

Leicester
City Council

PLEASE NOTE THE TIME OF THIS MEETING

PLEASE NOTE: this will be a 'virtual meeting', a link to which will be available on the Council's website at least 24 hours before the meeting.

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

DATE: THURSDAY, 21 MAY 2020
TIME: 3:00 pm
PLACE: Teams Virtual Meeting

Members of the Committee

Councillor Cassidy (Chair)
Councillor Joel (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Dawood, Halford, Joshi, Kitterick, Porter, Thalukdar (substitute),
Waddington and Westley

Youth Council Representatives

To be advised

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

Elaine Baker

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Kalvaran Sandhu (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

Elaine Baker (Democratic Support Officer),

*Tel: 0116 454 6355, e-mail: elaine.baker@leicester.gov.uk
Leicester City Council, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ*

Information for members of the public

PLEASE NOTE that any member of the press and public may view or listen in to proceedings at this 'virtual' meeting via a weblink which will be publicised on the Council website at least 24 hours before the meeting. It is important, however, that Councillors can discuss and take decisions without disruption. The only participants in this virtual meeting therefore will be the Committee members, the officers advising the Committee and any members of the public who have registered to participate in accordance with the Committee's rules relating to petitions and to questions, representations, or statements of case.

Attending meetings and access to information

You have the right to attend, view, or listen to (as appropriate) formal meetings such as full Council, committee meetings & Scrutiny Commissions and see copies of agendas and minutes. On occasion however, meetings may, for reasons set out in law, need to consider some items in private.

Dates of meetings and copies of public agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website at www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk, from the Council's Customer Service Centre or by contacting us using the details below.

Making meetings accessible to all

Braille/audio tape/translation - If you require this please contact the Democratic Support Officer (production times will depend upon equipment/facility availability).

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Elaine Baker, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 454 6355.** Alternatively, email elaine.baker@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151.**

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 12 February 2020 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

6. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on any petitions received.

7. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT

Appendix B

The Monitoring Officer submits a report that updates Members on the monitoring of outstanding petitions. The Committee is asked to note the current outstanding petitions and agree to remove those petitions marked 'Petitions Process Complete' from the report.

8. QUESTIONS FROM SCRUTINY COMMISSION MEMBERS REGARDING THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Appendix C

Attached are questions received from Scrutiny Commission members in relation to the Council's response to the Coronavirus situation and the financial implications of this. As these questions relate to matters covered in the reports following this item, responses to the questions will be provided during consideration of the reports.

9. LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL'S CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

Appendix D

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submits a report summarising the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic locally within the city, the way in which services have responded, impacts and implications for the Council's employees, and how the Council has supported residents to date during the crisis.

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) consider the Council's local response to the Coronavirus pandemic and comment as appropriate, including those areas seen as good practice and any aspects where lessons can be learnt, or things can be improved going forward; and
- b) note the ongoing work relating to 'recovery' and the intention to provide further updates to scrutiny as this work progresses.

10. IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE 2020/21 BUDGET

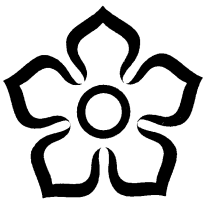
Appendix E

The Director of Finance submits a report summarising the initial financial impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Council's revenue budget. The Committee is recommended to note the report and make comments to the Director of Finance and City Mayor as wished and to support the City Mayor's stance that the Council expects Government to meet the full costs incurred.

11. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

The City Mayor will answer questions raised by members of the Overview Select Committee on issues not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Cassidy (Chair)
Councillor Joel (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Dawood	Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Govind (sub for Councillor Khote)	Councillor March (sub for Councillor Joshi)
Councillor Halford	Councillor Porter

In Attendance:

Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor

* * * * *

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joshi, Khote, Waddington and Westley.

Councillor March was present as the appointed substitute for Councillor Joshi and Councillor Govind was present as the appointed substitute for Councillor Khote. Councillor Sandhu was appointed as substitute for Councillor Waddington, but submitted apologies for absence.

56. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Halford declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 11, "Housing Revenue Account Budget (Including Capital Programme) 2020/21", in that she was a Council tenant. Councillor Halford remained in the meeting during consideration of this item, but took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

57. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 28 November 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

58. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

a) Minute 47(c), “Questions for the City Mayor – ‘Lying Figure No. 1’ Painting”

It was queried whether the recently announced improvement works and changes to security at New Walk Museum and Art Gallery had been as a result of the question asked at the meeting of this Committee held on 28 November 2019 about the “Lying Figure No. 1” painting and whether that question had prompted an increase in visitor numbers.. It also was asked what the picture was insured for and whether this was an accurate reflection of its value, as an international auction house had contacted a member of the Committee and offered to undertake a valuation.

In reply, the City Mayor explained that the Council’s art collection was valued in its entirety on a regular basis, with each piece being insured separately. However, he did not consider it appropriate to disclose the value for an individual piece in public. He also noted that security arrangements were audited regularly by an independent assessor, whose recommendations were acted on. The last audit had been approximately 2 – 3 years ago and work arising from this had already been completed, or was in progress.

