

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**17 DECEMBER 2020**

**ANGUS COUNCIL WINTER 2020 AND COVID19 RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS**

**REPORT BY MARGO WILLIAMSON – CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**ABSTRACT**

The report advises Council of the ongoing response to Covid19 and the operational arrangements that have been put in place to manage the potential worst-case scenario and concurrent resilience risks over winter 2020 and in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic.

**1. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

It is recommended that the Council:

- (i) Note the ongoing response to Covid19.
- (ii) Note the operational arrangements that have been put in place to manage potential concurrent worst-case scenario resilience risks over winter 2020 in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic.
- (iii) Note the impact that these arrangements could have on council services over the winter period.
- (iv) Delegate to the Chief Executive the powers outlined in paragraph five of this report.
- (v) Note that update reports will be provided to Council as appropriate.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/COUNCIL PLAN**

This report contributes to the following strategic priorities in the Angus Council Plan:

We want:-

- Angus to be a go-to area to do business
- To maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities
- Our communities to be strong, resilient and led by citizens
- Angus Council to be efficient and effective

**3. BACKGROUND**

[Report 217/20](#), and its associated [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#) provided members with an overview on Angus Council's response to the first UK wave of the COVID-19 pandemic detailing its impact and outlining proposals in terms of recovery and renewal. Information on the continuing response to Covid19 is also detailed within this report.

In recent weeks senior officers have assessed the potential worst-case scenario and concurrent resilience risks facing Angus Council and its communities as we move into winter, combined management of the pandemic in our communities.

**4. CURRENT POSITION**

COVID-19 is a global health emergency, and transmission of the virus remains prevalent within our communities. Data from the World Health Organisation intimates that Covid-19 will remain in our communities for a considerable time, and as such planning for Test and Protect is being scheduled into 2022.

The welcome and recent announcement of a global mass vaccination programme scheduled to commence in December 2020 is also underway.

Council services continue to respond to the increasing pressures of the pandemic, alongside the delivery of mainstream services. This response work includes the following activity:

- Increasing demands on health and social care services, specifically care at home.
- An increase in referrals and demands on children, families and justice services
- The Angus response to Covid19 with the third sector through the Community Planning Partnership to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Schools continue to be open to support the learning and development of our young people.
- The request for additional enforcement, inspections and support via environmental health and consumer protection.
- A significant increase in online requests and calls for support and assistance through the contact centre, including outbound calls to those isolating.
- The management and co-ordination of an increasing number of Scottish Government grant schemes, (individuals and businesses) with competing timelines for publication, completion of the application process and the parameters for the awarding criteria.
- Digital services supporting our agile approach and the development of online applications and processes.
- Housing allocations and repairs.
- Delivery of waste and park services.
- The Council's Gold and Silver Incident Management teams meeting weekly.
- The Council Emergency Centre supporting the response to Covid19.
- The production of weekly situation reports for elected members and trade unions.
- The Tayside Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) meeting every two weeks. This is now chaired by Angus Council's chief executive.
- Various subgroups of the LRP are progressing critical areas of work including:
  - Additional deaths planning.
  - Test & protect, (including allocation of mobile testing units).
  - Mass vaccination plans and resourcing.
  - Care for people
  - Renewal & recovery
  - Public communications
  - Production of plans and guidance.
- The Chief Executive attends the Public Health Incident Management Team, which meets to scrutinise and forecast cases, acute hospital beds, and the number of positive tests.
- Angus Council representation on the Tayside Mass Vaccination Programme Board and subgroups, all of which is progressing at pace.
- Introduction of AngusAlive services on phased basis.
- Extension of the furlough scheme for AngusAlive.
- Financial management of Scottish Government funding for local authorities for specific areas of work and delivery of services.
- Assessment of EU Exit on existing demands and specifically supply chains.
- Public communications and the #stickwithittayside campaign.
- Continuing to promote the [Protect Scotland App](#).
- Debriefs being undertaken to establish good practice and where improvements can be made.
- The health, safety and wellbeing of employees and services users to ensure compliance with Covid19 regulations.
- Engagement with trade unions

Given the ongoing response and the competing demands for service, consideration has been given to the immediate and medium-term resource requirements to provide reassurance that the Council, as a Category 1 responder, is prepared to effectively manage the reasonable worst-case scenario over the next 6 months.

Based on the analysis of the current situation and the projected worst-case scenario the Chief Executive has made a number of decisions relating to operational matters, primarily regarding the deployment of staff to ensure the preparedness of the Council. These decisions have a range of impacts on all council services.

The preparedness arrangements that have put in place can be summarised as the operating environment experienced during lockdown in spring 2020 with the associated redeployment of resources, suspension of business as usual and reprioritisation of council activity.

The key decisions to note are:

- (i) Adoption of the Tayside LRP Outbreak Management Plan, as approved by the LRP, Appendix 1 as the operating model for managing Covid19 outbreaks in Angus.
- (ii) That employees in identified non-essential services being redeployed temporarily to provide organisational resilience where it is required as a priority. The identified essential services that will be retained as a priority are listed in Appendix 2.

## **5. PROPOSALS**

Council is recommended to note the ongoing response to Covid19 and arrangements that have been put in place and to note the impact that these arrangements could have on council services over the winter period. In terms of the ongoing response to Covid19 and the potential worst-case scenario, Council is also recommended to grant the following delegation to the Chief Executive, for further sub-delegation as required, in the event that urgent action is required to be taken without time for recourse to elected members for approval. The Chief Executive will keep the Leader of the Administration and of the Leader of the main Opposition informed of such actions.

- (i) “Subject to existing officer delegations already in place, and only where there is urgency and a decision cannot wait until the next meeting of the Council or the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee to take or arrange to be taken such action as is required in accordance with the Council's statutory powers, in terms of the response to Covid19 and/or any other concurrent emergency, whether weather related or otherwise, including the incurring of expenditure:
  - i. to maintain, reduce or increase statutory services;
  - ii. to support the emergency services and other organisations involved in the immediate response;
  - iii. to provide support services for the community and others affected by the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - iv. to enable the community to recover and return to normality as quickly as possible;
  - v. to provide aid to other local authorities; and/or
  - vi. to take such other action, which in the reasonable opinion of the Chief Executive is required

This delegation is granted subject in all instances to a report being made to Council or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee at the first opportunity on any item for which Council or Committee or Sub-Committee approval would normally be necessary.”

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It is expected that all actions will be able to be delivered through existing budget resources and any further assistance from additional Scottish Government Covid19 Grants which may be received. This position will be kept under review and members will be asked to approve any exceptional expenditure which can't be met from existing budgets.

The recommendations could however impact on the delivery of non-essential services which may in turn have unforeseen financial implications for future budgets.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

It will be important to ensure continued compliance with government advice and guidance on public health matters. All resilience response arrangements will be assessed for equality implications as well as the Fairer Scotland duty, as appropriate.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

All Angus Council directorates and Angus Health and Social Care Partnership have contributed to this report.

**NOTE:** The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

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List of Appendices:

Appendix 1	Tayside LRP Outbreak Management Plan
Appendix 2	Prioritised essential council services