

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**13 October 2020**

---

**Subject: COVID-19 Update**

**Cabinet Member: Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military Civilian Integration and Communications**

**Key Decision: Non-Key**

---

#### **Executive Summary**

This report provides a summary of activity to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus in Wiltshire since the last update to Cabinet in September. There is extensive work underway on local outbreak management; support for business, the new kickstart scheme and rollout of self-isolation payments; support for vulnerable groups and care homes; and close working with schools and transport providers continues.

#### **Proposal(s)**

Cabinet are asked to

- Note the current impact of COVID-19 in Wiltshire and encourage all residents to download the NHS Test and Trace app on their phone.
- Note changes in national policy and the work underway within the four Recovery Coordinating Group themes and on Organisation Recovery.
- Endorse the proposed approach of the council towards events in the county to ensure protection of population health and reduce the risk of increasing viral transmission (paras 19-22).

#### **Reason for Proposal(s)**

Wiltshire Council continues to work closely with partners to deliver in a rapidly changing environment.

While Wiltshire Council and Government have new powers to prohibit events if they present a risk to public health, it is necessary for event organisers to take responsibility. It is regrettable that the council is unable to support events at this time, but this recommendation has been made to protect the health of Wiltshire residents.

**Terence Herbert  
Chief Executive**

## Wiltshire Council

### Cabinet

13 October 2020

---

**Subject:** COVID-19 Update

**Cabinet Member:** Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Military Civilian Integration and Communications

**Key Decision:** Non-Key

---

### Purpose of Report

1. To provide a summary of activity to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus in Wiltshire since the last update to Cabinet in September.

### Background

2. As of Friday 25 September 2020, 364,280 people in the England had tested positive for COVID-19. Further information is available [online](#). The [ONS](#) suggest that as of 11 September there were 51,917 registered COVID-19 deaths across England and Wales. In Wiltshire, there have now been 1,610 people who have tested positive for COVID-19. The rate of positive cases in Wiltshire is 322 per 100,000 population which is lower than the England rate which is 647 per 100,000 population. Up to the 11 September, 368 registered deaths involving COVID-19 in all settings in Wiltshire had occurred (207 in care homes, 138 in hospital, 20 at home and 3 in hospices). Further information on weekly mortality is available from [ONS](#).

### Main Considerations for the Council

3. Since the last update to Cabinet the reproduction rate of the virus (the r number) nationally has moved above 1. As a result the Prime Minister [announced](#) on 22 September a tightening of some restrictions, which are being considered in all aspects of the council's recovery work. Government also launched the new test and trace app and [announced](#) further measures from 28 September to ensure people self-isolate when required, as well as requirements for businesses which are being followed up by the council's environment health officers.
4. Alongside these new measures, those asked to self-isolate, cannot work from home and are on a low income, may be entitled to a one-off payment of £500 through the Test and Trace Support Payment. Local authorities are required to have arrangements in place to pay this from 12 October (eligibility from 28 September) and whilst final guidance only arrived from Government on 1 October, work on this ambitious requirement is already underway in Wiltshire.
5. The new national arrangements sit alongside those [announced](#) on 9 September – including the rule of six, plans for a mass testing programme

and potential roll out of COVID secure marshals (guidance and funding from government to be confirmed at the time of writing).

6. Funding has also been announced for Emergency Departments to expand and upgrade, ensuring they have the physical space to treat patients, manage patient flow and improve infection control. £5m has been awarded to GWH, to provide a new single initial assessment area and increase waiting capacity, urgent treatment centre and same day emergency care consulting rooms by 50%.
7. The Winter Economy Plan was [announced](#) by the Chancellor on 24 September and included measures such as a new Job Support Scheme (coming into effect as furlough ends on 31 October) and an extension to the temporary 15 per cent VAT cut for the tourism and hospitality sectors to the end of March 2021. The Autumn Budget was cancelled but the Comprehensive Spending Review, which sets departmental spending limits, seems likely to continue with the local government finance settlement being announced once this is published.
8. Wiltshire Council is continuing to work with partners through the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum. Local Outbreak Management Plans are in place to deal with any localised outbreaks. There has been a national step change to address the spread of the virus with guidance in many cases being elevated to law. Restrictions could be in place for a number of months which could contribute to other pressures going into the winter period including, D20/ EU exit.
9. At this stage there are no requirements for the LRF to formally step back up into a response phase given that good preparations have been made and there is good situational awareness through existing partnership arrangements such as the Wiltshire Local Health Protection Board.
10. The Recovery Coordinating Group continues to meet in Wiltshire, with work continuing under the four themes –Health and Wellbeing; Care, Safeguarding and Education; Community Resilience and Economy. Significant developments since the last report are summarised under the sub-headings below; with additional detail in **Appendix 1**.