The City Mayor noted that it was impossible to know the reason why every visitor had gone to the Museum and Art Gallery, so was unable to say whether the question asked at the last meeting had prompted an increase in visitor numbers.

b) Minute 52(c), “Scrutiny Commissions’ Work Programmes – The underachievement of ‘Black Caribbean’ and ‘White British Working-Class’ pupils of secondary school age in Leicester”

Councillor Dawood advised the Committee that the report discussed under this minute had now been presented to the Executive and the way forward was being discussed.

The City Mayor advised Members that he had undertaken to give the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission a full response to the report, which he would share with this Committee.

59. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded Members that the next meeting of the Committee would be held at 5.30 pm on Thursday 26 March 2020, (not 5 March as previously scheduled).

A briefing for all members of the Committee on Equality Impact Assessments would now be held 5.30 – 6.30 pm on Thursday 5 March 2020.

60. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

61. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer advised that there were no petitions to report.

62. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report updating Members on the monitoring of outstanding petitions.

AGREED:

That the petitions marked 'petition complete', namely 19/6/01, 19/7/02, 19/7/03, 19/8/01, 19/8/02, 19/9/01, 19/9/03 and 19/9/04 be removed from the Monitoring Report.

63. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

The following questions were put to the City Mayor at the meeting.

a) Vehicle Parking and Waiting Area Outside the Train Station

Councillor Porter noted that taxis currently were able to park outside the train station, as the Council had received advice that they could pull in to pick up and drop off passengers, and asked the City Mayor what his view of this was.

The City Mayor stated that he felt that the area past the station needed to be part of a comprehensive Red Route. This would remove differences in opinion about whether parking or waiting outside the station was permissible, as under a Red Route no-one could stop. Discussions about introducing a Red Route were being held, but in the meantime officers continued to enforce the Traffic Regulation Orders currently in force for that area.

b) Border House

Councillor Porter noted that Border House was owned by the Council, but the staff, who were employed by the Council, had been told that it would close, as it was not fit for purpose and funding was not available to improve it. However, asylum seekers were being housed there, which was a concern if the building was not fit for purpose.

At the invitation of the Chair of the Committee and the City Mayor, the Director of Housing addressed the points made, explaining that Border House remained

a hostel for families, as there had been no change in its use. There were no asylum seekers there.

There had been a proposal that Border House would close eventually, as the Council moved to a “Homes for the Homeless” approach, as this would remove the need for a hostel. The policy also would mean that there was more likelihood that homeless people could stay in their preferred area.

64. LEICESTER'S CLIMATE EMERGENCY CONVERSATION

The Director of Estates and Building Services submitted a report informing Members of draft proposals for the city's response to the climate emergency, as well as the associated programme of community consultation and engagement entitled “Leicester's Climate Emergency Conversation”.

Councillor Clarke (Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Environment and Transportation) introduced the report, noting that the consultation period had ended on 9 February 2020. Over 1,000 responses had been received, which were currently being considered.

The Corporate Environmental Consultant further explained that consultation on the proposals had started in November 2019, in order to get a public reaction to changes likely to be needed in Leicester in response to the declared climate emergency.

By the end of the consultation period, 374 on-line questionnaires had been completed and many letters received from individuals and groups, which was felt to be a very good response. Efforts also had been made to reach out in other ways, such as face-to-face consultation, holding a Climate Assembly attended by 53 people representing a cross-section of Leicester's community, holding a Young People's Climate Assembly attended by 104 students representing 12 secondary schools, and speaking to key organisations across the city.

During the consultation, the Council's Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission asked that consideration be given to how primary school age children could be included as consultees in the Conversation. In response to this, a pack of information had been circulated through the Council's extra-net. This had resulted in over 200 primary school students from eight primary schools participating in the Conversation.

In addition, to this work, a Climate Emergency pack had been prepared for schools that they could use to declare their own climate emergency.

The Committee welcomed the range of consultation methods used and expressed the hope that the diversity of tools used would generate responses from a diverse range of people. In reply, the Corporate Environmental Consultant explained that not all of the consultation methods used produced demographic information, although it would be gathered from responses to the on-line questionnaire and attendees at the Climate Assembly events.

The following comments also were made in discussion on this:

- It had been asserted that reducing consumption of meat and dairy products could reduce gases harmful to the climate. What could be done to encourage this?

Response from the Corporate Environmental Consultant:

An action plan was being prepared, so no proposals had been made yet. However, there would be an emphasis on awareness raising, as it was not intended to impose actions on people. Care also would be taken to co-ordinate with any recommendations about diet with messages from public health services.

- Planting trees could help tackle global warming and reduce carbon dioxide. The report suggested that there could be a lot of trees planted in the city, so would there be a scheme to encourage people to plant trees, for example with the Council buying trees in bulk that people could plant in their own gardens?

Response from Councillor Clarke:

This purpose of this report was to receive suggestions that could be fed in to the consultation, so no decisions of this sort had been taken yet.

