

Message

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Sent: 17/03/2020 11:02:02 AM
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CC: Peter May [peter.may@justice-ni.x.gsi.gov.uk]
Subject: COVID 19

David

We spoke.

Here are some thoughts for you to consider. You might then want to ask Perm Secs to think about the note below so you can start tomorrow with something to discuss.

As discussed, this is unprecedented and there is no plan to reach for which covers every thing. So I'm sure the note below can be improved on.

You are going to ask Perm Secs to prioritise and release resources. This is going to require collective decision making framework but some key issues will need very clear ownership. This might require a different approach to be developed.

On the issue of priorities, I've given Andrew a suggested framework for how we might cut back on Brexit work. Conscious that many of the people you need on COVID are currently on Brexit work in departments. If Andrew is happy, that will require discussion tomorrow so that Perm Secs have the space to call on some of their best planners.

I am hoping to speak to PSNI later about the note below, and will do so on the basis that this is a draft. But would give them a feel for the sort of issues which might come their way.

Chris, Anthony and I can have a chat later or tomorrow about roles and responsibilities. If Chris felt the Brexit split worked well (cumulative planning on my side, c3 on Chris's side) that can be a start but that happy to be flexible.

The note below is in the system but I don't have an electronic version (sorry). I can circulate this properly v early tomorrow. You'll see that it is person centric and focuses on health and well being. Brexit risks stemmed from a shift in international relations and trade arrangements. But quite a lot of the Brexit risks and mitigations will be relevant. We will draw on existing Departmental plans too, and bring that all into one assessment. I'll need Perm Secs to identify the right people for me to work with.

I also need to know from Chris how we are docking into Whitehall structures, and whether we are following their planning assumptions and reasonable worst case scenario.

Karen

Draft

COVID 19

Introduction

The best response to COVID 19 will involve the following strategic objectives and activities:

1. Planning

- all parts of the public sector will refresh and be ready to invoke response plans
- a joined up approach across the public sector to understand and mitigate as far as possible cumulative impacts, interdependencies with other risks and concurrent planning requirements
- a base case and planning assumptions which reflect the issues likely to arise for NI

2. Liaison

- Effective liaison with Whitehall, other Devolved Administrations and the Irish Government
- effective liaison with the private and VCS sectors
- effective liaison with other key stakeholders and sectoral interests

3. Messaging

- strong and clear public messaging
- accessible messaging

4. Decision making

- political and administrative decision making
- clear and transparent underpinning objectives and values
- Robust C3 and CCGNI arrangements
- Good governance
- All actions and decisions recorded to aid scrutiny
- Proactive engagement with the assembly and committees
- Financial decisions clearly articulated
- key you decisions taken within the executive and CCGNI

5. Enablers

- for the NICS this will require HR, finance, IT and accommodation solutions to assist delivery
 - collaborative working
- Prioritisation and flexible approaches
Reliance on previous learning and best practice, but activities and decisions focused on COVID-19 realities

6. Response

- Short medium and long-term responses
- Maintain joined up working at strategic level beyond the short term activities
- Ensure that response is coordinated at strategic level alongside PFG, available resources and other executive priorities over the medium and long-term

1. Planning

NICS departments will have response plans and business continuity plans. These are likely to be focused on departmental business delivery requirements, and COVID-19 requires a real time plan and response of an unprecedented nature.

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It will be essential therefore for a joined up and NICS And public sector approach. This needs to be a combination of robust department and public sector plans, and a cumulative impact assessment which describes the interactions which are specific to COVID-19.

The starting point would be the articulation of the base case and planning assumptions, including the reasonable worst case scenario for Northern Ireland. It will be essential to read across to other planning considerations, such as the U.K.'s exit from the EU and likely available resources.

Actions:

- 1.1 develop base case, planning assumptions and reasonable worst case scenario for Northern Ireland
- 1.2 instruct that departments and wider public sector refresh plans to meet COVID-19 reality is
- 1.3 produce a cumulative impact assessment and keep under review

2. Liaison

NI Will have specific issues and risks. However, planning and delivering our response will benefit from liaison with administrations which are experiencing similar issues and risks. NICS should engage with the Whitehall civil contingencies Secretariat, Scottish government, Welsh government and the Irish government to ensure that our interests, Risks and issues are understood and that we can benefit from the most up-to-date information.

