charitable body, with an extensive network and positive relationships with many CVFS bodies and a good understanding of the communities' needs and issues, as well as having sound financial systems for attracting funding and expertise in dispersing grants. It is therefore recommended that a contribution of £200,000 be made to CFS, for the purposes set out in their Coronavirus Support Fund.

40. Discussions will be held with the CFS to explore the opportunity to use the contribution to create a match-funded arrangement, resulting in a benefit significantly greater than £200,000 to support the VCF sector.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

41. Risk implications are stated throughout the report and COVID-19 related risks are managed through the Strategic Coordination Group governance structure.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY

1. In March and April 2020 the council received a general allocation of £47m from the COVID-19 Response Fund, to cover the costs and loss of income associated with the pandemic. Since then we have been indicatively allocated additional grants which are ring-fenced to deal with specific COVID-19 public health responses.
2. Any plans on how to spend the £19.2m of Infection Control Fund allocated to the council must meet the conditions set out in the grant determination. All of the funding will have to be spent by September 2020. Any unspent grant is at risk of clawback.
3. We have also been indicatively allocated £8.5m (£1.7m for phase 1 and £6.8m for phase 2) of the Emergency Active Travel Fund. A bid for the phase 1 funding has been submitted. However, there are number of challenges associated with delivering the projects, with this funding, if the bid is approved. For example, the work to deliver the projects need to start within 4 weeks of receiving funding and be completed within 8 weeks of commencing.
4. Test and Trace funding of £3.5m will be payable in one instalment in June. At the time of writing, the funding has not been received. Internal Audit sign off is required to validate its use in line with the conditions set out in the grant determination. A failure to comply with the grant conditions may result in funding being withheld, reduced, suspended or require the repayment of the whole or part of the grant.
5. To date we have awarded £0.229m of funding to the VCSF through the Hardship Fund set-up in response to the increased demand for services. If agreed, the £200,000 contribution to the Community Foundation Surrey Coronavirus Support Fund, to provide additional financial support to the VCSF, will be funded from COVID-19 Response Fund.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

6. The various initiatives described in the report have been the subject of specific legal advice and support in formulating and implementing the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure they are in accordance with the Council's powers, duties and responsibilities. There are no further specific legal implications arising in the report.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

7. The national picture for COVID-19 is shifting rapidly, and with new guidance coming from the government daily, we are continuing to assess the equality implications for residents and staff.

8. The Test and Trace programme will be crucial for managing complex cases, such as care home outbreaks, so protections for older and disabled people are strengthened. The programme will also be crucial for protecting residents who are more at risk from Covid-19 such as residents from black and minority ethnic groups.
 9. The Community Helpline is vital for supporting vulnerable residents as the Covid-19 crisis progresses. Its support role for the Test and Trace programme means its operation takes on added importance.
 10. The Infection Control Fund for ASC will be vital in supporting the council and care providers to strengthen measures to prevent infection and protect some of the most vulnerable older and disabled residents in Surrey's population.
 11. Investing in active travel will be particularly beneficial for some of our residents who may be more vulnerable to poor air quality or be involved in a road traffic accident, such as children, older people and residents with health conditions such as heart and respiratory problems.
 12. Although the Hardship Fund is due to close at the end of June, the council's contribution to the CFS's Coronavirus Support Fund will ensure that VCFS organisations who support residents from protected groups, and are experiencing financial difficulties, will be able to access support to continue providing vital services to those residents.
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Consulted:

- Cabinet Members
- Corporate Leadership Team and other staff

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