### **Test and Trace**

11. Local residents have raised concerns over difficulties in booking a test, some being given a slot in another part of the country or not being able to get one at all. Schools have also expressed concerns over the availability of testing slots.
12. Testing for current COVID-19 infection takes place in hospitals (known as Pillar 1) and the community (known as Pillar 2). Pillar 1 testing is led by the NHS and Public Health England. Pillar 2 testing is led by the Department of Health and Social Care and is not run by local councils or local NHS services. On the ground, it is provided and run by independent contractors. A number of fixed sites and mobile units operate around the country taking swabs from people who have reported symptoms.

13. In Wiltshire, the contractor, Mitie, runs one fixed site in Beehive Park and Ride, Salisbury (known as a 'regional testing site') and three mobile units which are currently operating from Trowbridge, Chippenham and Warminster. Home tests can also be ordered which are sent in the post for people to use themselves and then returned via post for processing. Once the swabs have been taken, either at home or at testing sites, they are sent to laboratories across the country, specifically equipped to process them.
14. There is currently a limit to the number of tests these laboratories can process; around 245,000 per day for the whole of the UK. This includes both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2 tests and capacity can be flexible between the two types of test. A recent increase in the demand for testing has meant that these laboratories are running beyond full capacity and generating a backlog. As a result of this, laboratory capacity has been prioritised for processing of tests taken in areas with higher infection rates, such as the north west.
15. In practice, this means that areas with lower rates of COVID-19, such as Wiltshire, are only able to test as many people as they have been given laboratory capacity for, despite having the ability to do more tests. This has led to people being offered a test a long distance away or the inability to book a test at all. Home tests have been similarly prioritised, i.e. they are only sent out to people where there is laboratory capacity to process them. The council is making representations about this situation to the Department of Health and Social Care.
16. The channel capacity bookings total as at 21 September was at 91%, (including regional and local test sites and mobile test units). Two new Lighthouse labs have been announced in Newcastle and Bracknell, which will help to increase lab capacity in the coming months. There have also been announcements for new laboratory facilities - including in Newport and in Charnwood - along with new technology to process results faster. Work is ongoing to identify LTS (Local Testing Sites) across more specific local settings within communities that allow for walk-in testing and are housed inside, usually at community centres and local halls.
17. A technical issue was identified overnight on Friday 2 October in the data load process that transfers COVID-19 positive lab results into reporting dashboards. It was identified that 15,841 cases between 25 September and 2 October were not included in the reported daily COVID-19 cases nationally. NHS Test and Trace and PHE have worked to resolve the issue and transfer the cases as soon as the issue was identified. Locally we will see the backlog of cases added to the Wiltshire case numbers from Monday 5 October onwards which will impact on our 7-day case rate in the short term. Positive cases have received their results as normal and will have been advised to self-isolate along with their household in accordance with government guidance.

### **Outbreak Management**

18. Due to the nature of the outbreaks and to help with continuity we have identified Consultants in Public Health as leads for schools, businesses and care homes. We are continuing to exercise the Local Outbreak Management Plan, and to date have exercised three scenarios with partners, with the next

taking place in October. Following the feedback and learning from these, the plan will be updated accordingly.

19. We are continuing to develop opportunities to encourage community engagement to support the delivery of the Local Engagement Plan. Information is being provided to key settings such as schools and businesses to help address common queries around symptoms, testing and isolation.

## **Events**

20. As we continue to see outbreaks of Coronavirus across the country, we must continue to ensure the health of Wiltshire residents is protected as much as possible and that Wiltshire does not end up in local lockdown, as we have seen in other areas. As we start to see an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases being confirmed daily, it is important to act quickly to limit gatherings or events that may increase the risk of transmission across the population.
21. While the "Rule of 6" brings some clarity, there are a number of exemptions to the new regulations on events which include work, voluntary or charitable work, weddings, funerals and organised sports activities among others. These are detailed in Government [guidance](#).
22. Any events or gatherings of more than six people, other than those which are exempt, risk increasing the number of infections in the county. However, it is not possible for Wiltshire Council to risk assess every planned event which meets the exemption criteria. Therefore, it is proposed that in response to the current situation that Wiltshire Council will be strongly recommending local businesses and event organisers postpone or cancel events that are planned to take place in the county for the remainder of 2020. This recommendation is in response to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country and the additional measures and restrictions introduced by the Government.
23. This advice will be regularly reviewed, and it is hoped that the number of cases will reduce as a result of the "Rule of 6" in which case we will be able to review this recommendation.

