

CABINET  
15 JULY 2009

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### **SWINE INFLUENZA UPDATE**

#### **Executive Summary**

Pandemic Influenza is recognised in the UK National Risk Register as the highest risk to the country due to its catastrophic impact and probable likelihood. Commensurate with this rating the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum has been actively involved in Pandemic Influenza planning and preparation for a number of years.

At the end of April 2009 the World Health Organisation (WHO) detected an emerging strain of A type influenza virus H1N1 originating from Mexico. Known as Swine Flu, this virus was identified as having the potential to become a pandemic, as the majority of the population would have little or no immunity to it.

On 11 June 2009 the WHO declared Pandemic Alert Phase 6 confirming a global pandemic of Swine Influenza.

At the time of writing there are over approx 60,000 cases of Swine Flu world wide and with approximately 6000 cases in the UK and 10 laboratory confirmed cases within Wiltshire although this is expected to rise.

The Cabinet should recognise the continued threat of the Swine Flu pandemic and endorse the continued need to plan and build resilience in preparation for the predicted increase of numbers and impact.

#### **Proposal**

The Cabinet considers the update report, providing comment as necessary and endorses the overall pandemic response and future planning proposals.

#### **Reason for Proposal**

This update report by has been prepared by the Joint Director of Public Health to provide an essential briefing on the current impact and future planning implications of the Swine Influenza pandemic.

**Maggie Rae**

Joint Director of Public Health

**George Batten**

Director of Transport Environment and Leisure

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## **SWINE INFLUENZA UPDATE**

### **UPDATE AND PROGRESS ON THE SWINE INFLUENZA RESPONSE**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To update the Cabinet on the Swine Influenza pandemic, including progress on local planning and response.

#### **Background**

2. An Influenza Pandemic has been recognised in the UK National Risk Register as the highest risk to the country due to its catastrophic impact and probable likelihood for considerable period of time. Commensurate with this rating the Emergency Planning Service of Wiltshire Council has been actively involved in Pandemic Influenza and excess deaths planning and preparation for a number of years. Wiltshire NHS is leading the multi agency planning and response arrangements on behalf of partner agencies within the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum.
3. At the end of April 2009 the World Health Organisation (WHO) detected a new emerging strain of A type influenza virus known as H1N1. The virus originated in from Mexico and became widely known as Swine Flu. As a new strain of the virus 'Swine Flu' was quickly recognised by national experts as having the potential to reach pandemic levels, as the vast majority of the world's population would have little or no immunity to it.
4. On the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009 the WHO declared Pandemic Alert Phase 6 confirming a global pandemic of Swine Flu.

#### **Current Situation**

5. The total number of confirmed cases of Swine Flu is increasing at a rapid rate. At the time of writing there are over approx 60,000 cases of Swine Flu world wide and with over 4,000 cases in the UK and 10 laboratory confirmed cases within Wiltshire although this is expected to rise.

#### **Main Considerations for the Cabinet**

6. The Health Incident Coordinating Centre (HICC) at the NHS Wiltshire headquarters at Southgate House has been running since the outbreak first commenced at the end of April 2009 and continues to manage local cases of Swine Flu in conjunction with the Health Protection Agency's regional Flu Response Centre in Bristol.

7. The Local Resilience Forum in holding weekly teleconference updates to oversee the Swine Flu response and the local health agencies are keeping partner organisations well informed of any changes in situation and preparing for eventualities such as an outbreak in a Wiltshire school.
8. At the Strategic Local Resilience Forum meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009 the executive representatives agreed a new proposed Local Resilience work stream focussing the group's resources on planning for pandemic's possible effects, including mass antiviral distribution, excess deaths, fuel or utility disruption and the provision of a vaccination program when available.
9. Predicting the spread and impact of a new virus is a difficult process monitoring of H1N1 activity is ongoing at all levels of response. In line with advice received via the Government Office South West and the Department of Health we continue to refine and build resilience into our pandemic plans and prepare our staff for the possible implications of Swine Flu.
10. Wiltshire Council is responsible for planning for and responding to the implications of excess deaths i.e. those deaths caused by a pandemic over and above the normal death rate.

#### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

11. As the number of bodies that may have to be buried could by far exceed normal burial rates, an environmental impact assessment on suitable cemeteries will need to be carried out to ensure that there are no adverse effects to water supplies within Wiltshire as a result of this increase..

#### **Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal**

12. One of the main focuses of the planning and response to Swine Flu is ensuring we meet the needs of the vulnerable.
13. During the planning process much consideration has been given to ensuring that information regarding Swine Flu and in particular antiviral medication is available and accessible to all members of the community. The Local Resilience Forum is leading on engaging the community in all elements of the response.
14. An important facet of the excess deaths planning process is to ensure that the deceased are treated in accordance with their appropriate religious and cultural rites and customs. To this end the faith community is closely involved in assisting the Emergency Planning Service with the development of excess deaths arrangements

#### **Risk Assessment**

15. Potentially very large numbers of community unwell putting increased strain on local health and welfare services.

16. Increase in virility of the Swine Flu virus causing excess deaths within Wiltshire and the implementation of business continuity measures and plans to manage the a high number of fatalities.
17. The commitment of all Category 1 organisations to the planning and joint response is vital mitigate the consequences of the Swine Flu pandemic.
18. A Business Continuity failure, through a lack of staff or other secondary threat, leading to a direct issue with critical service delivery

### **Financial Implications**

19. Financial implications are likely due to the following:
  - Staff training requirements and purchase of personal protective equipment.
  - Resourcing to increase organisational resilience.
  - Increase on social care demand.
  - Mutual aid and support in Swine Flu response coordinated by the Local Resilience Forum.
  - The implementation of business continuity plans and procedures.
  - Engaging consultants to carry out the environmental impact assessment for increased burials
  - The advance procurement of equipment and resources necessary to mount an effective response
  - The procurement of body holding premises, staffing and resources to maintain an effective response

### **Legal Implications**

20. Wiltshire Council has a legal duty under the Public Health Act to provide public mortuaries Implicit within this is the responsibility to provide, manage, staff and resource body holding facilities in response to a pandemic situation.
21. There is a statutory duty on Wiltshire Council as a Category 1 responder under the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to plan for emergencies.

### **Options Considered**

22. Planning and response to the Swine Influenza pandemic is statutory function.

### **Conclusion**

23. The Cabinet should recognise the continued threat of the Swine Flu pandemic and endorse the continued need to plan and build resilience in preparation for the predicted increase of numbers and impact.