

Notice of KEY Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Decision to approve the new staffing structure for the Outbreak Control Service and its associated funding
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Viddy Persaud Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety
SLT Lead:	Barry Francis Director of Neighbourhoods Public Realm Bronze
Report Author and contact details:	Chris Barrett Programme Manager Chris.Barrett@havering.gov.uk
Policy context:	The Council's response to COVID-19: Reducing the spread of infection and preventing further outbreaks
Financial summary:	In addition to the pre agreed amount of £1.320m allocated in November 2020, the Outbreak Control Service will require a further £1.193m to provide the services required. It is anticipated that the full cost of the Outbreak Control Service structure will be £2.513m over a period of 12 months.
Reason decision is Key	(a) Expenditure or saving (including anticipated income) of £500,000 or more
Date notice given of intended decision:	8th July 2021

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Relevant OSC:	Public Realm Bronze
Is it an urgent decision?	No
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	No

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connections making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is recommended that the Director of Neighbourhoods approve the new staffing structure to employ additional 15 employees for the Outbreak Control Service at a cost of £722,609. The total additional funding requested for the Outbreak Control Service is £1,193,000.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

3.4 Powers of Second Tier Managers

Human Resource powers

To exercise responsibility for all human resource matters within their service, providing that the following requirements are met:

(c) the creation of a new post outside of the Council's organisational change process requires the agreement in writing or by e-mail of

(i) the relevant Cabinet Member for a post up to PO7 or

(ii) the relevant Cabinet Member and the Leader of the Council for a post above PO7

such agreement to be given or withheld within seven working days of being sought

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

1. Background to Outbreak Control Service

As the COVID-19 pandemic gained momentum throughout 2020 the Council's Public Protection (PP) Service led the Council's response with respect to advising and enforcing the restrictions placed upon businesses and the public from the March 2020 lockdown.

In November 2020, Members agreed a structure for a new Outbreak Control Service (OCS), separate to Public Protection. The new service was positioned in Civil Protection alongside Public Protection. The new Head of the Outbreak Control Service, identified in the structure, was appointed in March 2021 and is progressing the recruitment of the staffing complement approved in the November 2020 report. At the time it was anticipated that recruitment to several fixed term posts might replace the agency staff who have provided much of the additional expertise and capacity required, to design and deliver the coronavirus outbreak management response since last summer. However, since the initial OCS was designed the responsibilities of the Council and funding provided by Central Government have greatly increased. As a

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result, an expanded team is both necessary and affordable; and it is proposed that alongside recruiting new staff on a fixed term basis, interim staff will be retained for the foreseeable future thereby preserving the knowledge and expertise acquired thus far and making it easier to vary the capacity of the OCS in the future as needed.

The COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving and developing. It is important that the OCS is structured and managed in a flexible and adaptive manner that can develop and evolve to meet the new and emerging operational demands placed upon it.

2. Aim & Vision of The Outbreak Control Service

The aim and vision for the OCS is to ensure Havering is a safe place to live; through helping to protect everyone who lives, works, or travels to Havering, from the implications and effects of Covid-19. The Outbreak Management Plan details the Council's responsibilities in responding to the pandemic. The OCS has been established to deliver the various aspects of the Council's response as detailed in the plan.

3. Original Staffing Structure for OCS

The original financial envelope agreed by Cabinet for the OCS in November 2020 was £1,320,000. This was funded through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

4. Rationale for developing a new service structure

The pandemic and the response the Council needs to make, has moved on rapidly since November 2020, which has resulted in the Council requiring the following:

- Testing on site is declining due to infection rates stabilising, however if infection numbers increase as modelled for autumn and winter then demand will increase. Therefore, when planning the future of this service there should be a flexible approach to standing up testing provision and this has been set out in the future operating model for post June 2021.
- Pilot of isolation support.
- Further development of an offer for isolation support.
- Prepare a surge testing response to variants of concern.
- Developing an enhanced contact tracing service which includes backward, and forwards contact tracing.

The staffing and organisational structure agreed in November 2020 is therefore no longer sufficient and has been reviewed to amalgamate it with all the new areas of work. We have proposed a new structure that aims to meet the demands of the additional requirements, and this is outlined in [Appendix 3](#).

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Within the new structure the Council require an additional Assistant Head of Service, 1 Senior Outbreak Control Officer, 12 Outbreak Control Officers and 1 Project Officer at a total cost of £722,609. These positions will be offered on a fixed term basis. Within this structure there is a core of qualified environmental health officers (EHO's), who will provide the professional expertise and technical direction for the overall effective delivery of the OCS. As part of the COVID Secure workstreams, staff qualified and/or experienced in health and safety legislation are essential to this delivery area.