## **Safe Spaces**

24. Whilst awaiting the full guidance and funding for marshals (or another suitable local approach for encouraging compliance), we continue to work closely with our partners in town councils to evaluate the effectiveness of social distancing schemes that have been implemented and have a clear structure in place with weekly meetings overseeing all schemes for creating safe space for walking and cycling. This covers all Covid-19 related schemes such as: Safe Reopening of High Street; Emergency Active Travel; and Pavement Licencing. Area Board funding has supported implementation of schemes and, while the council is awaiting receipt of the grant offer letter and associated conditions for the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund, other funding sources are being explored.

25. At the end of September Wiltshire Police launched 'Operation Adamo', which focuses on the dedicated deployment of proactive units (increase Police Community Support Officers ) to engage with members of the public and encourage them to comply with the COVID-19 Health Protection Regulations and, where appropriate, take enforcement action. This enhanced resourcing has been established in response to increasing national scrutiny and public expectation in terms of the role of the police in enforcing the regulations and is being put in place to enhance the 4Es approach (Engage. Explain. Encourage. Enforce) that has already been underway. Wiltshire Council is contributing to the partnership plan for Operation Adamo with input from relevant tactical leads such as the Public Protection Team.

## **Care Homes**

26. We continue to provide ongoing support to care homes via a dedicated helpline and webinars with providers. £6.3 million of Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Funding has been allocated to care providers (75% went to care homes and the remainder to home care and supported living providers). The Government has recently announced the extension of the IPC Fund. Wiltshire has been allocated £5,353,622, unlike the previous fund, 71% is allocated on the basis of the number of care home beds, and 29% is allocated on the basis of users supported by community care providers. The allocated is a reduction on previous allocations.
27. The Council has also supported providers with additional costs they have faced due to COVID-19 e.g. PPE, technology aids to enable contact between care home residents and family and additional agency staff costs etc. To date the Council has provided £3 million to secure improved infection control and financial resilience since the end of March.
28. Wiltshire had witnessed an increase in care homes reporting positive COVID-19 tests for staff and residents in the early part of September 2020. In a two-week period 24 out of 179 homes reported a positive case, although over half of these were due to a member of staff being tested positive. However, in the last week there has been a reduction in the number of positive cases, down to 5 homes reporting a new case in w/e 24<sup>th</sup> September. In most cases, there were not multiple positive test results, and from analysis of the data, there does not appear to be any correlation with hospital discharges due to the stringent testing arrangements adopted across the county for admissions into care homes. The weekly testing of staff is enabling early detection of any asymptomatic staff due to transmission in the community. The Council continues to work closely with Wiltshire Care Partnership, Public Health England, CQC and BSW CCG to ensure action is taken in a timely manner.

## **Social Care**

29. The Council is seeing an increase in the number of people waiting in hospital for longer periods who require support and has been working with the CCG to model the likely demand across the different hospital discharge pathways for this winter. This indicates a potential gap in the support required within pathway 1 (return home) and pathway 3 Discharge to Assess (people who

require their Care Act assessment to take place in a specialist care home bed). The Council is taking steps to meet this capacity gap, including new ways of working within social care and with community health partners.

30. The Adult Social Care Winter Plan has been published with the aim of curbing the spread of COVID-19 infections in care settings. It outlines the actions every local area (Local Authorities and NHS partners) and every care provider must take in order to manage the challenges the sector will face this winter. The Council is reviewing its plans to ensure that they meet these requirements and identifying any areas requiring further development.
31. The Adult Social Care Winter Plan includes a focus on PPE distribution methods until end of March 2021. MHCLG PPE drops have now ceased and Wiltshire Council have received a final 'stockpile delivery' which will assist with any spikes/second waves of COVID-19. A Government PPE portal has been set up and a number of settings, including Adult and Children Social Care, schools, primary care etc have been invited to register. This portal is to provide 'emergency top up' supplies if a commercial source fails or is delayed. The Council has registered on the portal.

## **Education**

32. From the start of September all education establishments opened to all pupils. In preparation for this, risk assessments were developed and agreed by governing bodies or trust boards. For all community and voluntary controlled schools, and those which buy services from the Council's health and safety (H&S) service, these risk assessments were approved by the H&S team. The risk assessments take full account of government guidance and reflect the individual characteristics of each establishment.
33. Attendance is being monitored daily via the DfE register. Schools are supported to achieve full attendance through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and a 'team around the school' approach. A multi-team approach is used to ensure pupils with social workers and/or an Education Health and Care Plan EHCP attend. The numbers of families opting to home-educate (elective home education - EHE) increased at the start of the new term. Guidance has been reissued to schools and early years settings to ensure that families are fully informed of this process. Follow-up visits to families are conducted by the EWS to monitor the quality of education being provided. Where this is judged to be unsatisfactory and a suitable education is not being provided, a school attendance order is issued which requires parents to register their child at a school and for them to attend.
34. A robust process has been developed to support education establishments in the event of a member of the school community being confirmed to have Covid-19. Public health and education officers support the establishment to risk assess the situation and agree next steps for the establishment ensuring that the following areas are considered:
  - Communications
  - Home-learning
  - Safeguarding
  - Transport