- The use of low emission diesel fuel by some bus companies was welcomed, but was it possible to have electric-powered buses?

Response from Councillor Clarke:

The only Council-operated bus route on which it was possible to use electric buses was the Birstall Park and Ride. Electric buses were being bought for this purpose.

The Council also was working with the government to produce targets in relation to reducing fuel emissions.

- How would the introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy address climate change? Encouraging the use of electric vehicles via incentives, such as free parking in the city or permitted use of bus lanes, could help increase the use of such vehicles.

Response from the Corporate Environmental Consultant:

The proposed strategy would be to continue to focus on walking, cycling and the use of public transport as first steps in the process of change, as many people in Leicester did not have access to a privately-owned vehicle. Although there was a wish to encourage and enable the use of electric vehicles, providing a proper charging infrastructure for these vehicles was likely to be considered later.

- Was data available on how many Councillors and Council officers drove while on Council business, used public transport, or used other methods of

travel?

Response from the Councillor Clarke:

The Council had procured several Nissan Leaf electric cars to use as pool cars and some electric bikes. A lot of people also used the Park and Ride Services.

- The encouragement given to schools to declare their own climate emergency was very welcome.
- Was there a pack of information that schools could use to help discussions with parents and carers about the climate emergency?

Response from the Energy and Environment Manager:

A wide range of different activities had been identified that could be used for this purpose. Some included a wider range of stakeholders, such as school governors, staff, parents and carers.

- What was the ideal position to be achieved in the long-term? Also, although education had a very important role in addressing the climate emergency, how could engagement be encouraged now?

Response from the Corporate Environmental Consultant:

A declared long-term aim was to make the city carbon-neutral by 2030, or sooner if possible. This would be part of the action plan currently being developed and lobbying of government also was underway. Other opportunities would continue to be taken as they arose, (for example, a response recently had been made to a government consultation on building regulations), but it needed to be recognised that financial or other restrictions could prevent a faster rate of change. In all of this, an important aim was to engage with community groups.

AGREED:

- 1) That the progress made since the climate emergency declaration, including the consultation and engagement programme recently undertaken, be welcomed and supported;
- 2) That the involvement of the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission and the Housing Scrutiny Commission be noted;
- 3) That the proposals in Appendix 1 to the report, including their implications for the city and the Council, be welcomed;
- 4) That all Councillors be encouraged to help publicise the Climate Emergency Conversation through their role as Ward Councillors;
- 5) That the next steps for the development and adoption of a Council action plan to address the climate emergency be noted; and

- 6) That the Director of Estates and Building Services be asked to report at an appropriate time on progress with, and the results of, schools declaring their own climate emergency.

65. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET (INCLUDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME) 2020/21

The Director of Housing submitted a report setting out the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2020/21, with indicative budgets for the following three years.

The Director introduced the report, explaining that, following a four-year period in which the government required rents to be reduced by 1% each year, the government had announced that for five years from 2020 rents could be increased by up to an amount equivalent to the Consumer Price Index plus 1%. This was welcomed, as the reductions had resulted in a £3million loss in rent for the Council. Overall budget pressures had exceeded £12million. Ongoing financial pressures remained, with the HRA facing a further £11million in budget pressures over the next three years. To manage this and deliver a balanced budget it was a recommendation that rents should be increased.

This proposal had been considered by the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum, as well as the Housing Scrutiny Commission. Comments from both bodies were included in the report. The Director drew Members' attention to the Housing Scrutiny Commission's support for the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum's proposal that rents should increase by 2.5% (not the proposed 2.7%), service charges should increase by 1.7% (not the proposed 2.0%) and hostel rents should not be increased (instead of applying the proposed 2.0% increase).

The Director of Housing explained that this would reduce income by £180,000 per year. The cap placed on rent increases by the government meant that this money could not be recovered in future years, so over ten years the Council would lose £1.8million that could have been used for investment in improvements to its housing stock and estates and to provide services. Therefore, although this could have had resulted in a small reduction in rent, (on average 14p per week), it would have a significant impact on the Council's HRA budget.

The City Mayor reiterated that the original budget proposal was the start of the process of addressing the problems caused by the previous enforced reduction in rent. The changes proposed were small increases for the people affected, but were significant for the Council's resources. He therefore strongly recommended that the increases included in the original proposal be supported.

Some concern was expressed that the increases in rent and service charges proposed by the Council could have a significant impact on tenants, particularly those already experiencing financial difficulties. The Director of Housing explained that approximately 60% of housing tenants and over 90% of people

in Council hostels had their rent paid through Housing Benefit, which would cover any increase in rent. Also, a problem with the proposal made by the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum was that although the Forum wished to see a lower increase in rents and service charges, there was no balancing adjustment proposed to work to be carried out using income from those rents and charges. The Forum agreed that all of the proposed investment in the HRA budget was needed. The Director reminded the Committee that the Council was legally obliged to set a balanced budget, so would have had to reduce the work undertaken to match the reduction in income.

