

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN – ACTION PLAN (COVID-19)

In terms of the business continuity position of the Town Council - please find enclosed the existing Business Continuity Plan.

In the WTC Plan a reference is made to the National Flu Pandemic Plan, which would seem to be most appropriate. The entire suite of documents relating to the Plan can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pandemic-flu>.



[Pandemic flu - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pandemic-flu)

www.gov.uk

Pandemic flu planning information for England and the devolved administrations, including guidance for organisations and businesses.

Further information can be obtained from the following sources: -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response>



[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): UK government response - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response)

www.gov.uk

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. Find out how to protect yourself or check if you need medical help on the NHS website Guidance for employers and businesses

In terms of our own response to the National Plan, therefore, the following areas can be identified as relevant to this situation (COVID-19) (see attached document for more details). Actions are in **bold**: -

- Appoint a Pandemic Co-ordinator - **suggest it to be the Town Clerk - will contact key stakeholders/partners**
- Identify critical activities – **WTC has no activities which are life and death - however, we do have several service areas we need to maintain and ensure are OK in terms of materials; suppliers; contractors; security. These are: -**
 - **Parks and open spaces**
 - **School milk**
 - **Payment of invoices**
 - **Concessionary travel payments**
 - **Grants**
 - **Allotments**
- Ensure suppliers have effective business continuity plans - **our main suppliers are school milk provision; grounds maintenance contractor; Town Park (Northwich TC); office supplies; IT**
- Requirement for additional workers - **will look to see if this is required depending on health/availability of existing employees**
- Forecast Employee Absence - **based on key issues - childcare (school closures - three office staff and one groundsmen potentially affected); sickness (everyone could be affected - need to self-isolate - recognise potential impact on older staff who are most at risk [60 years old and over])**
- Assess need for face-to-face - **no real requirement for face-to-face contact with public or staff due to use of ICT**
- Sick Leave policies - **the existing WTC policy for 'infectious diseases' reads as follows: -**

An employee who is prevented from attending work because of contact with infectious disease shall be entitled to receive normal pay whilst absent from work in consequence of this. The period of absence on this account shall not be reckoned against the employee's entitlements under this scheme.

This policy will apply under these circumstances in relation to COVID-19.

- Establish flexible working policies - **the existing WTC policy on flexible working reads as follows: -**

Flexible Working

The Council will try, subject to the needs of the business, to accommodate requests from employees who wish to make changes to their working hours or place of work. Requests for a change in working arrangements can be made by any employee with at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the Council at the time the request is made. The request should:

- ***be made in writing and state this is a flexible working request;***
- ***set out the change requested; and***
- ***describe the impact that the change will have on the operation of the business and how any difficulties caused by the change may be addressed***

When a request is received, the employee will be invited to a meeting to discuss the potential change. The meeting will normally be conducted by the employee's line manager.

The employee will be entitled to be accompanied by a fellow employee to assist in making any representations that may be appropriate. The application may be refused on one or more of several grounds, these being that the proposed changes will result in:

- ***a burden of additional cost;***
- ***a detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand;***
- ***an inability to re-organise work among existing staff;***
- ***an inability to recruit additional staff;***
- ***a detrimental effect on quality;***
- ***a detrimental effect on performance;***
- ***an insufficiency of work during the periods you propose to work;***
- ***a planned structural change; and***
- ***any other ground allowed by regulations.***

In refusing any request the Council will explain the reasons for the refusal in writing and may make an offer of an alternative arrangement. Discussions may then take place to try to agree a way forward. If no agreement is reached then the employee's terms and conditions will remain unchanged, subject to the right of the employee to appeal the decision.

Any meetings should take place in a spirit of cooperation with both sides seeking to reach agreement on an appropriate way forward.

Any change in working arrangements which results from this process will be confirmed to you in writing.

This policy will not prevent managers agreeing to ad hoc arrangements from time to time. However, any such arrangement will not amount to a variation in your terms and conditions of employment unless specifically agreed to the contrary and confirmed in writing. The Council may terminate any such ad hoc agreement at any time and require you to revert to your agreed working

arrangements.

As there will inevitably be a limit to the amount of flexibility the Council can tolerate without detriment to its interests, employees must accept that the fact that a particular working arrangement has been granted to one employee does not oblige the Council to grant it to another.

Under the current circumstances, there will be no requirement for a meeting and the policy will be varied to allow working from home at any time based on government and other advice and based on the needs of the individual employee and the needs of the particular service

- Based on government advice, develop policies for reducing the spread of the pandemic illness at the worksite - **the policy of WTC, unless otherwise advised, will be to ask those who show symptoms to self-isolate for seven days**
- Develop policy for those suspected to be ill, or become ill, at the worksite - **as above (sent home immediately and self-isolate for seven days)**
- Authority to make changes to the organisation's operations - **Town Clerk, or nominated deputy**
- Always provide enough and accessible means for reducing spread of infection - hand-washing facilities/hand hygiene products to be available **in all meetings and all spaces used by WTC**
- Additional measures to reduce risk of infection - **all WTC buildings will be deep cleansed**
- Enhance communications/ICT to support working from home - **laptops to be made available to all office-based staff; information provided on how citizens contact the Council; telephones patched through to employees; tele-conferencing facilities put in place**
- Information to employees - **information on COVID-19 to be provided to all staff**
- Plan - **this plan has been shared with all employees and elected Members**