35. All schools will be receiving £650 million of universal catch-up premium funding in addition to their usual pupil premium funding. This covers all state-funded schools who receive £80 per pupil and special schools receive £240 per pupil. In addition to this, there is a fund of £350 million to be used for the most disadvantaged learners to receive 1:1 tuition through the national tutoring programme or national coaching programme. All schools have in place a 'catch up' plan which details their strategy for focusing on missed learning for pupils through the use of this funding and through adapted curriculum which focus on key concepts that have been missed. These catch up plans focus on contingency plans to address an outbreak with tier 1 for full return to school, tier 2 for a part time rota where some pupils are taught via online learning due to self-isolation with other pupils in school, tier 3 for where all secondary pupils are again learning at home (other than key worker children and vulnerable learners) and tier 4 in which all types of school switch to learning at home (other than key worker children and vulnerable learners).
36. All school transport resumed at the start of the school term. Through a government grant, Wiltshire Council has procured an additional 20 buses to ensure that peak journeys are able to either maintain appropriate social distancing on public transport or provide additional dedicated transport for school pupils. There have been a further 40 changes to bus timetables to support the same outcome.
37. Extensive [guidance](#) has been provided to parents, schools and transport providers outlining expectations for transport to ensure young people are kept as safe as possible. There is no requirement for social distancing on home to school transport as per government guidance, but the Council has introduced the following measures:
- Additional cleaning of vehicles
  - Good ventilation to be maintained at all times
  - Face coverings to be worn, where pupils can wear them (Government guidance is only a recommendation to wear them)
  - A process to follow should a school bubble be closed down.
38. The Council is working with schools, parents and the bus companies to increase awareness of the importance of wearing face-coverings and will review continually. All taxi drivers and passenger assistants are now required to wear a face covering.

## **Economy**

39. There were 66,800 employees furloughed in Wiltshire in August. The primary sectors that have furloughed staff are arts, accommodation and food, and construction. There has been a total of 361 business closures, and 94 business openings notified to the Council since 1st April 2020. There were 12,850 claimants of universal credit in August. This has risen from approximately 5000 at the end of 2019.
40. The Business Grants schemes closed at the end of August. There has been a total of £94m awarded to 8000 Wiltshire businesses, including £4m paid to

600 businesses from over 900 discretionary grant applications. The last grant applications and appeals are now being considered prior to the last date for payments on 31<sup>st</sup> September. The Task and Finish Group that was set up to oversee this work has now been de-commissioned. Ongoing support is being provided to Wiltshire's larger businesses through the Wiltshire 100 programme, especially on providing support for redundancy and training where there are redundancies being planned and announced.

41. Following the announcement of a £1bn public sector green energy scheme the Recovery Coordinating Group is working on a multi-agency bid to secure investment in Wiltshire, and also encouraging Wiltshire businesses to register with 'Trustmark' to provide the Green Home Grants Scheme.
42. The Council is working with partners through the Education, Employment and Skills Advisory Group (EESAG) in developing and rolling out redundancy support mechanisms and an approach to using data to map job vacancies with the skill sets of those seeking re-employment. Two Task and Finish Groups have also recently been set up to oversee a coordinated, multi-agency approach to the Kickstart Programme and the payment scheme to enable low income employees to self-isolate. The Kickstart Fund is a £2bn programme offering 16-24 year olds 6 month work placements from November. This could potentially assist over 4500 eligible Wiltshire residents. The self-isolation payment scheme will enable £500 one-off payments from 28<sup>th</sup> September to January 2021 to support low income families with Covid-19 symptoms needing to self-isolate. The first payments have also been made via the Wiltshire Council Tax Hardship Fund.

### **Safeguarding Implications**

43. The Council's adult social care teams have continued to meet all statutory duties throughout this period. Advice and Contact continue to see an increase in demand for first conversations and for requests for care and support. Children's support, safeguarding and care services have been maintained throughout the pandemic with statutory requirements met and good performance maintained. A significant reduction in referrals to social care were seen from late March and continued through most of the summer. Work with partner agencies focused during this period on identifying the most vulnerable children so that support and intervention could be provided where required. The Council is now seeing an increase in demand for both children's support and safeguarding services and expects this to continue at least until the end of the financial year with a significant increase in the number of children who become subject to child protection plans or looked after.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Engagement**

44. This report will be considered by the Wiltshire Covid-19 Response Task Group on 14 October 2020, with members of the Executive and senior officers in attendance to answer members' questions. Updates on the Task Group's work are brought to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, which next meets on 18 November 2020.

