

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3207
TITLE:	COVID-19 - Update Report and Position statement	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix 1 - Council Response to COVID-19		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 This report sets out the Council's response to the COVID-19 emergency and the help and support it has provided to residents, partners, local businesses and staff.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

### **The Panel is asked to:**

- 2.1 Identify any areas of specific feedback that the Panel wishes to highlight relating to the Council's response; and
- 2.2 Agree the feedback that should be presented to the Council Cabinet on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May for consideration.

## **3 THE REPORT**

The attached report (Appendix 1) details how the Council has worked to protect the most vulnerable, support businesses and maintain local services in its response to the COVID-19 emergency. It also highlights the financial impact of the coronavirus on the Council and the need for additional funding to address the predicted £50m shortfall for services this year.

Sadly, there have been 79 COVID-19 related deaths of Bath & North East Somerset residents (as of week ending 8 May).

The Council has worked hard to respond to this public health emergency, streamlining its decision-making processes since declaring a major incident on 23 March. It has been supporting the community including vulnerable residents and local businesses whilst maintaining critical services from refuse collection to child-protection. Throughout we have been following Public Health England advice and guidance.

The Council's Leader and Chief Executive have written to residents explaining the financial situation and the report states that the government must honour its commitment to fund local authorities' response to the pandemic.

The report includes details of how the Council has responded to the needs of the most vulnerable during the pandemic. In partnership with Virgin Care, the CCG and 3SG, Council staff worked around the clock to set up the Compassionate Communities Hub. Based in Peasedown St John, the hub is providing advice and support to thousands of residents self-isolating, shielding or in need of help. It has received over **4,000** calls from people across Bath and North East Somerset and 3SG volunteers, which number over 2,400, have completed more than **800** tasks such as food shopping and collection of medicines.

The report also reveals that the Council has so far paid out over £33m in Business Support Grants. There are circa 3,500 businesses across Bath and North East Somerset that are eligible for this funding and approaching two thirds have now received payment.

Cabinet members will also be told about additional measures taken in response to COVID-19 including:

- Systemic changes in working practices with technology playing a crucial role and 1,500 staff working remotely each day
- Installation of temporary facilities at Haycombe Cemetery and Crematorium
- Introduction of online child protection conferences
- Provision of a virtual library to enable both children and adults to feed their thirst for literature
- Provision of virtual music lessons for school children
- Provision of loaned free e-bikes to key workers at Bath's RUH.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council's response forms a key part of the Policy and Budget Framework in the Council's constitution. The Council responded to the emergency using its emergency powers which are outlined in the constitution, and sets out the key priorities of the Council that have helped to guide its activity and decision-making.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 The report highlights the resourcing requirements and the implications of decisions undertaken whilst having to respond to the emergency.
- 5.2 Section 4 of the report highlights the emergency funding received by the Council and the anticipated financial impact the emergency is likely to have on the Council's overall financial position.
- 5.3 Section 7 of the report highlights the support given to staff during the emergency.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

## **7 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 7.1 The response to the COVID-19 emergency considered Climate emergency Issues where this was appropriate in any decisions linking to the already declared Climate Change Emergency. Clearly the Climate emergency will need to be considered in detail in our recovery plans

## **8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 None

## **9 CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 The Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources have been consulted on the drafting of this report as well as the Chief Executive, S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer.

<b>Contact person</b>	David Trethewey Director of Partnerships & Corporate Services
<b>Background papers</b>	
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	