The private sector will have some specific concerns and also solutions are mitigations which can benefit the overall response. Issues will include short, medium, and long-term economic impacts as well as the role the private sector to comply in easing the short-term impacts of COVID-19. The voluntary and community sector plays a vital role in service delivery, community cohesion and supporting vulnerable citizens. The CS will play an important role in short, medium, and long-term activities. The VCS could be impacted in their ability to play that role through staff, financial, And logistical impacts. If that is the case, there will be an impact on delivery and outcomes some of which are important to business as usual public sector objectives.

Other stakeholders, community leaders, statutory advocates (e.g. for children and older people), Trade unions, and sectoral Interests will be vital to delivery and messaging. These include faith leaders, community voices, financial institutions, academics and other influencers. It will be vital to both retain the strong networks which have been developed by individual departments and to take crosscutting and sectoral approaches to effective engagement.

Actions:

- 2.1 develop a central engagement strategy which enables two-way communication, supports delivery and provides for constructive challenge
- 2.2 To build on departmental stakeholder networks which are proven to be effective
- 2.3 be responsive to sectoral requests for engagement and information

3. Messaging

Citizens and stakeholders will need clear advice and messaging. Individual citizens are likely to respond as they best believe for their circumstances. They will need a clear baseline of medically sound and understandable

information which should be kept under review, and changes or new information will need to be explained to inform decisions.

This will include advice on how to keep safe personally, how to protect vulnerable relatives and neighbours, and how they can contribute To overall best outcomes including responsible shopping and required isolation. It will also include clear advice on how to access support.

Recognising that COVID-19 has the potential to impact all of our society, P'll links to the rest of the island, GB and beyond, messaging should be fully inclusive and accessible.

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Recognising that COVID-19 has the potential to impact all of our society, our links to the rest of the island, GB and beyond, messaging should be fully inclusive and accessible.

Actions:

3.1 establish a central communications response which deliver strong and clear advice in line with political and administrative decisions

3.2 To keep communication is under review and in line with developments

3.3 deliver messages in an inclusive way which takes account of vulnerable persons, languages, and formats and the needs of those who are outside of NI on a temporary basis

4. Decision making

There will be a need to harness departmental expertise and planning experience, operational responsibilities, and best practice within a framework which includes executive competence, ministerial responsibilities and collective decision-making.

There will need to be a set of clear and strong objectives for the response to COVID-19, starting with the health and well-being of citizens. This may drive a citizen centric approach to planning and response, taking account of the short medium and long-term economic well-being of Northern Ireland. This would be underpinned by our values for the health and well-being of our citizens, the short, medium, long-term societal and economic interests, and the need for a whole of society approach, individual and collective roles and responsibilities, and respect and dignity for those who are ill or bereaved.

To support and inform the response and effective decision-making, C3 and CCGNI arrangements will be in place within a national framework And in close liaison with other devolved administrations and the Irish government. They will be close working with local government key stakeholders and emergency services. Into dependencies with other planning and risks will be understood and accommodated.

Good governance arrangements will be in place. This will include clear decision-making, escalation roots from departments in line with C3 doctrine which will be agreed as early as possible. Operational decisions will be taken at the lowest level appropriate to the required decision.

There will be a contemporaneous recording of actions And key decisions to 8 scrutiny. Transparency and open decision-making will be a guiding principle.

The process for responding to COVID-19 will proactively recognise the real time and future interests of the scrutiny role of the assembly and committees.

The costs associated in responding to COVID-19 and the short, medium, and long-term implications for Northern Ireland will be a consideration. All finance related decisions will be articulated and recorded. Normal processes will be a dear to whenever possible, subject to the need to take swift decisions in line with objectives and values. And key decisions to aid scrutiny. Transparency and open decision-making will be a guiding principle.

