

ANGUS COUNCIL

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE – 28 APRIL 2020

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE ANGUS RESPONSE TEAM (HAART) FOR ANGUS

REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**ABSTRACT**

This report seeks to develop the Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HAC) for Angus, now known as the Humanitarian Assistance Angus Response Team (HAART), following a nation-wide initiative in light of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee agrees:-

- (i) to note the action taken so far and further proposals detailed in this report to extend the Humanitarian Assistance (HAART) for Angus and the provision of services as outlined in this report to vulnerable individuals beyond those identified by Scottish Government as being in need of 'shielding';
- (ii) to note the use by the Chief Executive of the delegated emergency power as detailed in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of this report;
- (iii) to delegate authority to the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform, following consultation with the Chief Executive, to continue to enable the delivery of emergency service provision to vulnerable adults and families beyond the 'shielding' group for a period of up to six months in the first instance;
- (iv) to delegate authority to the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform, following consultation with the Chief Executive, to determine how the Council's share of the Scottish Government's Food Fund (£602,000) is used;
- (v) to delegate authority to the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform, following consultation with the Chief Executive, to put in place a transparent and robust governance framework with appropriate controls and in accordance with the Scottish Government Food Fund Guidance 2020 to allow the delivery of the delivery of emergency service provision as outlined in recommendation (iii) above and as further detailed in this report;
- (vi) to note that the delegation detailed in recommendation (iii) above will be limited to the use of the Council's share of the Scottish Government's Food Fund;
- (vii) to note that in the event of the aid Food Fund proving to be insufficient, a further report will be brought to Committee outlining proposals for the necessary reallocation of existing Council budgets subject to establishing appropriate controls and operational delivery mechanisms in relation to this spend; and
- (vi) to note that regular formal progress reports on this matter will be brought to members, of this committee while it exists, supplemented by informal email updates when appropriate.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 As part of a national effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 and to save lives, on 17 March the First Minister announced: "*The third and final step is to shield the most vulnerable – by which I mean specifically people with compromised immune systems. GPs and other healthcare workers will be contacting these patients to ensure they are fully supported.*"

2.2 The six categories of people determined to be at highest risk of severe illness from Covid-19 and therefore requiring shielding measures to be established are set out below:-

1. Solid organ transplant recipients.
2. People with specific cancers: -
  - People with cancer who are undergoing active chemotherapy or radical radiotherapy for lung cancer.
  - People with cancers of the blood or bone marrow such as leukaemia, lymphoma or myeloma who are at any stage of treatment.
  - People having immunotherapy or other continuing antibody treatments for cancer.
  - People having other targeted cancer treatments which can affect the immune system, such as protein kinase inhibitors or PARP inhibitors.
  - People who have had bone marrow or stem cell transplants in the last 6 months, or who are still taking immunosuppression drugs.
3. People with severe respiratory conditions including all cystic fibrosis, severe asthma and severe COPD.
4. People with rare diseases and inborn errors of metabolism that significantly increase the risk of infections (such as SCID, homozygous sickle cell).
5. People on immunosuppression therapies sufficient to significantly increase risk of infection.
6. People who are pregnant with significant congenital heart disease.

2.3 Reference is made to report 124/20 to the Special Council meeting on 3 April 2020 where members agreed that local services would be prioritised for these high risk individuals – to protect them, to reduce the loss of life from Covid-19, and to reduce the burden on the NHS in responding to patients who are likely to become severely unwell should they be infected. Following the Special Council meeting, 2549 people in Angus have now been identified as being in need of ‘shielding’ for a period of 12 weeks. We have received the datasets from NHS and have matched the information with our own locally held data sets. Many of the people in scope are already known to us, however, we will need to reach out to others in order to ensure they have appropriate support arrangements in place.

2.4 Local resilience partnerships, which are in place for civil contingencies, are required to establish Humanitarian Assistance Centres (HAC) or an equivalent local arrangement. In Angus this is now branded as the Humanitarian Assistance Angus Response Team (HAART). These are a multi-agency facilities established to meet the needs of individuals and communities. The HAART will support all of those directly affected by emergencies including survivors, the bereaved, families, friends and relatives of those affected, the wider community and staff. The early priorities will be to ensure that people who need to self-isolate have access to deliveries of food and medicines, and that people who need to can access healthcare services without putting themselves at risk.

2.5 As set out in the “Preparing Scotland” guidance, the HAART should:-

- act as a focal point for gathering and disseminating information and advice;
- provide a single point of access to services and support offered by all of the agencies caring for people;
- allow people to make informed choices according to their needs;
- ensure a seamless multi-agency approach to care for people to minimise duplication and avoid gaps in provision;
- ensure that support is provided by those best able to meet people’s needs;
- monitor individual and community needs; and, where necessary; and
- gather evidence to assist investigations and identification processes.