45. On 29 September 2020, Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed that from November the other select committees will resume formal meetings, focusing on the COVID-19 response and recovery.

### **Procurement Implications**

46. A sequential approach to supplier relief has been agreed, ensuring that suppliers access central Government support where possible first and work with us on an open book basis when necessary.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

47. Work is ongoing to understand the impact of the pandemic on those with protected characteristics. The Council continues working with partners across Wiltshire, to ensure that those most vulnerable in the community are supported through this pandemic. Equality implications are being considered in the Council's decision making and any changes to service provision. Recovery theme leads have embedded the use of a Health Equality Assessment Tool. The Community Resilience theme working with partners is leading on work to enable Wiltshire's communities to be cohesive places where difference is celebrated. This ensures inequalities in Wiltshire created or made worse by COVID-19 are addressed.

### **Environmental and Climate Change Considerations**

48. A new Climate Strategy will be developed in the coming year to set out how the council is going to meet its challenging targets to become carbon neutral by 2030. The Climate Strategy will outline the steps the council needs to take to improve its resilience to climate change impacts in Wiltshire. As part of developing the strategy, each Recovery Theme will need to consider the environmental impact of its activities and identify opportunities to contribute to a green recovery. The council has held a Wiltshire Climate Alliance virtual conference in September to discuss a green recovery in Wiltshire and is carefully considering the suggestions that come out of these discussions. An informal Councillor climate working group will help to guide the work in this area.

### **Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken**

49. Wiltshire Council specific risks related to the management of, and recovery from, COVID-19 are owned and regularly reviewed by the Chief Executive. A new partnership risk register is being prepared for the RCG. This will comprise of some risks that transferred from the response phase as well as new risks identified by each of the themes. Risks will be managed in Themes on separate registers with an escalation procedure for significant risks to be reviewed by the RCG. The RCG will adopt Wiltshire Council's risks management processes. Wiltshire Council's Performance and Risk Management reporting will resume for quarter two 2020/21 and the Council's own strategic Risk Register will reflect, to some extent, the risks being managed by the RCG.

### **Financial Implications**

50. An update on the financial implications for the council and latest outturn will be provided to cabinet in a separate report as part of the regular schedule of updates.

### **Legal Implications**

51. The Council's legal team continues to provide advice on the application of new Covid-19 legislation and all aspects of recovery.

### **Workforce Implications**

52. Government guidance about employment matters has been applied throughout the COVID-19 response and will continue to be reviewed and applied through recovery and the Council's continuing response to the pandemic. COVID-19 policy implemented in March 2020 sets out information for staff, including the application of policies and procedures to support response, and the organisation recovery programme will continue to review and update this in consultation the trade unions.
53. The organisation recovery programme is taking steps to assess, evaluate and review the way in which the workforce operated during lockdown so that we can embed some of the positive changes and identify new opportunities to deliver services differently. Further detail on the steps taken towards organisation recovery is provided in **appendix 1**.

### **Conclusions**

54. Wiltshire Council continues to play a critical role with its partners and the local community in responding to the impact of the coronavirus in the county.

### **Terence Herbert, Chief Executive**

---

Report Author: David Bowater, Executive Office and Recovery Theme Leads  
2 October 2020.

**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Additional detail on work under themes and on Organisation Recovery

## **Health and Wellbeing – additional information**

### **Public Service Staff Wellbeing**

- Staff wellbeing continues to be a significant priority across the public service group with particular emphasis upon the mental health and musculoskeletal impacts associated with prolonged homeworking and isolation. Data is being collated across employers to measure impacts and assess the effectiveness of measures put in place as mitigation. Within the local authority, demand for support services has been lower than expected and sickness absence, including that linked to mental health, has fallen considerably against the same period last year. More work is necessary to explore these trends against the backdrop of staff having to transition working practices, and staff survey responses which indicate enhanced staff engagement juxtaposed with heightened anxiety relating to covid-related health issues and job security concerns.

### **Upcoming mental health work**

- There are currently several community-based services aimed at supporting people to live their good life. The people employed in these services are not mental health professionals and the services are designed to offer low level support to prevent people's mental health deteriorating and support people to plan positively for their future. The services are run by local voluntary sector organisations, GP surgeries, and the local authority. Examples of roles include, health trainers, social prescribers, local area co-ordinators and community connectors. Many of these services are receiving referrals for people in mental health crisis and with complex, acute mental health issues. They do not have the tools to support people in crisis, and often the only option is to ask these people to seek support from their GP (who often had made the referral in the first instance).
- The Health and Wellbeing Board have discussed this gap in mental health services and identified a need for crisis support in the community that isn't linked to any specific service, condition or life circumstance (e.g. housing, domestic violence, disability). Steps have been made to address this by linking into the Thrive meetings and through separate meetings with Lucy Baker, who has responsibility for mental health in BSW CCG. The plan is to work together to develop community based Mental Health crisis support that will work alongside the connectors; enabling people to continue working towards their good life once the acute crisis has passed

### **Substance misuse**

- The recovery plan has been completed and was signed off at the drug and alcohol strategy group on Thursday 24 September. This group will be responsible for driving forward the identified outcomes. Weekly meetings continue with providers and key information is shared with the recovery health and wellbeing group and the vulnerable people stakeholder group (VPSG).

