

## Executive Board – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

<b>Subject:</b>	COVID -19 Excess Deaths - Cost share of Body Storage facilities
<b>Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):</b>	Hugh White, Corporate Director for COVID Response & Recovery
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Councillor Sally Longford, Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Democratic Services
<b>Report author and contact details:</b>	Paul Millward, Head of Resilience, <a href="mailto:Paul.millward@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">Paul.millward@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a> x62980
<b>Other colleagues who have provided input:</b>	Dave Halstead – Director of Neighbourhood Services Sarah Southwell, Senior Emergency Planning Officer
<b>Subject to call-in:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Criteria for Key Decision:</b>	
(a) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £1,000,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision	
<b>and/or</b>	
(b) Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
<b>Type of expenditure:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital
<b>Total value of the decision:</b> £1,139,000	
<b>Wards affected:</b> All	
<b>Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	
<b>Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:</b>	
Nottingham People	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living in Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Growing Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect for Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving Nottingham Better	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summary of issues</b>	
This report outlines the agreed cost share with Nottinghamshire County Council for the provision of Body Storage facilities in Mansfield, and latterly, Nottingham arising from the Government's request to Local Authorities to ensure sufficient Body Storage facilities to cope with potential excess deaths, in line with the Government's Reasonable Worst Case Scenarios for the first and second wave of COVID-19	
<b>Exempt information:</b>	
None	
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	
<b>1</b> To approve the cost split between Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council for the provision of Body Storage facilities in line with the Government's Reasonable worst case scenarios for excess deaths, and	
<b>2</b> To note the provision of the current Body Storage facility for the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) area is available until April 2021.	

### 1 Reasons for recommendations

- 1.1 This report updates Executive Board on the Council's costs arising from the work of the Local Resilience Forum's (LRF) Excess Death cell.

- 1.2 Councils were instructed by the Government to ensure the dignity of the death management process in the event of excess deaths. This work included the provision of additional Body Storage facilities to meet the expected demand.
- 1.3 The Local Resilience Forum's Excess Deaths cell's decisions were informed by the current Government data at the time.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The Government urged LRFs and councils to prepare to provide sufficient body storage facilities to cover the expected 'reasonable worst case scenario' (RWCS) excess deaths as a result of COVID-19. The multi-agency LRF Excess Death Cell was formed, with Dave Halstead, Director of Neighbourhood Services, as its chair. That cell, taking into account the available data which showed that existing storage capacity was clearly insufficient, agreed to commission, with other partners, a body storage facility in Mansfield to meet the demand. The Government clearly urged Councils to prepare for excess deaths and gave the indication that they would fund this work. The Government subsequently allocated in year COVID-19 grants to Councils, Nottingham's allocation to date has been £23.545m. This funding was, in part, for Local Authorities to maintain the dignity of the death management process (which would include expenditure on body storage).
- 2.2 Following discussions at the LRF's Strategic Coordinating Group and the Tactical Coordinating Group it was decided that the site at Crown Farm Mansfield be decommissioned after the first wave of COVID-19 and a smaller site commissioned in Nottingham. The Nottingham facility will be available until April 2021, this being in line with the Government's revised Reasonable worst case scenario for 'wave 2' excess deaths. The council is monitoring capacity weekly, and if the body storage capacity is not under stress over winter we will move to decommission the Nottingham site. If data shows that the store is required after April, a new business case will be brought forward via the LRF.
- 2.3 The provision of Body Storage facilities, on the scale required, has not been undertaken before and, therefore, there was no existing agreement as to how this cost would be allocated between Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council, both having responsibility for Public Health and Emergency Planning. The provision of the Mansfield Body Storage facility was undertaken at great pace and received praise as 'best practice' from the Government as to the efficiency of the operation. There was, inevitably, a national shortage of the specialised equipment necessary for such a facility and some LRFs sought mutual aid from those LRFs who had responded quicker in setting up these facilities.
- 2.4 Although the final cost of the two facilities won't be known until April 2021 it is estimated at £3.254m, the City Council has forecast its share of the costs as £1.139m (35%) and this figure has now been agreed with Nottinghamshire County Council, who have paid all expenses to date. This figure is in line with the grants received by both councils from the Government.
- 2.5 Fortunately, the facility at Mansfield was not used, as the Reasonable worst case scenario provided by the Government at the time of the commissioning of Crown Farm, proved to be more pessimistic than reality. Nevertheless, during March, work with the LRF Data and Information cell showed a clear danger of there being insufficient body storage across the county-wide area if the RWCS had even been partially met. The revised RWCS for wave 2 urges councils to plan for many more

excess deaths but it is currently expected that the facility in Nottingham should meet the needs suggested by the RWCS.

### **3 Other options considered in making recommendations**

- 3.1 The Council must continue to comply with its statutory duties and guidance from Government during this pandemic in order to meet the vital needs of citizens. This expenditure resulted from a unique situation and a number of possible options as to the split of costs between the two councils were considered but, taking into account the Government grants to local authorities and other factors, the above option was agreed by both councils.

### **4 Finance colleague comments (including implications and value for money/VAT)**

- 4.1 Government has made funding available to support Local Authorities with costs of responding to covid-19. This funding can be used to fund activity across specified local authority services including the immediate costs of increasing death management capacity within local areas.

Nottingham has currently received £23.545m as set out in the 'Interim Budget 2020/21, Medium Term Financial Outlook and Draft Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24' report approved at Executive Board on 22 September 2020.

- 4.2 The costs associated with this requirement of £1.139m are included in the 2020/21 forecast which forms part of the report referred to in 4.1 above.

There are currently no costs assumed for 2021/22+ however, if any further financial commitment is required a formal arrangement of cost apportionment is required in advance and it has been assumed that Government would reimburse the cost.

- 4.3 The allocation of the total cost of £3.246m between Nottingham City and County Council is in alignment with the in year funding allocations from Government.

Ceri Walters, Head of Commercial Finance, 6 October 2020

### **5 Legal and Procurement colleague comments (including risk management issues, and legal, Crime and Disorder Act and procurement implications)**

- 5.1 There are no significant legal issues arising out of the proposals contained in the report.

Malcolm Townroe, Director of Legal and Governance, 06 October 2020

### **6 Strategic Assets & Property colleague comments (for decisions relating to all property assets and associated infrastructure)**

- 6.1 N/A

### **7 Social value considerations**

- 7.1 N/A

**8 Regard to the NHS Constitution**

8.1 N/A

**9 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

9.1 Has the equality impact of the proposals in this report been assessed?

No



An EIA is not required because the report is for information

**10 List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)**

None

**11 Published documents referred to in this report**

All relevant Government regulations and guidance published up 04/10/2020  
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>