

## Report to: Personnel Committee

**Report Ref:** P1921  
**Meeting Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
**Agenda Item:** 19  
**Prepared By:** Town Clerk



**Subject:** Coronavirus

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### 1.0 BACKGROUND

Coronavirus disease is an infectious disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus not previously seen in humans. The World Health Organisation has declared the outbreak a “*Public Health Emergency of International Concern*” and there has been great attention to the disease and reported outbreaks in the media. As it is a new virus there is a lack of immunity in the population and currently no effective vaccine.

It is expected that a minority of people who get COVID-19 will develop complications severe enough to require hospital care, most often pneumonia. Illness is less common and usually less severe in young adults.

The government is issuing regular guidance on responding to the emerging spread of the disease.

### 2.0 PREPAREDNESS

Three office employees have laptops which would enable them to work from home with minimal difficulty. Four employees have desktop computers. Two older laptops will be prepared for use which will enable two additional members of staff to work from home should it be necessary. The two new computers purchased for the administration staff are compact and could be taken home if necessary.

Toilets in the Council Offices are stocked with anti-bacterial handwash. Further supplies will be obtained when possible and hand sanitiser will be purchased where stocks are available (current attempts to purchase at a reasonable price have been unsuccessful).

Employees who self-isolate on medical advice or are ill with the virus will receive pay in accordance with their contractual sick pay entitlement. The government has announced plans for Statutory Sick Pay to be payable from an employee’s first day of sick leave, at present one member of staff is below the earnings threshold and would receive no payment. If an employee does not self-isolate but is sent home/refused permission to attend work, they will be entitled to paid time off.

WHO advice is to designate a room or area where someone who is feeling unwell or has symptoms can be safely isolated. The Moor Room has been designated for this purpose.



The Town Clerk is monitoring government advice and will implement protocols as recommended by government. The decision to put staff into home working arrangements will be based on risk to the employee/fellow employees and following advice from government.

### **3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED**

The committee should consider whether there are further steps it considers should be taken or policy enacted/varied in respect of the virus.



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