## **Joint Strategic Needs Assessment**

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2020 is divided into around 20 chapters and each chapter describes what has and is likely to happen in a certain thematic area. Each chapter is being treated as its own publication, which may have a few editions before the financial year is over at which time the chapters will be combined into one JSNA 2020 publication. This will allow fast and fluid intelligence feeds to the Health & Wellbeing recovery cell. The Public Health Intelligence team have shared early editions of the following sections of the JSNA 2020:
  - COVID-19 (focused solely on the disease)
  - Demographics
  - Economy
- The JSNA chapters are being undertaken around the intelligence work involved in COVID-19 cases, outbreaks and mortalities. As the COVID-19 response work has grown again our original timeline and the number of chapters included is under review.

## **Care, Safeguarding and Education Theme – additional information**

### **Education**

- The DfE 'Well-being return to education' programme is being rolled out across all education establishments in Wiltshire. This is a national programme that is delivered locally to reflect Wiltshire systems and services. This programme provides an opportunity to take a co-ordinated approach to training for schools to support emotional and mental health and wellbeing, bringing together a multi-agency collective to ensure the training ties in with existing developments locally (e.g. Five to Thrive training programme) and clearly promotes and signposts children and young people to local support.
- The weekly attendance data survey of early years providers indicates that 94% of settings are open. There is sufficient childcare provision currently and some new providers have opened and some existing providers have extended their provision. The DfE have advised that settings should be funded '*broadly in line with 2019*' to maintain sufficiency. Some settings have more children this year whilst others have fewer so the Early Years Sufficiency and Finance Teams worked with the Early Years Reference Group to review the situation.
- Due to the disapplication of some of the requirements of the EYFS including the statutory duty to carry out assessment, we have no attainment or progress data to use this year. This has impacted on the educational checks for all two-year-old children in settings and these have not been undertaken. We are currently in the process of gathering information about how many children this has affected and how settings are planning to bridge that gap and ensure that no children have been missed and appropriate interventions put in place where needed. The disapplication for the EYFS end on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September.

- The Family and Community Learning Service (FaCL) has launched a new online learning platform, offering support for disadvantaged learners to ensure they can access the courses through short term data packages. The new Young Work Wiltshire service which supports young people Not in Education or Employment (NEET) launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> June. Referrals to this service are increasing and to date, 60% have secured EET and 12% are on re-engagement programmes. The Education, Employment and Skills Action Group (EESAG) has been established to bring partners together to provide support to businesses with redundancy, pulling together a universal package of support delivered by key partners to assist employees in reskilling and sourcing alternative employment.

## **Social Care**

- Demand modelling is drawing data and intelligence from a wide range of providers and partner organisations to enable a system wide response. For example data from mental health providers (Oxford Health and AWP) is used to understand the impact changes to their service provision will have on Adult Social Care. A significant increase in referrals is forecast through November 2020 and in December 2020 in to both Adult and Children's MASH. Planning is underway to ensure this demand can be met. Practice standards are under review and resource will be redirected to support safeguarding work if trigger points are reached.
- Where there are patterns or emerging themes presenting, these are highlighted as part of the Vulnerable People's Stakeholder Group (which currently meets fortnightly) for further discussion and to develop a system wide response. Themed meetings are currently scheduled and are exploring our preparedness in relation to:
  - Domestic Abuse – demand, thresholds, capacity and workflow;
  - Mental health prevention and crisis intervention (inc. suicide prevention);
  - Sudden and complex deaths. Learning from rapid reviews;
  - Custody support and delays within the criminal justice system. Impact on vulnerable adults and children.
  - Transitional safeguarding and pathway planning for vulnerable adolescents and younger adults.
- Work continues with commissioned support services to understand pressures on services and manage demand appropriately. This has also supported the wider work into a 'surge demand' model. Wiltshire Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner has extended its funding of the 'out of hours' domestic abuse support line for anyone impacted and in need of support and advice. A thematic rapid learning review was undertaken with partner agencies. This explored four serious domestic abuse incidents with a view to understanding whether the impact of COVID and the lockdown contributed to these events for individuals/families who perhaps otherwise would not have required support/intervention.
- A joint communications strategy between partners has been established and work has taken place across Wiltshire to raise the awareness of the support available for people with mental health concerns including work to support GPs and primary care networks to identify pathways for early intervention and

support. The Health Based Place of Safety (HBPOS) in Devizes (the place the police will take people who may be in a mental health crisis in the community) has also seen a large increase in activity including closure in order to accommodate one individual with highly complex needs. There remains between 30 and 50% of people being brought to the suite who are not from Wiltshire and Swindon. Work continues across the system to understand this increase, to prevent people entering into crisis and to ensure that the HBPOS is accessible at all times. This work is being completed across the Health, Social Care and Police partnership.

