

Northborough Parish Council

EMERGENCY DELEGATED POWERS (previously High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID)) POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In response to the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus in March 2020, this policy was adopted in order to permit powers to be delegated to the Clerk without the need to convene a meeting of the council. This update extends the policy to allow delegated powers whatever the reason it becomes necessary.
- 1.2. Northborough Parish Council actively seeks to protect the Councillors and Staff working for and on behalf of the council and its activities as well as the residents it represents. As such, and following any current Public Health England (PHE) and government guidelines, the following policy applies to any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) as defined by PHE.
- 1.3. In addition there may be the need for such a policy if the council is unable to convene, including if there are insufficient councillors to be quorate, or legislation or a directive from the principal authority prevents the council from meeting for a period of time.
- 1.4. This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of an HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Parish of Northborough, or other reason that it is unable, or expected to be unable, to meet.

2. Scope of the policy

- 2.1. The main area of concern for Northborough Parish Council is:

- Remaining an effective council

And with respect to HCIDs, is:

- Safety & Health of Councillors, Staff, Contractors and Members of Public

3. Activation of the policy

- 3.1. This policy is considered to be activated, when

- There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the parish or Northborough, **or** another reason makes it ,or is expected to make it, impossible for the council to meet for three months or more, **and**
- At least 3 councillors have requested its activation to the Chair, and subsequently notified the Clerk, **or** the Chair plus 2 councillors have requested its activation to the Clerk, **or** its activation is resolved in a meeting of the Northborough Parish Council.

OR

- The government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings or has taken other action that makes the convening of a council meeting impossible.

4. Deactivation of the policy

- 4.1. This policy is considered to be deactivated, when

- When the imminent threat of infection in the parish of Northborough or the other reason for not meeting has passed **and**

- A minimum of 3 councillors have requested public meetings be recommenced **and**
- The government of the United Kingdom has reversed its action that may have caused activation of the policy.

5. Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

5.1. A HCID is defined as

- acute infectious disease
- typically has a high case-fatality rate
- may not have effective prophylaxis or treatment
- often difficult to recognise and detect rapidly
- ability to spread in the community and within healthcare settings
- requires an enhanced individual, population and system response to ensure it is managed effectively, efficiently and safely

5.2. The current list of HClDs as defined on www.gov.uk (11/03/2020)

Contact HCID	Airborne HCID
Argentine haemorrhagic fever (Junin virus)	Andes virus infection (hantavirus)
Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (Machupo virus)	Avian influenza A H7N9 and H5N1
Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)	Avian influenza A H5N6 and H7N7
Ebola virus disease (EVD)	Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)
Lassa fever	Monkeypox
Lujo virus disease	Nipah virus infection
Marburg virus disease (MVD)	Pneumonic plague (<i>Yersinia pestis</i>)
Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS)	Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)*
	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

At any such time as a new disease is classified as a HCID, it shall be treated as if it were in the list above and this policy shall apply.

6. Matters relating to staff

6.1. All staff

6.2. In the event of a HCID outbreak the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC) will issue guidance for employers which the council will follow. A summary of the most recent guidance during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 is detailed below

6.2.1. *Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.*

6.2.2. *In accordance with Part 2 Para 10.9 of the 'Green Book', if an employee is fit for work but decides or is instructed to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. We would expect all options for home or remote working to be explored with the employee. As they are 'well' at this stage they should stay on normal full pay for the duration of the self-isolation period until such time as they are confirmed to have contracted any such HCID, at which point they transfer to sickness absence leave and the usual provisions of the sickness scheme will apply.*

6.2.3. *In circumstances where an employee decides to self-isolate without instruction from the authorities it is not unreasonable for the employer to ask for some evidence such as an email from a holiday operator that shows the dates of the holiday, the resort location*

and flight details. However, it will probably not be possible in all cases for an employee to produce any evidence, so employers will need to use their discretion when trying to establish the facts behind the employee's decision to self-isolate

