

# North Yorkshire County Council

## Executive

7 December 2021

### LGA Outbreak Management Peer Challenge

Report of the Corporate Director – Health and Adult Services

#### 1.0 Purpose of report

##### 1.1 This report

- i. Informs the Executive of the outcome of the LGA Peer Challenge carried out in September 2021 and sets out how the recommendations will be addressed;
- ii. Remembers the more than 1300 people who have lost their lives to Covid-19 in North Yorkshire since the pandemic began; and
- iii. Thanks communities and partner agencies across the County for all their hard work to support people during the past 22 months; to try to prevent, contain and manage the virus; to test and vaccinate the population; and to balance health protection with re-opening the economy and society

#### 2.0 Background

2.1 The Association of Directors of Public Health, working with the Local Government Association in Yorkshire and Humber, have agreed a programme of Peer Challenges as part of their sector-led improvement approach. The purpose of the Peer Challenge, which other Local Authorities in the Region are also undertaking, is to deliver sector-led improvement, assurance and mutual learning.

2.2 The scope of the peer challenge was to explore North Yorkshire County Council's approach to COVID 19 outbreak management. The peer team considered a range of documents sent by the County Council, and spent two half days working remotely with us. During this time they spoke to more than 120 people during 19 meetings, including colleagues from within the Council and partners organisations, councillors and other stakeholders. The team looked at:

- The overall plan and approach
- Governance and leadership
- Partnership working
- Resilience and capacity
- Communications and engagement
- Insight driven health response
- Living with COVID 19
- Care settings
- System-wide learning to assist in local government reform progress and future pandemic planning

2.3 The peers who delivered the peer challenge were:

- Phil Norrey, Chief Executive, Devon County Council
- Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE, Leader, Warwickshire County Council
- Dr Louise Smith, Director of Public Health, Norfolk County Council

- Corinne Harvey, Public Health England (PHE), YH Regional Director
- Ernest Opuni, LGA, Peer Challenge Manager
- Frances Marshall, LGA, Peer Challenge Manager

### **3.0 Feedback**

- 3.1 Feedback from the Team was very positive, and the team concluded that there had been effective system-wide collaboration that prioritised outcomes over organisational boundaries and enabled delivery at pace and scale. Individual and collective leadership were a feature of the response, and “despite considerable fear, people walked towards this risk to provide the best for the people of North Yorkshire”. It concluded that it was important to create space for staff to reflect, recharge and celebrate what has been achieved, as peoples’ experiences are “compounded by significant fatigue and uncertainty about future organisational changes and the ability to adapt to the future pandemic response”. The team commented that, as we move into winter, we should widely articulate and engage staff in a medium-term contain strategy for the winter and beyond, focusing on living with COVID 19. A copy of the full feedback report is shown at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Whilst this positive feedback is welcome, it should be noted that over 1300 North Yorkshire residents have lost their lives to Covid-19 and the Council wants to take this opportunity, as it has on previous occasions, to remember them and their families and friends. It also wants to take this opportunity to thank the 600,000 residents of the County and the Council/partners’ staff and volunteers, as well as businesses, for the huge effort since February 2020 to support people, which continues as the pandemic is still with us.
- 3.3 The team made ten recommendations in the following areas, which are set out in full at Appendix 2.
- Overall approach and living with COVID 19
  - Governance and Leadership
  - Communications
  - Insight-driven health response
  - Resilience and capacity
  - Care settings
  - System-wide learning
- 3.4 Action is already underway to address some of the recommendations, and a full response will be captured in an action plan and progress monitored through Management Board.

### **4.0 Performance Implications**

- 4.1 The report from the Peer Team is external validation of the work and effort of the County Council and “Team North Yorkshire” during the pandemic. It provides valuable feedback on areas for further development as we approach the next few months, and as we transition to “living with COVID”, and dealing with the social and economic consequences.

### **5.0 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Any implications in meeting the recommendations of the Report will be identified as part of the action planning, and reported to Management Board. The national Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), and other funding streams, are being used to support the ongoing Covid-19 response.

## **6.0 Legal Implications**

**6.1** Any implications in meeting the recommendations of the Report will be identified as part of the action planning and reported to Management Board and to Members.

## **7.0 Impact on Other Services/Organisations**

**7.1** Some recommendations will require partnership working with other agencies to deliver, for example, how, as a system, we work together to plan strategically around living with Covid. These measures will be identified as part of the action plan.

## **8.0 Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that Executive Members

- i. Note the feedback report following the Peer Challenge, at Appendix 1;
- ii. Note that an action plan will be developed and monitored through Management Board and reported to Executive as required;
- iii. Remember all of the North Yorkshire residents who have lost their lives to Covid-19 and to publicly express the County Council's condolences to their families and friends; and
- iv. Thank all North Yorkshire residents, including community, public and private sector partners and volunteers for all of their hard work over the past 22 months.

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23 November 2021

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Background Documents – None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Feedback Report from Peer Challenge  
Appendix 2 – List of Peer Team Recommendations