### **Families and Children Transformation Programme (FACT)**

- Working closely with our partners we are committed to ensuring that our transformation activity remains in focus and addresses the key priorities as they emerge and develop.
- To ensure the FACT programme remains focussed, effective and true to its core values, we have held partnership events, engage regularly with families and children and ensure structured strategic dialogue across the partners to identify 'wicked issues' and agendas of mutual priority. The programme structure and priorities have recently been reviewed in the context of post-Covid needs analysis with partners sharing an update on the impact of the Covid period on their service priorities. In accordance with the FACT Executive Board's challenge to ensure the programme is focussed, manageable, tangible and measurable the future programme structure will be based around the multi-agency agreement on six Priority Projects that will follow the Outcomes-Based Accountability approach.
- As well as driving forward the priority projects, the FACT Programme also features explicit oversight and monitoring of other transformational projects that are in the implementation or delivery stage and a group of projects that are currently being scoped for potential future development. The revised programme structure focuses on the following 6 priority projects;
  - Early Support Assessment-implementation plan
  - Inclusive approaches- alternative education provision
  - Young People's Service-multi agency staffing
  - School readiness- speech, language and communication in the early years
  - Integrated Commissioning- MH/LD/ASD
  - Transitional Safeguarding- older adolescents and young adults

### **Community Resilience Theme**

- Strategic partners and partners from across the voluntary sector continue to meet on a weekly basis working in together to ensure no one gets left behind in Wiltshire during the recovery from COVID19 and building on the tremendous response shown by our community during the lockdown period. Four workstreams currently sit under the Community Resilience theme: Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub; Community Engagement; Community Spaces; and Inequalities.

## **Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub**

- While calls into the Wellbeing hub have remained low over the last couple of months we are ensuring we are prepared for any increased need as we hit a second COVID19 spike. This includes reviewing the shielding lists from the NHS to ensure we are supporting the most vulnerable in Wiltshire; reviewing the call handler scripts to make sure they have the latest information and guidance; and continuing to engage with the over 300 community groups across Wiltshire who have supported the COVID19 response.

## **Community Engagement**

- Under the Community Engagement workstream Wessex Community Action have done an excellent job leading networking events for the COVID19 community groups and setting up the Wiltshire Together community digital platform. This online resource enables communities to post their activities, share information on volunteering and let everyone in Wiltshire know what is happening locally to them. Our Area Boards continue to play a central role in the community response, during the Autumn a series of virtual partner engagement events will be hosted by each Area Board focusing on how their areas have been impacted by COVID19. The data from these, partner data, our health data and information from Town and Parish Councils will all come together for the Area Boards to hold a local picture and develop local recovery plans. Wiltshire Faith Leaders continue to meet regularly with a recent focus on the impact of COVID19 on children and young people and very positive engagement in supporting the identification of further foster carers across the authority area.

## **Community Spaces**

- The Community Spaces workstream is focused on three areas: the mobilisation of community spaces (leisure, libraries, village halls etc); active communities and the Wiltshire Council vision for Communities post COVID19. Mobilisation of the Council's leisure centres and libraries continues to go well with all spaces anticipated to be open in some form by the end of October. We are keeping a close eye on new government guidance and the impact of the latest restrictions. The active communities work is in its infancy but will take a targeted approach to support those most at risk from COVID19 to develop healthy lives including addressing obesity, mental health and targeting young people.

## **Inequalities workstream**

- The Inequalities workstream currently has three areas of focus the impact of COVID19 on BAME communities in Wiltshire; the impact on our LGBTQ+ community and digital access. The partnership approach being taken has led to some valuable data being gathered. This is now being analysed to ensure we are able to identify need and target activity.

## **Organisation Recovery**

- The theme leads for organisation recovery have continued to meet weekly to agree priority areas for action and have developed a vision for the programme, and a set of principles against which all recovery related work will be set.

## **COVID Policy**

- Some of the temporary arrangements put in place at the start of the pandemic as part of a COVID-19 policy remain in place, and the policy continues to be updated as advice and guidance from government is issued or changed.

