

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 18 May 2020

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Ward All

Lead member: Councillor James Swindlehurst, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Strategy

PART 1 **NON KEY DECISION**

SBC RESPONSE TO COVID 19

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To set out the response from the Council to the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. **Recommendation**

2.1 Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- a) That the Council's response to Coronavirus to minimise the impact on our communities be noted;
- b) That the risk register be noted; and
- c) That the next steps be agreed noting the separate report on recovery and renewal.

2. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy 2020-24**

Coronavirus has the potential to impact on the delivery of all of the Wellbeing Board's priorities:

1. Starting Well
2. Integration
3. Strong, Healthy and Attractive Neighbourhoods (Building Community Asset Resilience)
4. Workplace Health

However the response to the crisis has demonstrated the strength of community and partnership working.

3. **Five Year Plan 2020-24 Outcomes**

Coronavirus has the potential to impact on the delivery of all of the Five Year Plan's priority outcomes:

Outcome 1 Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful

Outcome 2 Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs

Outcome 3 Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay

Outcome 4 Our residents will live in good quality homes

Outcome 5 Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents

4. **Other Implications**

- (a) **Financial** –There are no financial implications associated with the proposed actions, beyond Coronavirus itself. A separate report is being submitted on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (b) **Risk Management** – There are no identified risks to the proposed actions, beyond the risks highlighted in the attached risk register at Appendix B. This uses the council's corporate methodology to ensure that risks are identified and assessed in a consistent manner. The council's Risk and Audit Board will be asked to review the risks identified and agree mitigating actions.
- (c) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications** - There are no Human Rights Act implications associated with the proposed actions.
- (d) **Equalities Impact Assessment** - There is no requirement to complete an Equalities Impact Assessment in relation to this report.

5. **Supporting information**

National context

- 5.1 The coronavirus outbreak began in China in December, and began to spread rapidly across the world throughout January and February. The number of cases detected in the UK accelerated markedly in early March and the Government started to implement measures to protect people and the economy.
- 5.2 Schools were closed from 20th March, as well as all pubs, restaurants, gyms and other social venues. This was followed on 23rd March by the announcement of the nationwide lockdown - requiring the public to stay at home, and only go out if they have a reasonable excuse - such as exercise, shopping for basic necessities, medical needs, providing care for a vulnerable person or travelling to or from work.
- 5.3 The Government is expected to publish details of a phased approach to lifting the lockdown in the next few weeks, but has warned that restrictions will stay in place until its 'five tests' are met:

1. The NHS can cope.
 2. There is a sustained and consistent fall in the daily death rate from coronavirus,
 3. The rate of infection is decreasing to manageable levels across the board.
 4. Operational challenges are in hand with supply able to meet future demand.
 5. Any adjustments will not risk a second peak of infections.
- 5.4 As of 28th April, there have been 157,149 confirmed cases of coronavirus nationally and 21,092 official coronavirus-related deaths. The Prime Minister has stated that the evidence suggests that the country is now past the peak of the virus.
- 5.5 Since the beginning of the crisis the Government has outlined a range of special measures to support the population, business and councils, including:
- Additional funding to support local authorities.
 - The creation of an NHS list of 'shielded' vulnerable citizens, with underlying conditions who are at higher risk.
 - The creation of local authority-led hubs, to provide support to shielded residents.
 - The establishment of a suite of grants, loans and business rates relief to support businesses.
 - A coronavirus job retention scheme, to allow workers to be furloughed at 80% of their salary.
- 5.6 Nationally, there are still many key challenges to be addressed, including the availability of testing and of PPE, and the ability to conduct effective contact tracing.

SBC Response

- 5.7 We have set out our council response as a strategy on a page – see attached at Appendix A.
- 5.8 As a Council we have –
- Moved swiftly to manage the crisis and implement business continuity arrangements
 - Identified critical services and ensured capacity to maintain these (monitoring each of these on a daily basis)
 - Maintained key universal services including uninterrupted weekly waste collection and disposal, grounds maintenance and the Household Waste and Recycling Centre
 - Set up task groups to ensure support to those that need it most across adult social care, children's services and housing
 - Established a hub at Langley and a dedicated team to coordinate requests for support
 - Prioritised PPE
 - Enabled staff to work from home wherever possible
 - Ensured robust governance through daily GOLD/SILVER meetings during the initial period and twice weekly meetings from w/c 20 April
 - Coordinated activity through a central Operations Room (7 days a week)

- Maintained communications to staff, councillors and communities
- Ensured staff are supported through regular communication with messages from the Chief Executive and the Senior Leadership Team, with clear direction to sources of support available.
- Participated in the regional response across the Thames Valley and all regional meetings.

6. **Comments of other committees**

6.1 This report has not been considered by any other committees.

7. **Conclusion**

7.1 The impacts of Coronavirus have been felt across every aspect of the council's services and across the entire community.

7.2 Our focus as a council has always been about addressing the needs of our communities and ensuring that the most vulnerable in our society get the support they need. We have put in place robust plans to respond to the crisis and protect our most vulnerable residents.

7.3 A separate report to Cabinet sets our recovery and renewal planning.

8. **Appendices attached**

A – Strategy on a page
B - Risk register

9. **Background papers**

None