

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Adults Social Care COVID-19 Response</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on Thursday, 17 December 2020
<b>WARD</b>	None Specific;
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Director, Adult Social Care and Health - Matt Pope
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services - Charles Margetts

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)**

This report seeks to gain agreement to a supplementary estimate to support the Council's response to COVID-19.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive:

- 1) agree the supplementary estimate, in support of the Council's response to COVID-19, of up to £500,000;
- 2) notes that work has already started in preparation and funding for this has been released by the Deputy Chief Executive (CFO) under emergency powers.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In September and October, the COVID-19 virus spread rapidly in all parts of the country. The government responded with new national restrictions which was replaced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December with a regionally-differentiated approach, where different tiers of restrictions apply in different parts of the country.

Returning to the Tier system, which allows for greater household mixing, increases the need for a concerted effort by all residents to follow government guidance in order to prevent a rise in community transmission rates.

To support our continued response to the pandemic, as we move out of the national restrictions, Adults Social Care is seeking a supplementary estimate of (up to) £500K. Funding to be released by the Deputy Chief Executive (CFO) in conjunction with the Director for Adult Social Care. This funding will support a number of initiatives across the Council including;

- Lateral Flow Testing; Care home visitors
- Contact tracing capacity
- COVID-19 vaccination programme

As the Council moves towards a new-normal, resources previously redeployed to Adults Social Care will need to return to their substantive roles. This will allow for some libraries and leisure facilities to partially reopen. Whilst this supports our communities to return to

a remanence of normality, and supports our wellbeing agenda, it will place additional pressure on our efforts to contain the COVID-19 virus.

This is an urgent decision as set out in paragraph 6.3.35 of the Council Constitution and therefore call-in provisions will not apply for this decision. The reason for the urgency is that any delay in the utilisation of these additional resources would seriously prejudice the public's interest. The Mayor has given his consent to the urgency provision and the matter will be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

## **BACKGROUND**

In September and October, the COVID-19 virus spread rapidly in all parts of the country. The government responded with new national restrictions which was replaced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December with a regionally-differentiated approach, where different tiers of restrictions apply in different parts of the country.

These tiers have been strengthened, compared to the previous tiers, in order to prevent a return to growing infections. Only a small number of local authorities have been placed in the lowest tier and Wokingham Borough Council is a Tier 2 local authority. This is for areas with a higher or rapidly rising level of infections, where some additional restrictions need to be in place. Tiers are reviewed by the government weekly.

The weekly rates of COVID 19 cases are responsive to the public health restrictions that are in place. During the November period of lockdown Wokingham Borough saw weekly rates decrease from a peak of 154.9 per 100,000 people, to 132.7 per 100,000 (as at 9/12/2020).

Returning to the Tier system, which allows for greater household mixing, increases the need for a concerted effort by all residents to follow government guidance in order to prevent a rise in community transmission rates. Significant work is being undertaken to develop the delivery of rapid tests within the Borough, provide a local case contacting service and to support the roll out of vaccination, however these areas of work will have a lead in time before they can be expected to have an impact on the population case rate. Concerted public health efforts across the Local Authority will need to be maintained through this period.

## **BUSINESS CASE**

To support our continued response to the pandemic, as we move out of the national restrictions, Adults Social Care is seeking a supplementary estimate of (up to) £500K. This funding will predominately support additional staffing for a number of initiatives across the Council including;

- Lateral Flow Testing; Care home visiting
- Contact tracing capacity
- COVID-19 vaccination programme

### **Lateral Flow Testing: Care homes visitors**

Rapid-turnaround Lateral Flow Tests have been provided to enable local teams to direct and deliver community testing based on local knowledge. Wokingham Borough Council can request lateral flow devices to be used to test priority groups.

Proactively testing asymptomatic individuals will help identify those who unknowingly have the virus and enable those who test positive and their contacts to self-isolate. This is crucial to break the chains of transmission of the virus. With lower rates of transmission, those at highest risk from the virus will be more protected and residents will feel more confident in getting back to their day-to-day lives.

It is proposed that additional funding is utilised to support the rollout of a local pilot to support local care homes with their Lateral Flow Testing. Visiting is a central part of care home life. It is crucially important for maintaining health and wellbeing and quality of life for residents. Visiting is also vital for family and friends to maintain contact and life-long relationships with their loved ones and contribute to their support and care.

Under Tier 2, visits to care homes can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. The government has announced that regular testing will be offered to up to two family members or friends per resident by Christmas, which – when combined with other infection-control measures such as PPE and Perspex screens – will support indoor visits and very limited physical contact.

### **Contact tracing capacity**

Case Tracing is a local scheme that is part of the wider NHS Test and Trace service. If residents receive notification of a positive COVID test result, NHS Test and Trace will attempt to contact residents to identify who they have been in contact with, and subsequently advise them that they need to self-isolate. If the NHS Test and Trace service cannot make contact with the WBC resident, this data is passed to WBC's local case tracing team. Local and national performance in Wokingham is strong. The contact tracing success rate in Wokingham Borough is currently 90%.

The data is received 7 days a week, the national data is cleansed by WBC's Data Cell and local intelligence used to support successful contact tracing, it is then passed to a member of the WBC's local contact tracing team to make contact via telephone call in the first instance. If repeat telephone calls are unsuccessful within 24 hours, this passes to the face to face team, so that a visit to the residents known address can be made instead.

It is proposed that additional funding is utilised to support the continuation of the Local Case Tracing service and develop a further element of self-isolation support through early contact, intervention to aid compliance.

### **COVID-19 vaccination programme**

In the UK, there are two types of COVID-19 vaccine to be used once they are approved. They both require two doses to provide the best protection. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), an independent expert group, has recommended that the NHS offers these vaccines first to those at highest risk of catching the infection and of suffering serious complications if they catch the infection. This includes older adults, frontline health and social care workers, care home residents and staff, and those with certain clinical conditions. When more vaccine becomes available, the vaccines will be offered to other people at risk as soon as possible.

To date, Wokingham has been allocated a limited number of vaccination for care home residents and staff. This is a programme being led by the NHS, supported by the local authority. As the programme starts to extended and expanded, and as more vaccines become available, could be asked to provide additional support to our partners and this will require additional resource to manage and coordination the programme locally.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION**

As the Council moves towards a new-normal, resources previously redeployed to Adults Social Care will need to return to their substantive roles. This will allow for some libraries and leisure facilities to partially reopen. Whilst this supports our communities to return to a remanence of normality, and supports our wellbeing agenda, it will place additional pressure on our efforts to contain the COVID-19 virus.

The funding provided will support the Council to meet the programmes identified above.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Up to £500,000		Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

<b>Other Financial Information</b>
None

<b>Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation</b>
None

<b>Public Sector Equality Duty</b>
Due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been taken.

<b>Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i></b>
Not applicable

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
None

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