

**To: COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING POLICY BOARD**

**On: 20 AUGUST 2019**

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**Report by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND PLANNING**

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**Heading: CONSULTATION: INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS:  
GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES IN  
SCOTLAND**

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The Scottish Government has recently launched a consultation on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness: Guidance for Health and Social Care Services in Scotland.
- 1.2 The consultation launched on 19 July 2019 focuses on the guidance and preparedness of Councils and Health and Social Care Partnerships and discusses both the legislative background and details requirements for stakeholders.
- 1.3 Renfrewshire Council has been asked to respond to the Scottish Government with a single response incorporating the views of all relevant services with a deadline of 13 September 2019. As this is in advance of the next meeting of this Board this report seeks approval for the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning to submit a response on behalf of the Council in consultation with the Convener of this Board.
- 1.4 An outbreak of Pandemic Influenza would affect all Services within Renfrewshire Council and many Services have a role in preparing for this including:
  - Civil Contingencies Service
  - Health and Social Care Partnership
  - Children's Services
  - Communities and Public Protection
- 1.5 Following submission of the response in line with Scottish Government timescales a further report will be brought back to this Board with a copy of the response submitted for the information of Board Members.

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## 2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board:
- (i) notes the consultation on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness: Guidance for Health and Social Care Services in Scotland; and
  - (ii) instructs the Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services to submit a response to the Scottish Government (Health Resilience Unit) by 13 September 2019 following discussion and input from relevant services and the Convener of this Policy Board. The Council response will be brought back to the next Policy Board for noting.
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## 3. **Background**

- 3.1 The UK National Risk Register 2017 identifies pandemic flu as the highest risk facing the nation.
- 3.2 Influenza (commonly known as ‘flu’) is a widespread and familiar infection, especially during the winter months. Illness caused by the influenza virus is usually relatively mild and self-limiting. However, some groups of people such as older people, young children and people with certain medical conditions, may be more at risk of severe infection or even death.
- 3.3 Pandemic flu is different from seasonal influenza. It occurs when a new flu strain emerges in the human population and spreads from person to person worldwide. As it is a new virus, the entire population is susceptible as very few people have immunity to it. Therefore, healthy adults, as well as older people, young children and those with existing medical conditions, may be affected. The lack of immunity in the population means that the virus has the potential to spread very quickly from person to person, leading to more people becoming severely ill and potentially many more deaths.
- 3.4 Influenza Pandemic Preparedness documents have been developed to provide guidance for local authorities and health and social care organisations in Scotland to understand the challenges of a pandemic and their roles and responsibilities during various phases.
- 3.5 The document highlights that pandemic planning is taking place at a UK level, with the four UK nations working together to update the UK Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Strategy 2011, on which this guidance is based. It also emphasises key messages from recent national pandemic flu exercises – of agencies planning together to enable an integrated response; and further developing plans to respond to significant increases in demand for services.

- 3.6 Reflecting the particular integrated health and social care landscape in Scotland, this document sets out an expectation that NHS Boards and Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCP) will work closely together to develop scalable plans and enhance each other's as well as the overall resilience of their respective sectors.
- 3.7 The guidance document sets out a strategic approach and principles for combatting a new influenza virus, namely:
- **Precautionary** – Plan for an initial response that reflects the level of risk based on information available at the time, accepting that uncertainty will initially exist;
  - **Proportionality** – Plan to be able to scale up and down in response to the emerging epidemiological, clinical and virological characteristics of the virus and its impact at the time.
  - **Flexibility** – Plan for the capacity to adapt to local circumstances that may be different from the overall UK picture, for instance in 'hotspot' areas.
- 3.8 The guidance further highlights the planning assumptions for excess deaths, scenario planning and the legislative framework – work where the Council will have a significant role alongside the Health and Social Care Partnership.
- 3.9 Planning and preparedness for an influenza outbreak in Scotland is currently robust and strong. The West of Scotland Regional Resilience Partnership has produced a Mass Fatalities Plan to be used in the case of an outbreak and Renfrewshire Council has a local framework document working alongside this wider regional plan.
- 3.10 The Civil Contingencies Service co-ordinates and leads on work with services in Renfrewshire Council and local partner agencies to prepare and update Business Continuity Plans regularly, with a specific focus on preparations for a potential flu pandemic.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** - none
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - none
3. **Community/Council Planning** –  
  
Renfrewshire is well – By reviewing and contributing to the guidance, Renfrewshire Council is in a stronger position to prepare and react to an influenza pandemic. This includes ensuring staff and communities are well and able to continue to function during a pandemic flu.
4. **Legal**– none
5. **Property/Assets** – none

6. **Information Technology**– none
  7. **Equality & Human Rights** - Duty to notify by providing information about potential victims of trafficking will ensure that victims receive appropriate support and assistance contributing to the core component of a human rights approach to ensure equal protection and equal access to support services
  8. **Health & Safety** – none
  9. **Procurement** – none.
  10. **Risk** – This risk of pandemic flu is covered by the national planning assumptions rather than Council Risk Registers.
  11. **Privacy Impact** – none
  12. **Cosla Policy Position** - not applicable
  13. **Climate Risk** – none
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#### **List of Background Papers**

- (a) Background Paper 1. Influenza Pandemic Preparedness – Guidance for Health and Social Care Services.

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Communities, Housing and Planning Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is the Communities and Regulatory Manager

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