## **Furlough**

- Some staff remained furloughed. Since the start of the start of the Coronavirus job retention scheme we have furloughed 583 staff across 828 posts mainly in leisure operations, City Hall and in the library service since March. We have also supported schools to make claims for 123 staff across 134 posts. For the period 20 March to 31 July we have claimed a total of £1.3m through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for these staff. As services have reopened, we have ended the furlough of some staff and as we move further into recovery and services re-open, we are flexibly furloughing others where it has been possible to allow staff to return to work for some of their hours. The CJRS closes on 31 October 2020.

## **Return to Workplace**

- The Council approach is for office-based staff to continue to work at home wherever possible so that we can ensure social distancing within our workplaces, keeping the staff who are delivering essential services from our workplaces as safe as possible.
- As outlined previously from June some services and staff have returned to the workplace either because this is essential for ongoing service delivery, for ad hoc reasons, (for example to complete a specific task), or for wellbeing reasons. Requests to return to the workplace are subject to an approvals process and this is being closely monitored.
- The social distancing measures needed to ensure workplaces are COVID-19 secure means that Council's workplace capacity has been reduced significantly. For example, normal capacity across the three main council hubs is usually around 1600 staff, and this has reduced to around 800. The number of staff returning to the work in the three hubs has been increasing weekly with an average of approx. 45% of the reduced capacity being occupied across the three hubs. The increase in numbers since the last report has been in County Hall, with the average daily number of staff accessing the building up from 178 to 206.

## **Employee Wellbeing**

- An employee wellbeing survey in May 2020 was completed by 2700 staff and indicated that around 77.7% of staff were working fully or mainly from home. The overriding response from staff was that there were not any significant challenges to working from home, some cited the time gained from a lack of

commute and the ability to spend more time with their family as positive to their wellbeing, and felt that, on the whole, the technology that has been implemented has worked well to support virtual working. This was reflected in an increased engagement score from 70 in December 2018 to 88 in May 2020.

- However, some of the challenges to working at home that staff cited were; social isolation, distractions in the home and a lack of physical workspace. 30% of all staff that were working from home did not have a dedicated workspace.
- Occupational Health have been providing IT equipment such as monitors, docking stations, and peripherals to try and create a more recognisable workstation at home and employees have been
- able to collect additional ICT equipment or chairs for working from home where there is a health need or an operational requirement.
- The on-going provision of home working equipment will be considered by the relevant workstream under the organisation recovery programme when looking at the future approach to use of workplaces.
- As outlined in the report a process was implemented in June to enable staff, who were finding that working at home was impacting negatively on their wellbeing, to raise this and to be supported by their manager and occupational health. In some cases, this has led to staff being approved to return to a workplace for some or all their working hours.
- A follow up wellbeing survey will be sent out to staff shortly and will give up to date insight into the impact of working at home, and the results of this survey will be fed into the organisation recovery programme activities and be considered when looking at the future approach to use of workplaces.
- In addition to the wellbeing survey staff will also be engaged through relevant workstreams under this programme to ensure they have an opportunity to have their voice heard, raise ideas and comment on proposals. This will include using existing staff forums, networks (e.g. digital ambassadors, Team EPIC, staff networks, trade unions) and virtual workshops to increase engagement with the wider programme and focus groups on specific themes.

## **EPIC Values**

- The council launched its new EPIC values on Monday 21 September, replacing the previous behaviours framework which was introduced in 2011. EPIC values have evolved from the behaviours framework and have been developed and simplified in consultation with staff from across the council to focus on positive ways of working and to support the council with the significant changes and transformation the organisation is going through, particularly as we recover from the impact of COVID.
- There are 3 EPIC values – Excellence, Responsibility and Trust & Respect, a reduction from the 6 behaviours in the old framework. The EPIC values are described in a 2-page document making it simpler, quicker and easier for staff

to read and understand what they mean, and how the values support positive ways of working. The new EPIC values also show how the values and our employee brand promise, EPIC, work together to support us to create stronger communities.

- To support the launch and embedding of these new values a toolkit has been created to support managers and staff with understanding what these values mean and what they look like within their teams. Appraisals, interview questions and other policies have been updated to reflect these changes, and these EPIC values will underpin the organisational recovery programme.

### **Organisational recovery workshops**

- Engagement with managers about organisation recovery has been happening as part of the monthly managers forums and this has been progressed further with a series of workshops with all heads of service. The purpose of the workshops was to provide further clarity and understanding from managers about the ways of working since the pandemic started in March, what elements of this should continue and be embedded, what improvements are needed and what new opportunities the way of working has identified.
- There is now 16 hours of feedback and ideas from these workshops to be analysed and this will help to shape the organisation recovery programme. Further workshops and engagement will happen with the Heads of Service as well as the wider organisation over the coming months to ensure engagement, buy-in and adoption of changes in ways of working to support organisation recovery and the delivery of business plan priorities.