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Collective decision-making within the executive and CCG and I will be the default position for crosscutting, significant or controversial decisions.

Actions:

- 4.1 collective decision-making will be the default position of the critical decisions and the executive or CCGNI will be the forum
- 4.2 objectives and values will be agreed and transparent decision-making will be key for scrutiny and public confidence
- 4.3 C3 arrangements will be stored up and prioritised within a NICS resources
- 4.4 . Four there will be escalation roots within a doctrine of decisions being taken at the lowest possible operational level
- 4.5 there will be a robust system of recording actions and decisions to aid scrutiny
- 4.6 The role of the assembly and committees will be fully respected
- 4.7 there will be a robust system for recording finance related decisions and costs

6. Enablers

The NICS response Will require HR, Finance, IT and accommodation decisions to act As a neighbours which are consistent with the overall objectives and values for the COVID-19 response.

The leadership role required to support planning and Delivery Will centre on collaborative working and prioritisation of COVID-19. Staff and teams will be flexible and agile, and management will have a clear focus on staff well-being and resilience.

Planning and response will be cognisant of existing plans, best practice, and lessons learnt. For example, winter preparedness, business continuity, and Brexit no deal planning will be informative. However all plans must be focused on COVID-19 realities.

Alex a sets out a framework for departments to work together in a cluster approach on six objectives and across 20 work streams.

Actions :

- 5.1 Department of finance to lead on business enablers
5. 2NICS leaders To model collaborative working and to be responsible for staff well-being and resilience
- 5.3 and ICS to model flexible working and an outcome/values-based focus
- 5.4 Four existing plans will be informative but not determinative

6. Response

The response to COVID-19 will be driven by the public health strategy in line with an objective to safeguard the health and well-being of our citizens in this phase, concurrent work will be needed to mitigate the well-being of the Northern Ireland economy. Considerations will be needed in respect of societal issues including dignity and respect for the deceased and bereaved. There will be a focus on delivery with stakeholders and a focus on staff well-being. Good Governance arrangements will be in place.

For medium-term recovery, joined up collaborative working will continue to be required reflecting the wide-ranging economic and societal impact is likely to arise from COVID-19.

The contact for the medium to long-term recovery will be driven at a strategic level alongside PFG, available resources and other executive priorities.

Actions:

- 6.1 permanent secretaries to immediately identify senior officials to engage in the work described In Annex a and to assist in the development of the cumulative impact assessment
- 6.2 COVID-19 recovery should be built into medium to long-term strategic planning

Annex A

Covered 19 departmental planning clusters and work streams

1. The health and well-being of our citizens

- 1. DoH and pha – health and social care strategy and response
- 2. EIS and pha - Communications to citizens
- 3. DoH and DOJ – people in our care (looked after children and people in custody)
- 4. DOE and DFE - Health and well-being of our young people, their education and their future prospects
- 5. DOH, DFI, DAERA, DFE and DOJ - Supplies And production of essential goods and critical services (medicines, food, water, chemicals, fuels) and distribution to vulnerable people and groups (school meals, people in custody, the homeless, Self isolating and other vulnerable groups)

2. Economic well-being of Northern Ireland

- 6. DfE and DAERA - Economic impacts, short, medium and long term
- 7.DfC – support for vulnerable citizens (benefits and debt advice)
- 8. DOF – engagement with Treasury

3. Societal and community well-being

- 9. DfC – role of and impact on the VCS
- 10.DfE and DOJ – societal responses to pressures
- 11. DOH and DOJ – dignity and respect for deceased and bereaved

4. Our delivery priorities and service delivery

- 12. DfC – working with local government
- 13. All - Maintaining critical services and reprioritisation

- 14. All – stakeholder engagement on sectoral issues
- 15. TEO – overall coordination of crosscutting engagement

5. Our people

- 16. DOF and permanent secretaries – well-being and resilience of our staff
- 17. All – prioritisation of COVID-19 planning and response

6. Good governance

- 18. TEO and dof – governance and decision-making
- 19. TEO and departments – assembling committee liaison
- 20. TEO and departments – working with Whitehall, other devolved administrations and the Irish government

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