



Policy & Resources Committee

30 September 2021

Title	Local Contact Tracing for COVID
Report of	Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee
Wards	All
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	Yes
Enclosures	Appendix A – Chief officer in consultation with committee chairman delegated powers report, Local Contact Tracing for COVID, 13.05.21 Appendix B – Chief officer in consultation with committee chairman delegated powers report, Local Contact Tracing for COVID, 02.08.21
Officer Contact Details	Julie George, Director of Public Health julie.george@barnet.gov.uk 020 8359 4645

Summary

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Urgency Committee on the 27th April 2020 provided delegation to Chief Officers (in consultation with the relevant Committee Chairmen) to take decisions on business-critical matters normally reserved to theme committees. The Committee resolved that any and all such decisions taken, shall be reported back to the relevant Committee for post-decision scrutiny.

This scrutiny report examines the two delegated power reports that were submitted to cover the council's approach in responding to the urgent requirement to establish large-scale local contact tracing service within the borough through the appointment of Capita Regional Enterprise (RE) to establish and operate a service on the council's behalf. The first delegated power report (Appendix A) submission covered the set up of the service. The second

delegated power reports (Appendix B) submission covered the contract extension required before the Policy and Resources committee.

Officers Recommendations

- 1. To note the decisions taken by Chief Officers (in consultation with the relevant Chairmen), via delegated powers in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, specifically in regards to the local contact tracing service.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The Urgency Committee on the 27th April 2020, provided delegation to Chief Officers (in consultation with relevant Theme Committee Chairman) to take decisions within the remit of that Committee, that needed to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters. The Committee resolved that any and all such decisions taken, shall be reported back to the relevant Committee for post-decision scrutiny. This report is pursuant to that requirement.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 In response to the recommendations agreed by the Urgency Committee on the 27th April 2020.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Considerations were made as to whether the local authority could go to market to procure the service. However, due to time constraints created by the national requirement to set up local contact tracing within a matter of weeks, going to market was not an option. Barnet Council were also in a position to utilise the Special Project Initiation Request (SPIR) framework within the existing main contract with Capita Re who provide the Barnet professional Environmental Health Services (EHO). EHOs already provide local contact tracing for some conditions other than COVID and have the professional expertise to run the service. Using this approach also enable Capita to redirect some Business-as-Usual resources to assist with the setup, enabling an earlier start to the service. For these reasons, Capita Re were considered the best option over any other.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Local Contact Tracing Service will be delivered until such point as the requirement for local authorities to provide the service change. This will be continually reviewed in light of Public Health policy landscape. If a service is required beyond the current SPIR extension, usual procurement procedures will be followed to extend the service.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

- 5.1 **Corporate Priorities and Performance**

5.1.1 During the emergency period, the Council moved to delivering critical services only and undertook additional responsibilities required by Government while aiming to continue to deliver as many elements of the Corporate Plan (Barnet 2024) as possible. Now that the remainder of the London Borough of Barnet are moving mainly back to business as usual, the Public Health team are continuing to provide a COVID response, including maintenance of the local contact tracing service.

5.2 **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 Appendix A (Section 5.2 pg.10-11) shows where the funding for the service was sourced from through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund provided by the Department of Health and Social Care. It establishes the fixed start-up costs (£319,489) and variable monthly costs of (£45,279). It also summarises the staffing capacities and outputs of the service. Please see Appendix A for more detail.

5.2.2 Appendix B (Section 5.2 pg.20-21) outlines the current maximum cost over the entire period of the service including the SPIR extension (December 2020 to March 2022) is £1,197,016. It also summarises the staffing capacities and outputs of the service. Please see Appendix B for more detail.

5.3 **Social Value**

5.3.1 N/A

5.4 **Legal and Constitutional References**

5.4.1 The Council's Constitution, Article 7 (Committees, Forums and Working Groups) – the terms of reference of the Policy & Resources Committee include "...to be responsible for those matters not specifically allocated to any other committee affecting the affairs of the Council." The terms of reference of the Health & Wellbeing Board include "...Overseeing public health and promoting prevention agenda across the partnership."

5.4.2 The Urgency Committee on the 27th April 2020 provided delegation to Chief Officers (in consultation with relevant Theme Committee Chairman) to take decisions within the remit of that Committee, that needed to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters.

5.4.3 Chief Officers making decisions using the delegations approved via the Urgency Committee report need to record all decisions via a Delegated Powers Report. Decisions should record that consultation has taken place with the relevant Chairman with a copy of the report published to the Council's website and circulated to members of the relevant committee for information.

5.5 **Risk Management**

5.5.1 Regularising emergency decisions taken and providing a delegation to officers to decide matters normally reserved to committees enables the business of the Council to continue whilst maintain the appropriate level of Member oversight and decision recording.

5.6 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.6.1 The service specification for Local Contact Tracing is set nationally and therefore is set to with all groups in consideration.
- 5.6.2 We have ensured that we have access to interpreting services to ensure we can communicate with people from different ethnic groups who may not have English as a first language.
- 5.6.3 We are currently working on better access for people who are hard of hearing.
- 5.6.4 In making these decisions officers have had regard to the public-sector equality duty. Decision makers should have due regard to the public-sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that decision makers have regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material.

5.7 Corporate Parenting

- 5.7.1 The service is operated in accordance with the requirements of National Test and Trace Service. As outlined in both Delegated Powers Report attached as appendix A (Section 5.8 pg.12) and B (Section 5.8 pg.22).

5.8 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.8.1 N/A

5.9 Insight

- 5.9.1 Analysis of positive test numbers and the number of cases transferred to the Local Contact tracing service was analysed to understand the likely number of calls the Local Test & Trace service were likely to be able to make. This analysis was undertaken by ward and compared to the wards which had consistently high case rates.
- 5.9.2 As capacity within the local team was exceeded by case numbers requiring local contact tracing, we were able to prioritise the wards which the local team would focus on, with the emphasis placed on local areas where a strong offer of support could make a difference to individuals' ability to self-isolate.
- 5.9.3 The caseload and the capacity of the team were monitored weekly using the internally created dashboard which allowed the local contact tracing team to adapt staffing in consultation with Barnet Public Health.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Urgency Committee 27th April 2020, Approval of Emergency Decisions and Delegation to Chief Officers report:
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s58641/Urgency%20Committee%20-%20Emergency%20Decisions%20Final.pdf>