The Council have made a provision for a contingency of £358,000 for agency costs. This is the full cost of staffing the service for 12 months by filling all vacant posts with agency staff. This gives the OCS the flexibility to scale up and down the workforce according to demand at short notice and therefore allows it to recruit in a flexible, cost-effective way, for the Council. Any unspent contingency funds will be returned to the Outbreak Control Management Fund.

The OCS is requesting additional funding of £1,193,000, bringing the total projected costs for the Outbreak Control Service to £2,513,000 which will be used as follows:

Activity	Detail	
Outbreak Control staffing establishment	This represents the existing staff team structure as of Nov 2020 plus increased capacity to include Assistant Head of Service, 1 Senior Outbreak Control Officer, 12 Outbreak Control Officers, 1 Project Officer.	£1.780m
Agency	Contingency funds for staff costs x 12 months	£0.358m
Overtime	OOH 1/3/21 to 30/6/21 for PP staff covering weekends	£0.045m
Training and Development, General Office, Legal, ICT, Recharges	Develop (online) training and self-help aids re. IPC / COVID security for priority business / community settings. Legal fees, ICT hardware, internal recharges, office expenses	£0.031m
Transport costs	Staff travel expenses and mileage.	£0.010m
Contact Tracing	Provided through Customer Services Telephony	£0.289m
Total		£2.513m

5. Costs and Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Director of Neighbourhoods approve the new staffing structure to employ 15 employees for the Outbreak Control Service at a cost of £722,609. The total additional funding request for the Outbreak Control Service is £1,193,000, bringing the total project costs for the Outbreak Control Service to £2,513,000. These costs will be met from the Outbreak Control Management Fund (COMF), which is funded by central government.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Other than the options identified in the statement above, no other alternative options were considered. If the capacity of the Outbreak Control Service is not increased, then London Borough of Havering would not have sufficient capacity to meet all

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requirements of the service, as set out in this report, therefore any unused COMF would need to be returned.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

Pre-decision consultation has been held with key stakeholders from Outbreak Control, Public Health and Corporate Finance. A briefing paper on the service redesign was presented to and agreed by SLT.

NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Sasha Taylor

Designation: Head of Outbreak Control Service

Signature: *S. Taylor*

Date: 18/06/2021

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Protection Outbreak Control Service Plan and Enforcement Policy set out the legal obligations placed upon the Council in response to the transmission of the COVID-19 across the community and businesses etc. COVID-19 is identified as one of 31 notifiable diseases under The Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010. The list of diseases is maintained by Public Health England. The majority of COVID-19 outbreaks will be dealt with at a local level and there are a number of existing and new powers available to the Council to control the spread of COVID-19 in the borough. These powers are summarised in the Outbreak Control Service Plan.

Part 3 [Responsibility for Functions] of the Council's Constitution para 3.4 Powers of Second Tier Managers

Human Resource powers

To exercise responsibility for all human resource matters within their service, providing that the following requirements are met:

- (a) all decisions must be taken in accordance with human resource policies
- (b) all appointments to permanent posts must be within the approved establishment and be appointments to an identifiable vacant post and all appointments to temporary posts must be within existing service budgetary provision
- (c) the creation of a new post outside of the Council's organisational change process requires the agreement in writing or by e-mail of
 - (i) the relevant Cabinet Member for a post up to PO7 or
 - (ii) the relevant Cabinet Member and the Leader of the Council for a post above PO7 such agreement to be given or withheld within seven working days of being sought

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The original financial envelope agreed by Cabinet for the OCS in November 2020 was £1.320m. This was funded through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

Within the new structure the Council require an additional Assistant Head of Service, 1 Senior Outbreak Control Officer, 12 Outbreak Control Officers and 1 Project Officer at a total cost of £722,609. These positions will be offered on a fixed term basis.

The total additional funding request for the Outbreak Control Service is £1.193m, bringing the total projected costs for the Outbreak Control Service to £2.513m. These costs have been earmarked and will be met from the Outbreak Control Management Fund (COMF).

**HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS
(AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)**

All additional posts proposed for creation in this report will be formally created through the Council's Establishment Control Process. All employees directly affected by the proposals contained in this report will be managed in accordance with the Council's published HR and specific Covid-19 related policies and guidance.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

9.2 The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The purpose of establishing the Outbreak Control Service is to deliver an ongoing operational response to the pandemic, as set out in the Havering Outbreak Management Plan. The Service supports the wider efforts of the Council, partner agencies and the local community to ensure that residents, visitors and workforces are safe; actions that make an essential contribution to enabling the Recovery agenda, with its impact on the wider determinants of health.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Delete as applicable

Proposal NOT agreed because

Details of decision maker

Signed

Name:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date:

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Committee Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____