- 6.2.4. *If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have coronavirus, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the employee may then have been in direct contact with the virus we would expect only working from home arrangements to be then considered for the duration of the incubation period. Employers should keep in touch to support employees.*
- 6.2.5. *(Following any school closures, employers should be fully supportive of employees with childcare responsibilities and consider flexible working arrangements, including adapting working patterns to care for children or dependents or taking time off, whether this is special leave, annual leave or flexible working.)*

6.3. Clerk

- 6.3.1. Northborough Parish Council has no offices of its own and the Clerk's primary place of work is at home. Members of the public are met by appointment only. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, no appointments will be permitted, except in accordance with social distancing in place in accordance with government guidelines.
- 6.3.2. The village hall, or any other public location used for Parish Council meetings is the 2nd normal place of work for the Clerk. This is dealt with in Section 7.

6.4. Other staff

- 6.4.1. Northborough Parish Council employs a cleaner part of whose employment is held on behalf of Northborough Community Association. This element of employment, and any other held on behalf of another organisation, shall be subject to the decisions of that organisation with regard implementation to 'Green Book' guidance, provided those decisions are compliant within current legislation.
- 6.4.2. All other employment is carried out by staff at their own home or outdoors around the parish. During any active outbreak of a HCID in the UK, they may work as normal and are expected follow government guidelines with regard to contact with members of the council and public.
- 6.4.3. In accordance with normal practice, the Clerk reports to the council, with line management by the Chair and Vice Chair. All other staff report to the Clerk.

7. Public Meetings

- 7.1. It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that council business shall be conducted at public meetings of the council and any committees.
- 7.2. Councillors and committee members can choose not to attend public meetings. As an officer of the council, the Clerk is expected to attend.
- 7.3. Due to the likelihood of a number of members and public being considered "high risk" with respect to HClDs listed in Section 5.2, and to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy, if the reason for activating it is an HCID outbreak.

8. Delegated Authority

- 8.1. To allow the council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Clerk for the duration of the activation of this policy.
 - 8.1.1. Planning applications, after consultation with a minimum of 3 councillors, a summary response will be circulated to all councillors for comment prior to submission to Peterborough City Council by the Clerk.

8.1.2. Finance

- 8.1.2.1. all standard regular payments as listed in the attached schedule shall be administered the Clerk at the appropriate time to prevent unnecessary hardship, interruption in service or late charges.
- 8.1.2.2. all other payment to be administered by the Clerk after consultation with a minimum of 2 councillors, preferably Chair and Vice Chair.
- 8.1.2.3. All payments to be made by BACS according to normal practice, using Unity Trust Bank's 'triple signature' procedure.
- 8.1.2.4. All payments will be formally authorised by the full council at the next full council meeting.
- 8.1.2.5. Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the Clerk will prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all of councillors. On the written (by email) acceptance of a minimum of 3 councillors, they will be signed by the Clerk and Chairman, as required, for submission to the external and internal auditors. The accounts will be accepted by resolution at the next full council meeting.

8.1.3. Responses to other communications. The Clerk will circulate at the earliest opportunity, any communication from any 3rd parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the council. The Clerk will circulate a summary response and respond to the 3rd party after authorisation by at least two councillors.

8.1.4. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, where this policy is activated during a meeting of the council the meeting will be adjourned. Using the delegated authority as elsewhere detailed in this policy, the Clerk will endeavour to complete the remaining agenda, the outcome of which will be reported to the council at the next full Council meeting.

9. Review of the policy

- 9.1. This policy was approved by the Parish Council at its meeting on 25th March 2020 and is presented for adoption with amendments. It will be reviewed annually in May, at the Annual Council Meeting.

Presented by Catherine Franks, Clerk

Proposer: Cllr John Dadge (Chair)

Seconder: Cllr Mark Malcolm

RESOLVED unanimously for adoption, Minute 21.65.4, 5th May 2021

[Schedule of Regular Payments can be found here](#)