

# Council

## Planning for a Flu Pandemic – Establishing an Emergency General Purpose Committee

19 October 2009

### Report of the Executive Portfolio Holder for Democratic Services and Member Development

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request Council to agree the establishment of an Emergency General Purpose Committee.

This report is public

#### Recommendations

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The Executive recommends Council to:

- (1) Agree that in the event of an ongoing emergency an Emergency General Purpose Committee be constituted to make any decisions the Council is able to make which are not part of the Executive functions or reserved in legislation to full Council. The composition of the Emergency General Purpose Committee would be the Leader of Council with any member of the Executive as substitute, the Deputy Leader with any member of the majority group as substitute and the Leader of the opposition, with any member of the opposition group as substitute.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 3 August 2009 the Executive considered a report on planning for a flu pandemic informing the Executive of the current situation and seeking approval for proposed actions in the event of significant levels of illness and agreed the following:

##### Resolved

- 1) That it be noted that the government may consider extending self certification from 7 days to 14 days and that a signed medical certificate would not be required.

- 2) That the ICT contingency reserve be utilised to fund expenditure of £15 000 to upgrade the IT infrastructure and ensure that home working is available to all who need it.
- 3) That agreement be given to providing mutual aid and assistance to the PCT as requested which would include making available the locations noted in the report as antiviral distribution centres and redeploying staff if requested provided those staff have the same level of protection as NHS staff. That mutual aid be made available to neighbouring local authorities subject to local circumstances and availability, provided that neither compromise our ability to provide essential services.
- 4) That the trigger for activating the Council's Pandemic Flu Plan would be when the first case is reported in a current employee. That the Cherwell District Council Decision Making contingency Plan as set out in Annex 1 to the minutes (as set out in the minute book) be agreed.
- 5) That if necessary all Executive powers be delegated to an urgency committee made up of any three of the Executive which shall include the Leader or Deputy Leader of Council if possible.
- 6) That Council be recommend in the event of an ongoing emergency to establish an Emergency General Purpose Committee to make any decisions the Council is able to make which are not part of the Executive functions or reserved in legislation to full Council. The composition of the Emergency General Purpose Committee would be the Leader of Council with any member of the Executive as substitute, the Deputy Leader with any member of the majority group as substitute and the Leader of the opposition, with any member of the opposition group as substitute.

### **Proposals**

- 1.2 The decision approved the Cherwell District Council Decision Making Continuity Plans as set out in the Appendix to these minutes, as part of these contingency arrangements an Emergency General Purpose Committee was suggested to make any decisions the Council is able to make which are not part of the Executive functions or reserved in legislation to full Council, in the event of the appropriate level of contingency being triggered due to the non-availability of members in an event such as a flu pandemic. The powers to create such a committee belong to Council.

### **Conclusion**

- 1.3 It is important that the Council ensures that essential decisions can continue to be made for residents of the district and the proposals in this report should enable this to happen.

## **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

<b>Option One</b>	To set up an Emergency General Purpose Committee
<b>Option Two</b>	Not to agree to set up an Emergency General Purpose Committee

## **Implications**

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<b>Financial:</b>	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.  Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance 01295 221551
<b>Legal:</b>	Whilst there are emergency powers under the constitution we do have notice of the emergency in this case and are therefore seeking authority to anticipated actions.  Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services 01295 221686
<b>Risk Management:</b>	By the nature of the report this is dealing with a risk to the district, the residents and to the services we provide.  Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566

## **Wards Affected**

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All

## **Corporate Plan Themes**

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Safer healthier communities

## **Executive Portfolio**

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**Councillor Pickford**  
Portfolio Holder for Democratic Services and Member Development

## **Document Information**

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<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
One	<i>Cherwell District Council's Decision making contingency plans</i>
<b>Background Papers</b>	
Cherwell District Council Pandemic Flu Plan	
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