



**EPIDEMIC OR SERIOUS**

**INFECTIONS**

**EMERGENCY POLICY**

*March 2020*

**Approved by Council:**

**19<sup>th</sup> March 2020**  
*(Minute No. C 0908 refers)*

**Plan Review Date:**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to manage the Council's operation in the event of a serious national or international outbreak of an infectious disease.
- 1.2 The implementation and scope of this policy is most likely to be triggered and potentially varied by advice from Government and/or National Health Advisory Bodies which the Council will seek to follow where it is at variance of the details within this policy.

## **2. Key Aims**

- 2.1 The main aims of this policy are to reduce the impact of any potential infectious outbreak plus to provide guidance for the operation and decision making processes to be followed by the Council in the event of such an outbreak occurring.

## **3. Risk Reduction**

- 3.1 The Council will check Government guidance on a daily basis once an epidemic has been confirmed by the relevant authority and implement all appropriate risk reduction measures.
- 3.2 The surfaces potentially being touched by people will be treated daily with an appropriate cleaning agent.
- 3.3 Before travelling once an epidemic has been confirmed or visiting any areas highlighted as being seriously affected by an infectious disease outbreak all council staff and councillors should carefully assess the risks involved and follow any medical advice provided for people visiting these areas.
- 3.4 Any Council staff and councillors visiting any place when an epidemic or serious disease outbreak occurs whilst they are present must follow all medical advice provided by the appropriate medical authorities including potentially self-isolating themselves and their families on their return.

## **4. Dealing with Infection**

- 4.1 Any Council staff or councillors, if infected by the disease should not under any circumstances enter any Council operated building or depot.
- 4.2 All Council staff and councillors that are infected by such a disease should self-isolate and follow all medical advice provided by the appropriate medical authorities until they are certified as being clear of the infection.
- 4.3 In the event that a member of staff's family becomes infected with the disease and has been in contact with the infected person, they should work from home

and are not to enter any Council building until the infection has passed and they are confirmed as being free of such infection.

- 4.4 Any member of staff or councillor, if they are concerned that they may have come into contact with someone who has the disease or start to demonstrate symptoms that may indicate they have the disease must contact the relevant medical authorities and follow all advice given, including the need to self-isolate if appropriate

## **5. Operational Matters**

- 5.1 As far as is possible, the running of the Council's routine business remains a priority.
- 5.2 Any decision to close the Council offices, Festival Hall, any other community building or the grounds depot will be taken based on Government advice or guidance at the time and made by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor.
- 5.3 In the event of any building closure, a full deep clean will be conducted if the building is considered as being potentially infected prior to any decision being made to re-open the premises.
- 5.4 If the Town Hall is closed, all meetings of the Council will be immediately suspended until the building is re-opened unless officers can locate and procure alternative suitable premises for holding the meetings and it remains safe to do so.
- 5.5 The business of the Council will need to continue throughout this period and the Scheme of Delegation outlined in section 7 of this policy should be followed in such a situation.
- 5.6 Once the Festival Hall or any other community building has been closed as a result of an infection outbreak in accordance with the terms of this policy, or the Government recommends that events or gatherings are not to take place, the hirer of the premises will be refunded with the cost of the hire only, or their cost of hire will be retained and placed towards a future replacement booking or event provided such an occurrence can be catered for within a 6 month period of the original date of hire.

## **6. Staffing Matters**

- 6.1 If the Town Hall is closed, officers will work from home as far as is reasonably practical.
- 6.2 If Government advice is issued recommending that travel is minimised and that people should work from home as far as is possible, this advice will be implemented even if the Town Hall offices remain open and on a skeleton staff.

- 6.3 During such periods of building closure, all staff will continue to receive payment of their salaries subject to their contract of employment and terms and conditions of employment.
- 6.4 If staff are required to self-isolate themselves as a precaution in accordance with the other provisions contained within this policy, the Council will consider this to be treated as sick leave which shall be paid in accordance with their contract of employment.
- 6.5 Any annual leave booked by staff during periods of self-isolation at home or illness will be re-instated to the individual's holiday entitlement for the year with discretion being given to the Town Clerk to permit more than the normal maximum of 5 days leave being carried over into the new financial year especially if such incidents occur close to the end of the relevant leave period.
- 6.6 The Council's Leave & Work Life Balance Policy will be followed in the event of any staff suffering bereavement during this time.

## **7. Delegation of Urgent and Routine Matters**

- 7.1 In the event that legislation is passed dealing with and/or impacting on such an infectious disease outbreak, those terms will take precedence over the outlined Scheme of Delegation.
- 7.2 The Town Clerk has delegated authority to make any decision appertaining to the Council's normal routine business.
- 7.3 The Town Clerk has delegated authority to act in such a way as to support the needs of the community during such an emergency as such needs are identified and to commit any of the Council's resources in support of or to satisfy such needs.
- 7.4 In the event that payroll software is unavailable during a period of office closure, the Town Clerk has the delegated authority to make salary payments to all staff at the normal level that the person would receive, with payment of any overtime or other additional hours payments being made in the next available payroll period.
- 7.5 In the event that any procurement decision needs to be made, delegated authority is granted to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the appropriate Committee Chairman to approve the appointment of any contractor with all decisions made being ratified by the relevant committee at the first available meeting of that committee.
- 7.6 Any decision required regarding the operation of or development of any aspect of the Council's work that would normally be covered by a committee or the Council itself is to be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Mayor, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and the

Chairman of the relevant Council Committee with all decisions made being ratified at the first available meeting of the relevant committee.

- 7.7 During any period in which these delegated powers are in operation the Town Clerk will provide a weekly update to all councillors outlining the details of what has happened in support of the emergency community needs as well as the regular business of the Council.

## **8 Cessation of the Emergency Policy**

- 8.1 The emergency powers within this policy will be revoked and normal business operation resumed once Government guidance confirms that people can travel and return to work and the agreement of the Town Mayor, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and other committee Chairmen has been obtained.