In response to an enquiry from the Committee, the Director of Housing advised that work on removing materials from Goscote House, prior to demolition, would start during 2020, but full demolition of the building was likely to be done in the summer of 2021.

In response to a further enquiry, the Director of Housing also advised that the purchase of the properties in Hospital Close would be undertaken from funding approved at Council in November 2019 and this would not be affected by the final decision on the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2020/21.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Govind and AGREED that:

- 1) the financial pressures on the Housing Revenue Account be noted
- 2) the comments from the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum and the Housing Scrutiny Commission be noted; and
- 3) in view of the implications of the proposals for changes to rents and service charges supported by both bodies, this Committee supports the following proposed changes to rents and service charges for 2020/21:
 - a) 2.7% increase to core rent
 - b) 2.7% increase to garage rent
 - c) 2.0% increase to hostel rent
 - d) 2.0% increase to service charges; and
 - e) no changes to sundry payments and charges.

Further to her declaration of interest in this item, (see minute 56, "Declarations of Interest", above), Councillor Halford remained in the meeting for the duration of this item, but took no part in the discussion or voting.

66. DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted the draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 to 2021/22, which would be considered at the meeting of Council on 19 February 2020.

Members were reminded that draft minute extracts, detailing Scrutiny Commissions' discussions on the draft General Fund Revenue Budget report, had been circulated separately. The City Mayor advised the Committee that he had considered the comments made by the Scrutiny Commissions and would be drafting a response to be presented at the Budget Council meeting on 19 February 2020.

The Director of Finance introduced the report, explaining that the Council had approved a one-year budget for 2019/20, as it had been expected that the system of local government funding would change during that period. However, due to other national political priorities during the year, this review had been deferred and would be implemented from 2021/22 at the earliest. Consequently, it was being proposed that a one-year budget be agreed for 2020/21.

The Director reminded Members that the Council had adopted a managed reserves strategy for a number of years. Under this, money had been put in to reserves where possible, to enable structured and planned spending decisions to be taken. The programme of spending reviews adopted over the last few years also had been beneficial, as it meant that the funding gap in the proposed budget was manageable. This programme of reviews needed to continue though.

It was noted that approximately 65% of the Council's expenditure was on adult and children's social care. In recognition of the increasing demands and pressures on these services, the draft General Fund revenue budget included growth in both areas. An additional £17million was being made available, this being £3million for adult social care and £14million for children's social care, due to the increasing number and complexity of cases. These figures were based on trends and predictions for service demands.

Members were advised that there had been an underspend on adult social care during 2018/19, due to the early completion of a spending review. As a result, a phased saving had been delivered earlier than anticipated.

The final 2020/21 local government finance settlement had only been announced by the government on 7 February 2020. This had been slightly more favourable than anticipated, so the Council's funding gap for 2020/21 was now £2.4million, rather than the £5.6million set out in the draft budget report.

However, due to other urgent parliamentary business, the local government finance settlement had not been laid before parliament on 12 February as planned and now would be debated after the parliamentary recess. Consequently, all local authorities would have to agree their budgets for 2020/21 before parliamentary approval of the settlement had been obtained. It therefore was possible that aspects of the budget could need to be reconsidered by Council if the settlement changed significantly from that proposed, although this was highly unlikely.

The Committee noted the discussion that had been held at the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission regarding the impact that the proposed increase in Council Tax would have on households and the consequent effect on the local economy, (minute 59, "Draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 - 2021/22", 5 February 2020 referred). The Commission had suggested that consideration could be given to using the projected Collection Fund surplus to support vulnerable households, for example by transferring it to the Council Tax Support Scheme, which it was projected would reduce by £0.7m. The Collection Fund surplus was used to support the overall budget and therefore already was taken into consideration, but the City Mayor advised the Committee that he was making a commitment to work with officers to look at other ways in which additional support to those facing financial hardship could be included as part of the General Fund revenue budget for 2020/21.

The Director of Finance assured Members that Council Tax support funds and discretionary relief continued to be funded, along with the Crisis Support Scheme, (through which goods and services were provided to those eligible). The Council had as an explicit policy for each scheme and those who meet the required eligibility criteria would be supported regardless of budget parameters.

It was proposed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Kitterick and AGREED that:

- 1) the Director of Finance be asked to circulate information to all Councillors on support available through the Council's various hardship funds; and
- 2) this Committee supports the recommendations set out in the report for the General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21, but asks Council to take this Committee's comments recorded above and the attached comments of the Scrutiny Commissions into consideration when considering the recommended budget proposals.

67. DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Director of Finance submitted the draft Capital Programme 2020/21, which would be considered at the meeting of Council on 19 February 2020.

While introducing the report, the Director explained that the capital programme previously had been agreed for two years, as it had been expected that the system of local government funding would change during that period. However, due to other national political priorities, this review had been deferred and would be implemented from 2021/22 at the earliest. Consequently, it was proposed that a one-year capital programme be agreed for 2020/21, although it was recognised that some schemes would run beyond that period.