### 3. PROPOSAL

3.1 Matters in respect of Humanitarian assistance are progressing at pace across Angus. It became increasingly apparent that those in need of assistance went beyond those identified by Scottish Government as being in need of ‘shielding’ and it became vital to extend our offer of assistance to the wider community. A partnership between Angus Council, Angus Health and Social Care

Partnership, Angus Alive, Voluntary Action Angus, Foodbanks and Angus Carers has been established to support people with food, medicines and befriending which is vital to ensure movement restriction.

- 3.2 A telephone contact number has been established for those people in need of 'shielding' and arrangements are being made nationally in respect of food deliveries for this cohort who have been asked to remain at home for 12 weeks. This is our first priority group and report 124/20 refers. There is now a pressing need to provide a formal delegation to the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector Reform in consultation with the Chief Executive so as to continue to provide the service to others not in the 'shielding' group but who are still vulnerable due to personal circumstances, restricted movement arrangements and require COVID-19 isolation measures.
- 3.3 Due to the fast paced nature of events and the urgent need to continue to establish and extend the HAART so that it includes the provision of emergency services to vulnerable persons beyond those in the group identified by Scottish Government, but who are assessed as being in need by our social work service, the Chief Executive used *the Chief Executive's Delegated Power Number 5* to do this –

This power provides:

*'in an emergency, to initiate action under any statutory procedure related to a function of the Council, subject to a report being made to the appropriate Committee at the first opportunity on any item for which Committee approval would normally be necessary;'*

Approval is now being sought from Council to continue to provide the HAART in this way which is to extend the provision of services (as outlined below) to vulnerable individuals beyond those identified by Scottish Government as being in need of 'shielding'. This is the first opportunity to bring this report to committee for consideration.

- 3.4 The HAART will provide support to other vulnerable groups as further detailed in paragraph 5.4 with food, shopping and deliveries, collection and delivery of vital medicines from local pharmacies, emotional support, befriending phone calls to members of the community feeling vulnerable through the period of lockdown and links with existing services to provided support and assistance. Investigation of how best to address transport needs is continuing. This will help to ensure that the wider group of vulnerable people and families can receive help. The resource will also be used to support families of children in receipt of free school meals and arrangements are already in place with banks to make direct payments to families in this group.
- 3.5 Members are being asked to delegate authority to the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation & Public Sector reform in consultation with the Chief Executive to continue to establish and operate the HAART in conjunction with other partners to enable the delivery of emergency service provision to vulnerable adults and families beyond those identified by the Scottish Government as being in need of 'shielding' for a period of six months, subject to providing progress updates to members when appropriate.
- 3.6 To maximise the efficient deployment of resources and to avoid duplication the co-ordination and integration of HAART activity with our neighbouring councils and the Local Resilience Partnership is also being explored.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 This report outlines the need to extend the HAART in Angus to people beyond the 'shielding' group, in order to best respond to emerging needs for people as a consequence of the Coronavirus.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 A £30m food fund, provided by the Scottish Government for organisations to address food insecurity, is to be delivered through Councils. The guidance does point to supporting free

school meal provision and communities at risk (non-shielded) as well as supporting households who may experience barriers to accessing food. Funding support of £10m is also being made available to Third Sector partners which will be used to support the HAART. The Angus share of the £30m fund is £602,000.

- 5.2 The national delivery of food to those people who are shielding consists of a basic provision which is likely to need to be supplemented in terms of nutritional balance and for special dietary requirements. It is likely that additional provision will therefore be required to be resourced from this fund.
- 5.3 It is not currently possible to estimate what the financial implications of establishing and operating the HAART will be, but officers will take this forward within the additional funding that is being made available from Government for COVID-19 response and if required by reallocating existing Council budgets in consultation with Service Directors to support this. In the event that the Council's contingency funding needs to be accessed members will be asked to provide approval for such action unless it is of a nature which necessitates Chief Executive's Delegated Power Number 5 being applied.
- 5.4 The Scottish Government has recently published guidance [FOOD FUND: GUIDANCE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES \(APRIL 2020\)](#) which includes scoping information around who may be considered in vulnerable and isolated groups. It should be noted that appropriate controls and operational delivery mechanisms will be developed in relation to this spend that are consistent with that Scottish Government Food Fund guidance publication to ensure the Council's expenditure is aligned to supporting those citizens for whom it is intended. This approach will also take cognisance of other related legislation (existing and new) which is connected to this complex work to ensure the Council's response is tailored and responsive to the needs of our Angus Citizens.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Corporate Leadership Team have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 The recommendations in this report will have no negative differential impact on persons with protected characteristics.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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