

MODEL DOCUMENT: Pandemic Contingency Plan Policy

This applies to parish, town and community councils in England and Wales.

In addition to the Council's disaster contingency policy, the Council recognises the need to have a separate pandemic recovery plan and procedure. The reason for this is that a general continuity recovery plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme whereas, for example, in circumstances where a public health emergency is confirmed such as the Coronavirus, the effects of the pandemic could last many months.

The following procedure sets out the contingency measures that the Council will bring into effect in the event of a pandemic.

The procedure aims to ensure that the Council will be able to operate its business to the best of its abilities in such an event while protecting, as far as is reasonably possible, its employees.

Procedure

The Clerk and Councillors are responsible for ensuring that employees understand the Council's pandemic recovery plan policy and procedure. Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the procedure and should speak to the Clerk should they have any questions.

The Council will identify a Pandemic Crisis Management Team. The team will consist of the Clerk, Chairman/Leader of Council and other appropriate councillors and staff

Members of the Pandemic Crisis Management Team will be trained in how to respond to a pandemic. In the event of a pandemic, members of the team will be expected to exercise leadership and make operational and business decisions in accordance with delegated authority.

As a contingency measure, employees will be trained in various functions to ensure that adequate cover is provided in different roles.

A pandemic communications strategy will be developed to ensure that employees are provided with up-to-date and accurate information on the status of the pandemic. Information will be provided to employees via e-mail and through team meetings. As well as other important information, employees will be briefed on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe they, or a colleague, has the virus. Employees will also be provided with instructions regarding personal hygiene to avoid spread of the virus.

The Council's leave and absence policies will be reviewed as the status of the pandemic changes. This includes the Council's policies on sickness absence, time off for dependants and bereavement leave.

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Employees may be required to observe several measures put in place by us to keep the risk of infection to an absolute minimum. Whilst advice will be published at the time in question to ensure it is specific to the pandemic, it is likely that rules will include:

- social distancing at work such as maintaining at least one metre distance between participants in essential meetings, avoiding unnecessary travel, cancellation of face-to-face meetings and working from home
- increased levels of hygiene management including keeping hands clean and coughing and sneezing into tissues which are immediately disposed of
- a requirement for employees to adhere to Government guidance on management of symptoms and self-isolation where recommended.

The above policy and procedure will be continuously reviewed and updated to take account of the changing status of a pandemic.

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