In response to a Member query, the City Mayor confirmed that the provision for the Reuse Shop at the Gypsum Close Household Waste Recycling site was to

finance an expansion of the shop. This was proposed due to the success of the shop, as it could no longer store all of the items for sale within its premises.

In reply to a further Member enquiry, the Director of Finance explained that the Touchdown project was a pilot workspace project. Council-managed buildings outside of the city centre were being assessed to identify where space was available that could be used by Council staff working in a mobile way. For example, staff undertaking visits to various locations could use Touchdown space for a short time between visits. This could include locations such as office space above libraries, or at sports centres, which would avoid staff having to travel in and out of the city centre so often.

The Committee noted that the largest project in the capital programme appeared to be the work to the Jewry Wall Museum. It therefore requested that a report on the project be submitted to the Overview Select Committee, to enable it to gain a full picture of what was being planned. The City Mayor advised the Committee that he would welcome its input on this major initiative.

AGREED:

- 1) That, in view of the scale of the investment being made in to the project, the Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment be asked to submit a report to the Overview Select Committee on the work to the Jewry Wall Museum, to enable the Committee to gain an overview of this project and provide input as appropriate;
- 2) That this Committee supports the recommendations set out in the report in relation to the Capital Programme 2020/21.

Councillor Porter left the meeting during consideration of this item

68. TREASURY POLICY

The Committee considered this item and the following two items simultaneously. (Minute 69, "Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21", and minute 70, "Investment Strategy 2020/21", refer.)

The Director of Finance gave a presentation on Investment Strategies, a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information. During the presentation, particular attention was drawn to the following points:

- The Council's Treasury Policy set out the framework for the governance of the Council's borrowing and investments. The Treasury Management Strategy described how this would be done and the Investment Strategy set out the Council's approach to making and holding investments that were not made for normal treasury management purposes;
- Security of the Council's money was paramount;
- Penalty charges were incurred on debts repaid early, so it usually cost less to maintain a debt than to repay it. Nonetheless, money still had to be set

aside in the budget to repay debt;

- The Council often had money before it needed to spend it. For example, staff salaries were paid at the end of the month and reserves were maintained. This meant that balances could fluctuate considerably day by day;
- The safer an investment was, the lower the return on it;
- Specialist advisers were used to help with investments, to make sure these investments were robust;
- As the Council's balances continued to grow, efforts continued to find the best ways to make this money work for the city;
- Currently, a better rate of return was received from lending to other local authorities than from bank interest;
- Along with a number of other local authorities, the Council was actively exploring environmentally and socially responsible investment;
- Some local authorities had bought commercial investments located a long way outside of their area and were borrowing very large amounts. This could create a high level of risk and raised questions of how assets managed at long distances could be transparent investments;
- This Council had invested in property in the city for many years. This currently generated approximately £6million income per year to support the Council's budget; and
- There was regular churn on the corporate estate, with properties being bought and sold as necessary.

The City Mayor reiterated the importance of the corporate estate to the city and the Council, and advised the Committee that discussions were being held with officers about how the performance of the estate could be made more transparent. One option was to present an annual report that included information such as what the Council held, income from this, expenditure and surpluses. It was hoped that the first such report could be presented to Council in the summer of 2020

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Finance explained that the Council did not invest in property abroad, as due diligence was very hard there. Some years previously, the Council had lent money directly to European banks, but since the collapse of the Icelandic Banks had ceased to do so, even though this Council had not invested in Iceland.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Chief Accountant be asked to circulate details of how to access the map showing all of the property owned by the Council

to all Members;

2) That the report be noted; and

3) That this Committee supports the approach being taken to managing the Council's resources and investing for the future.

Councillor Kitterick left the meeting during the presentation referred to above

69. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2020-21

The Committee considered this item plus the previous and following items simultaneously. (Minute 68, "Treasury Policy", and minute 70, "Investment Strategy 2020/21", refer.)

The Director of Finance gave a presentation on Investment Strategies, a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information. During the presentation, particular attention was drawn to the following points:

- The Council's Treasury Policy set out the framework for the governance of the Council's borrowing and investments. The Treasury Management Strategy described how this would be done and the Investment Strategy set out the Council's approach to making and holding investments that were not made for normal treasury management purposes;
- Security of the Council's money was paramount;
- Penalty charges were incurred on debts repaid early, so it usually cost less to maintain a debt than to repay it. Nonetheless, money still had to be set aside in the budget to repay debt;
- The Council often had money before it needed to spend it. For example, staff salaries were paid at the end of the month and reserves were maintained. This meant that balances could fluctuate considerably day by day;
- The safer an investment was, the lower the return on it;
- Specialist advisers were used to help with investments, to make sure these investments were robust;
- As the Council's balances continued to grow, efforts continued to find the best ways to make this money work for the city;
- Currently, a better rate of return was received from lending to other local authorities than from bank interest;
- Along with a number of other local authorities, the Council was actively exploring environmentally and socially responsible investment;

- Some local authorities had bought commercial investments located a long way outside of their area and were borrowing very large amounts. This could create a high level of risk and raised questions of how assets managed at long distances could be transparent investments;
- This Council had invested in property in the city for many years. This currently generated approximately £6million income per year to support the Council's budget; and
- There was regular churn on the corporate estate, with properties being bought and sold as necessary.

