

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

DATE OF MEETING: 18 FEBRUARY 2021

SUBJECT OF REPORT: UPDATE ON COVID RESPONSE

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: MATT LENNY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

KEY DECISION: NO

REASON: THE REPORT IS A REVIEW OF ACTION NOT A DECISION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HAWB) are asked to note the update on the pandemic response, comment on progress so far and provide any suggested priorities for future action to meet the needs of our community during the continued response and recovery from the pandemic.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been felt across North Somerset through a series of national lockdowns, personal and community restrictions and sadly, the heavy local cost from illness and death caused by the virus.

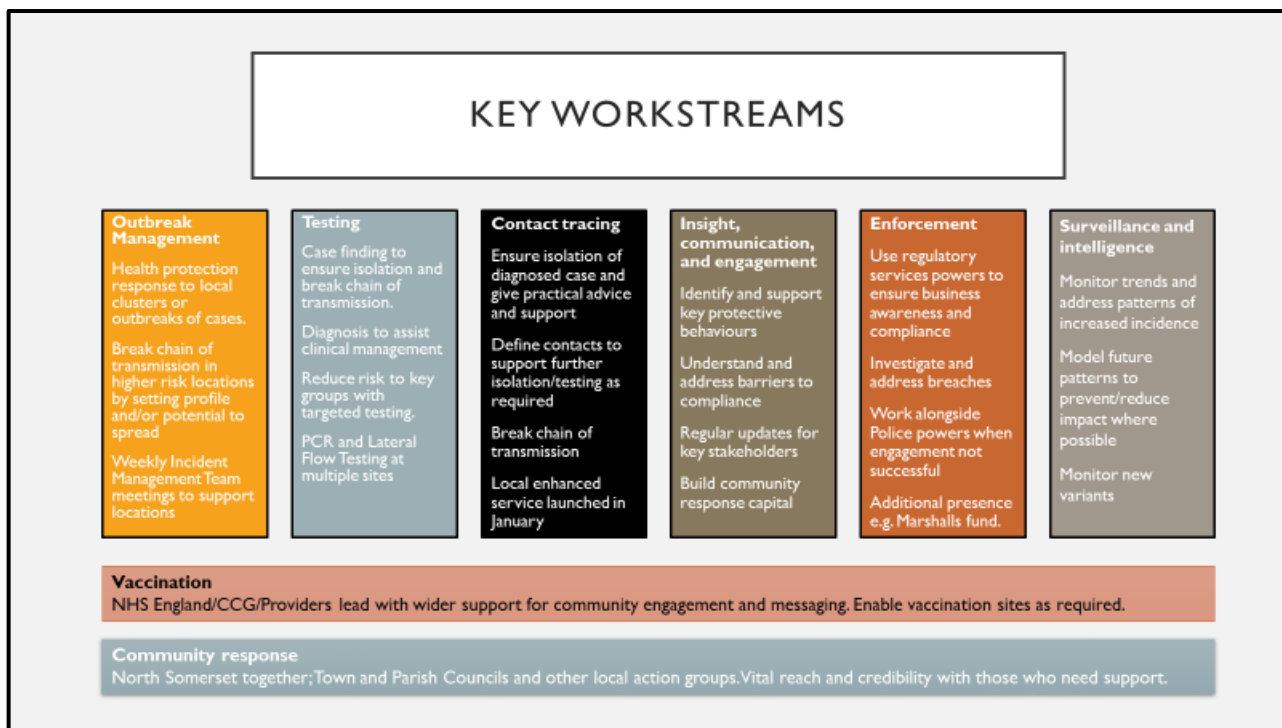
The response has been in progress for almost a year and the presentation provided in Appendix A gives a broad overview of key aspects of the public health and health and care system response. The presentation provides the latest information on patterns of infection, a summary of key areas of the public health response and a review of impact on local health and care services.

2. POLICY

In responding to the pandemic, the local authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and other local partner organisations, for example, the business community, the police and community organisations have needed to adapt to fast changing guidance and new legislation designed to reduce spread and limit the impact of the virus. Roles and responsibilities have been based on existing plans and structures and adapted to the changing needs and circumstances of the pandemic.

3. DETAILS

Appendix 1 provides the overview of key aspects of the public health response to the pandemic in a summary slide:



It recognises that local teams and partnerships have been working in a number of key areas, notably:

1. Outbreak management
2. Testing
3. Contact tracing
4. Insight, communications and engagement
5. Enforcement
6. Surveillance and intelligence
7. Vaccination
8. Community response

It should be noted that these workstreams have linked to other important aspects of the response, for example, adaptation of children and adult services, support for the business community, grant promotion and administration and targeted help for more vulnerable cohorts, for example, the homeless population.

4. CONSULTATION

Where possible, the pandemic response has been developed with the input and leadership from local community organisations. Some elements of response have necessarily been driven by a more directive approach through national guidance to reduce the risk of infection and minimise health and care impacts.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The pandemic response has been supported by a reprioritisation of existing resources within key agencies and effective use of government grants targeted at different priority actions, for example, support for local businesses, financial support for those needing to self-isolate and extension of testing in the community to find cases and minimise the risk of onward transmission.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

A wide range of new legislation and statutory guidance has been published to support local, regional and national responses to the pandemic.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The pandemic has had a significant impact on living and travel patterns for local people with the potential for some longer-term benefits, for example, reduced car use, greater enjoyment of active travel and outdoor activity and linking communities to local food sources.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks associated with the pandemic have been managed through a range of individual organisation risk registers or within partnerships working over wider footprints, for example, the Healthier Together system response across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire and the Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

New legislation, guidance and local response methods have taken into account the needs of different population groups and this will need to continue through the rest of the response and into recovery to effectively tackle the inequalities that are likely to have been widened by the pandemic.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The pandemic response has had a considerable impact on planned work which will require review as part of recovery. However, it has also shown how established approaches can be reset to the benefit of local communities, for example, the development of North Somerset Together as a means of understanding and responding to local needs more effectively.

11. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

The pandemic response has primarily been driven by new legislation and national guidance but dialogue has been maintained with a wide range of local partners to help shape the response to local needs.

AUTHOR

Matt Lenny, Director of Public Health and Regulatory Services

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Overview of the pandemic response

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None