

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE	17 th March 2022
REPORT OF	Simon Jones Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets (Monitoring Officer).
SUBJECT	COVID-19: Emergency Governance and Decisions
STATUS	OPEN (including Appendix) – Update

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIM

The Council has acted in accordance with its statutory duties as a Category 1 responder and marshalled its resources in such a way as to respond to the crisis. This has seen a sea change in Council priorities and deployment of its workforce. Swift and decisive action, taken within the scope of an emergency decision framework, has enabled the ability to meet the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, as we transition to a position of recovery the latter emergency decisions taken are presented to scrutiny.

There has been a tangible galvanisation around the strategic aims of Stronger Economy and Stronger Communities with the cohesive response by the Council, Clinical Commissioning Group, strategic partners and voluntary and community sectors.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Panel has the Constitutional remit to deal with issues arising from the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and emergency planning per se. This report seeks to update the panel as to the range of emergency decisions taken within the emergency governance framework to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. The framework and resultant decisions have been presented to this panel on several occasions in the past (Background papers).

This report covers emergency decisions made since 1st January 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Panel receive and note the emergency decisions taken within the emergency framework

REASONS FOR DECISION

The review of emergency decisions by the Communities Scrutiny Panel forms part of the overall emergency decision making framework.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

As outlined within previous reports, the process for a decision to be made, once monitored by appropriate officers was that the Chair of this panel was engaged to

seek consent to treat the subject matter as one of urgency, so complying with special urgency provisions. Upon consent being given the decision record was submitted to the Chief Executive who then engaged with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets.

Once made, all decisions (with supporting email threads) were published on the Council's website at: <https://www.nelincs.gov.uk/your-council/decision-making/emergency-officer-decisions/>

All recent decisions, since the last report (22nd July 2021), are repeated in the Appendix of this report.

The panel is invited to receive and note the decisions as per the recommendation above.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The risks countenanced by the Monitoring Officer are around whether or not the emergency decision making framework is robust. However, decisions are made at the highest officer level and in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets, thereby giving the decisions both officer and democratic support. All decisions followed the emergency decision making framework and were made in the knowledge that they would be published and appropriately scrutinised. The emergency framework itself is in accordance with established constitutional provisions and statute. The Monitoring Officer feels that risks around governance have been fully mitigated and that the process and framework described above is as robust as it possibly can be.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

There are no other options to be put to the panel

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

Clearly, in responding to the COVID crisis the Council must ensure that its decision-making functions are appropriate, transparent and follow accepted governance principles.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no financial considerations arising from this report itself. Financial implications for each emergency decision made have been captured in the individual decision records.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no such implications arising from this report.

7. MONITORING COMMENTS

In the opinion of the author, this report does not contain recommended changes to policy or resources (people, finance or physical assets). As a result, no monitoring comments have been sought from the Council's Section 151 Officer (Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources) or Strategic Workforce Lead.

8. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All wards.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel 4 June 2020.
Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel 23rd July 2020.
Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel 26th November 2020.
Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel 4th February 2021.
Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel 1st April 2021.
Report to Communities Scrutiny Panel 22nd July 2021.

10. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Simon D Jones. Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets (Monitoring Officer)

Simon D Jones
Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets.
(Monitoring Officer)

Appendix

EMERGENCY DECISIONS

DECISION	SCRUTINY CHAIR CONSENT	SIGN OFF - PFH	SIGN OFF - LEADER	SIGN OFF - JCX	TO DEM SERVICES
Assisted Restrictions Grant Omicron	17.01.22	17.01.22	17.01.22	18.01.22	18.01.22
Workforce Recruitment Retention	15.02.22	16.02.22	16.02.22	16.02.22	16.02.22
Workforce HCV Funding	15.02.22	16.02.22	16.02.22	16.02.22	16.02.22