The City Mayor reiterated the importance of the corporate estate to the city and the Council, and advised the Committee that discussions were being held with officers about how the performance of the estate could be made more transparent. One option was to present an annual report that included information such as what the Council held, income from this, expenditure and surpluses. It was hoped that the first such report could be presented to Council in the summer of 2020

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Finance explained that the Council did not invest in property abroad, as due diligence was very hard there. Some years previously, the Council had lent money directly to European banks, but since the collapse of the Icelandic Banks had ceased to do so, even though this Council had not invested in Iceland.

AGREED:

- 4) That the Chief Accountant be asked to circulate details of how to access the map showing all of the property owned by the Council to all Members;
- 5) That the report be noted; and
- 6) That this Committee supports the approach being taken to managing the Council's resources and investing for the future.

Councillor Kitterick left the meeting during the presentation referred to above

70. INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020/21

The Committee considered this item plus the previous two items simultaneously. (Minute 68, "Treasury Policy", and minute 69, "Treasury Management Strategy 2020-21", refer.)

The Director of Finance gave a presentation on Investment Strategies, a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information. During the presentation, particular attention was drawn to the following points:

- The Council's Treasury Policy set out the framework for the governance of the Council's borrowing and investments. The Treasury Management

Strategy described how this would be done and the Investment Strategy set out the Council's approach to making and holding investments that were not made for normal treasury management purposes;

- Security of the Council's money was paramount;
- Penalty charges were incurred on debts repaid early, so it usually cost less to maintain a debt than to repay it. Nonetheless, money still had to be set aside in the budget to repay debt;
- The Council often had money before it needed to spend it. For example, staff salaries were paid at the end of the month and reserves were maintained. This meant that balances could fluctuate considerably day by day;
- The safer an investment was, the lower the return on it;
- Specialist advisers were used to help with investments, to make sure these investments were robust;
- As the Council's balances continued to grow, efforts continued to find the best ways to make this money work for the city;
- Currently, a better rate of return was received from lending to other local authorities than from bank interest;
- Along with a number of other local authorities, the Council was actively exploring environmentally and socially responsible investment;
- Some local authorities had bought commercial investments located a long way outside of their area and were borrowing very large amounts. This could create a high level of risk and raised questions of how assets managed at long distances could be transparent investments;
- This Council had invested in property in the city for many years. This currently generated approximately £6million income per year to support the Council's budget; and
- There was regular churn on the corporate estate, with properties being bought and sold as necessary.

The City Mayor reiterated the importance of the corporate estate to the city and the Council, and advised the Committee that discussions were being held with officers about how the performance of the estate could be made more transparent. One option was to present an annual report that included information such as what the Council held, income from this, expenditure and surpluses. It was hoped that the first such report could be presented to Council in the summer of 2020

In response to a Member's query, the Director of Finance explained that the Council did not invest in property abroad, as due diligence was very hard there. Some years previously, the Council had lent money directly to European banks, but since the collapse of the Icelandic Banks had ceased to do so, even though this Council had not invested in Iceland.

AGREED:

- 7) That the Chief Accountant be asked to circulate details of how to access the map showing all of the property owned by the Council to all Members;
- 8) That the report be noted; and
- 9) That this Committee supports the approach being taken to managing the Council's resources and investing for the future.

Councillor Kitterick left the meeting during the presentation referred to above

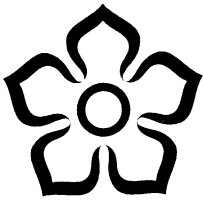
71. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

AGREED:

That the Committee's work programme be received and noted.

72. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.35 pm



Leicester
City Council

Minute Item 66

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)

Councillor Ali
Councillor Govind

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Solanki

* * * * *

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Joshi and Councillor Khote.

The Chair wished Councillor Khote a speedy recovery.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2020/21 to 2021/22. Members of the Commission were asked to consider the proposed budget that would be proposed at Council in February.

It was noted that the proposed budget was set for a year and the General Fund Budget was proposed on a year on year basis. Fundamental proposed changes were pushed through Parliament last year, but the funding review was side lined due to the uncertainty with Brexit. The gap going forward, and the level of uncertainty was unprecedented with cost drivers such as rurality and deprivation having a huge impact on the budget. However, the Councils strategy of having a well-managed reserve, had allowed the Council to be prepared for uncertain times.

In relation to this particular Commission the Director of Finance noted that the Revenues and Benefits division were under financial constraints as the Department for Work and Pensions continued to cut the grant provided to administer the work load. The service was able to integrate roles within staff to meet the demand and reduce cost. Channel shifting the service online was also a means of meeting the service demands.

