

<b>Report to</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of meeting</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> July 2020
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Cllr Mark Young, Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities</b>
<b>Report author</b>	Emlyn Jones, Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services
<b>Title</b>	Test, Trace and Protect – Inter Authority Agreement

## 1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. On 13 May 2020 Welsh Government (WG) published a national strategy which included the requirement to track and trace the spread of Covid-19 in Wales. This would involve Council staff offering advice to those people who had been in contact with someone who had tested positive for the disease.
- 1.2. As lockdown measures are relaxed, this project will be critical in managing the rate of spread of Covid-19 and in providing a rapid response to help those who might be infected.
- 1.3. As part of the national strategy, the North Wales Local Authorities have established local contact tracing teams. Until now, this has been an interim measure as the staff currently undertaking this work have been redeployed from their substantive posts.
- 1.4. As the Council starts to resume more of its services, these staff members will need to return to their normal duties, so staffing the contact tracing teams will soon become a critical issue.
- 1.5. Welsh Government has approved the funding of this project in the sum of £11.2m for North Wales; this sum is for the remainder of this financial year.

- 1.6. Flintshire CC will employ all the additional staff which will ensure that there is no duplication of procedures or effort or unnecessary competition for workforce between Councils.
- 1.7. The relationship between Flintshire CC, as the employing Authority, and the other 5 Local Authorities will be set out in an Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA).
- 1.8. Approval is now sought to enter into this IAA

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1. To seek approval to enter into an Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) with the other North Wales Local Authorities, to govern the recruitment and management of extra staff to operate the contact tracing element of the TTP project.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services following consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services, s151 Officer and Monitoring Officer to agree and sign the IAA to ensure that the Council supports the national and regional coordinated strategy to contain the spread of Covid-19

## **4. Report details**

- 4.1. The TTP strategy is intended to enhance health surveillance in the community by undertaking effective and extensive contact tracing and by supporting affected people to self-isolate when required to do so.
- 4.2. It involves asking people to report symptoms, testing anyone in the community who has symptoms and tracing those with whom they have come into close contact. These contacts are then advised to self-isolate.
- 4.3. Contact tracing is a long established, effective, public health approach to containing the spread of infections and has proved effective in controlling Covid-19 in other countries.
- 4.4. The regional approach to implementing the plan has been undertaken via a regional project team led by PHW. It has been established with representation from BCUHB, PHW and each of the local authorities.

- 4.5. This regional project team has a number of work-streams, including workforce, governance, finance, communications, ICT, regional cell and data reporting. Each Authority is represented on these work-streams.
- 4.6. Since 1 June, the Council has been deploying existing resources (workforce, ICT, equipment, etc.) into these new roles. The clinical lead roles are being provided by BCUHB, to provide expert clinical knowledge to the contact tracing teams.
- 4.7. A list of confirmed Covid-19 cases is sent to the local contact team. The tracers then contact each case (via telephone) and give them advice around self-isolation. There is also a provision to escalate issues to clinical leads.
- 4.8. It is important to be aware that the TTP project may be required to operate for up to two years, and that our temporarily deployed workforce will soon need to return to their substantive roles.
- 4.9. Therefore, the North Wales councils have been working on a single employment model to recruit and manage new staff to fulfil these roles and have been granted funding from WG to fund this additional area of work.
- 4.10. Flintshire CC has volunteered to coordinate the recruitment model. The IAA is now being negotiated to govern these arrangements.
- 4.11. The advantages of this single employer model include:-
- 4.11.1. a common set of terms and conditions of employment and remuneration to avoid competition for recruitment;
  - 4.11.2. a single and high-profile recruitment exercise with no HR or Payroll duplication across Authorities;
  - 4.11.3. a bank of retained workers (without contracted hours) to draw on if there was a sudden and unexpected increase in demand. This would be a flexible resource and allocated out as needed, and
  - 4.11.4. that there would be a single partner for the administration of the WG grant.
- 4.12. The IAA will cover such matters as:

4.12.1. the term of the agreement and its funding;

4.12.2. an exit strategy in 18 months to two years for whenever TTP ends, is reduced or replaced, and

4.12.3. detailed issues around the employment provisions.

4.13. WG has confirmed that it will fund the employment model with sufficient resources for each Council to operate at least three cells/teams. Of course, the number of teams recruited will be managed flexibly to meet demand.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

5.1. This key task, in supporting regional and national efforts to control/prevent the spread of Covid-19, affects all aspects of Council policy and practice, including the objectives and priorities contained in the Council Plan and other partnership and departmental plans.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

6.1. Welsh Government have confirmed that they will fully fund additional costs incurred in relation to the TTP project in the sum of £11.2 million across North Wales.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

7.1. A well-being impact assessment has not been completed.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

8.1. This report has not been the subject of specific consultation.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. It is welcome that funding has been secured for the project costs for the region for 2020/21 financial year. It is also welcome that there is an element of flexibility that would allow this to be reviewed if the costs increased in response to a worsening of the situation. However it is important to point out the following:

- No funding has yet been announced for 2021/22 financial year – this position will be monitored closely
- There are likely to be some costs that are not reclaimable from the grant – in particular exit costs at the end of the project. The IAA deals with this on an equitable basis.

Despite these issues the project is fully supported.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

10.1. Failure to successfully to implement the plan and reduce the spread of Covid-19 will lead to further harm and excess deaths in our community.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

11.1. The Council has a statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act to respond effectively in managing emergencies and has a statutory duty under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act to manage communicable disease outbreaks.