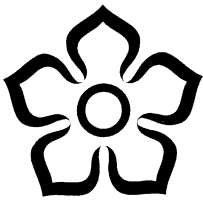
The Director of Neighbourhood Services noted that the area currently delivers 28 services such as Community Safety, Waste Management, 2 Household Waste Recycle Centres and others. The funding received through the General Revenue Fund Budget, paid for and delivered a lot in the city. The service was living within its means and had still been able to achieve an effective delivery of services. The past year had seen a food-outlets with a hygiene rating of 5 double, a 90% satisfaction levels of neighbourhood buildings and a 14.9 reduction in fly tipping cases. Although nationally fly tipping cases were on a rise, the city were able to reduce the number of local fly tipping cases as a result of a robust strategy and the great facilities the service had on offer, including the weekly waste collection service and a further recruitment for two additional City Wardens.

During discussions, members were concerned with what impact the proposed budget would have on the delivery of service and how the increase in Council Tax would benefit the service. It was suggested that channel shifting was part of the strategy to reduce cost and still maintain the level of service. The increase in Council Tax which was slightly under 4% was a means of recuperating the 50% loss in government funding. It was noted that business rates were set by a national multiplier and 50% of these rates were retained locally.

Members of the commission were assured that there were not specific areas that would see improvements rather it was a transformation process and all areas would see continuous improvements to existing services.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) That the director of Finance be requested to consider the comments made by Members of the Commission;
- 3) That the minute extract be shared with the Overview Select Committee and Council; and
- 4) That the Information on the Council's website regarding Council Tax increase for properties that have added extensions and planning advice to inform of possible increases to Council Tax to be shared with Councillor Ali.



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 15 JANUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)

Councillor Ali
Councillor Govind

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Solanki

* * * * *

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Joshi and Councillor Khote.

The Chair wished Councillor Khote a speedy recovery.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2020/21 to 2021/22. Members of the Commission were asked to consider the proposed budget that would be proposed at Council in February.

It was noted that the proposed budget was set for a year and the General Fund Budget was proposed on a year on year basis. Fundamental proposed changes were pushed through Parliament last year, but the funding review was side lined due to the uncertainty with Brexit. The gap going forward, and the level of uncertainty was unprecedented with cost drivers such as rurality and deprivation having a huge impact on the budget. However, the Councils strategy of having a well-managed reserve, had allowed the Council to be prepared for uncertain times.

In relation to this particular Commission the Director of Finance noted that the Revenues and Benefits division were under financial constraints as the Department for Work and Pensions continued to cut the grant provided to administer the work load. The service was able to integrate roles within staff to meet the demand and reduce cost. Channel shifting the service online was also a means of meeting the service demands.

The Director of Neighbourhood Services noted that the area currently delivers 28 services such as Community Safety, Waste Management, 2 Household Waste Recycle Centres and others. The funding received through the General Revenue Fund Budget, paid for and delivered a lot in the city. The service was living within its means and had still been able to achieve an effective delivery of services. The past year had seen a food-outlets with a hygiene rating of 5 double, a 90% satisfaction levels of neighbourhood buildings and a 14.9 reduction in fly tipping cases. Although nationally fly tipping cases were on a rise, the city were able to reduce the number of local fly tipping cases as a result of a robust strategy and the great facilities the service had on offer, including the weekly waste collection service and a further recruitment for two additional City Wardens.

During discussions, members were concerned with what impact the proposed budget would have on the delivery of service and how the increase in Council Tax would benefit the service. It was suggested that channel shifting was part of the strategy to reduce cost and still maintain the level of service. The increase in Council Tax which was slightly under 4% was a means of recuperating the 50% loss in government funding. It was noted that business rates were set by a national multiplier and 50% of these rates were retained locally.

Members of the commission were assured that there were not specific areas that would see improvements rather it was a transformation process and all areas would see continuous improvements to existing services.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) That the director of Finance be requested to consider the comments made by Members of the Commission;
- 3) That the minute extract be shared with the Overview Select Committee and Council; and
- 4) That the Information on the Council's website regarding Council Tax increase for properties that have added extensions and planning advice to inform of possible increases to Council Tax to be shared with Councillor Ali.



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Halford (Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Cole

Councillor Gee
Councillor Dr Moore

Councillor Shelton

In attendance:

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor, Culture Leisure & Sport

* * * * *

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr Moore declared an interest in that she supplied books to the Richard III visitor/ reading centre.

59. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2020/21 to 2021/22.

The Deputy Director of Finance presented the report and outlined the following:

- Last year the Council approved a one-year budget.
- This was because the system of funding local government was to fundamentally change, these changes being; the fair funding review, business rates review, and the total amount of funding allocated to government departments.
- However, due to Brexit and latterly political turmoil resulting in the general election, these key issues had been deferred, probably to 2021/22.

- Therefore, the amount of funding that the Council would receive going into the future remains unknown.
- The Council was, therefore, again being presented with a one-year budget for 2020/21, which included a future 'outlook' based on optimistic and pessimistic views.
- Reference to points 6.4 to 6.7 was made, which outlined the impact on the City Developments and Neighbourhoods Department.

In response to Commission Members' questions, the following issues were discussed and noted:

- A Member of the Commission raised concerns that the impact of the budget would mean reductions in the arts and museums budget.
- At this time, it was difficult to say what the impact of Brexit would be specific to individual services.
- There would continue to be some initiatives to help get people healthier, the budget wouldn't take away in terms of budgetary services.
- It was aimed to still be able to achieve everything planned for, as a result of the budget.
- The Festivals and Events programmes would be maintained and there were no proposals to reduce any funding as a result of the budget.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission be assured that the Council budget had the capacity to deliver the festivals and events programme 2020/21 to the same levels as previous years and that there would be no proposals to reduce any of these allocations.
2. The Overview and Select Committee be advised that the Commission:-
 - a. regretted that more funding had not been made available by the Government;
 - b. noted concerns that the previously approved new budget reductions in 2020/21 might impact on service delivery; and
 - c. welcomed officers' assurances that services would nonetheless be maintained.



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLS SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

Held: TUESDAY, 28 JANUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dawood (Chair)
Councillor Cole (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Hunter Councillor Rahman
Councillor Pantling Councillor Riyait
Councillor Whittle

In Attendance:

Councillor Cutkelvin, Assistant City Mayor - Education and Housing
Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor - Social Care and Anti-Poverty

Also Present:

Joseph Wyglendacz - Teaching Unions Representative
Janet McKenna - Unison

* * * * *

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Carolyn Lewis (Church of England Diocese).

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

53. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Chair referred to the draft report due to be considered by Council on 19 February 2020 which outlined the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2020/2021 and invited the Deputy City Mayor (Social Care and Anti-Poverty) to introduce the item.

It was noted that an expected overspend had been identified due to the requirement to ensure the correct and appropriate levels of care services were in place. The Deputy City Mayor (Social Care and Anti-Poverty) advised that the safety and protection of children was an absolute priority of the Council as it was for all other local authorities.

To supplement the information in the report, data was also circulated which explained the pressures on the service, principally arising from increased costs of external care provision. The importance and impact of the early-help service to provide care and protection was recognised. The need to challenge placement companies in terms of their charging structures and competition policies was highlighted. It was accepted that this issue could not be tackled locally but required a national campaign and lobbying.

The Director of Finance then submitted the draft report due to be considered by Council and clarified that the proposed budget was for one year, as significant changes to local government finance were expected. The impact of delayed decisions concerning the extent of future Business Rates retention and the Fair Funding Review, due to pressures including Brexit and the General Election were reported and noted.

It was clarified that there would be a recommendation to allow a rise in Council Tax and that a proposed use of reserves would be effected to ensure that the overall funding gap could be filled, at least in part. In respect of the information circulated showing a summary of the situation, the Commission noted the impact of the spending review programme and the savings expected from revisions to services such as Connexions and the Educational Welfare Service were explained.

In response to data from comparable neighbouring authorities and the position nationally, the number of looked after children (LAC) was noted and it was recognised that the type and suitability of provision was the principal influencing factor in terms of overall cost. It was reported that numbers of new LAC entering the system was difficult to predict with any certainty and therefore some assumptions on likely trends had to be made. The Director of Social Care and Early Help commented on the monitoring of LAC as a cohort and advised of the work undertaken to ensure that suitable placement arrangements could be made, including family placements and increased delivery of fostering and adoption options. The internal monitoring efforts and the value of the work of the Placement Sufficiency Board in this regard were reported and recognised.

The proportions of cost by type of provision compared the proportion of LAC in those provisions was highlighted, and in response to a question from the Vice-Chair it was accepted that the internal placement costs were also significant when compared to the proportion of the overall cost. In response to a question from the Chair it was reported that options for providing a higher proportion of internal placements were being explored, including increasing the numbers of fostering placements.

In terms of local government finance and in response to questions, it was confirmed that no information was available on the likely level of funding beyond 2020/21. The increases in the average costs of placements and the effect of inflation were reported and noted.

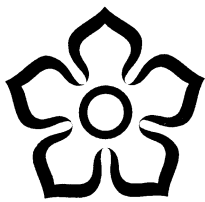
In response to questions concerning staffing it was confirmed that the numbers of agency social workers had dramatically reduced and information concerning the savings from vacant posts was provided.

The challenges concerning mental health assessment and the role of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) was discussed and it was noted that the Council did care for a number of children with very severe mental and emotional needs.

The Assistant City Mayor (Education) was invited to comment on the report and it was reported that the suggested changes to services, including Connexions, were currently subject of a consultation exercise.

AGREED:

1. That the report and proposed budget to Council be noted.
2. That the uncertainties concerning future government funding be noted and recognised.
3. That updates concerning the results of consultation on the proposed alterations to service provision be submitted to future meetings of the Commission at the appropriate time.
4. That any other significant impacts on services as a result of the Spending Review Programme be submitted to a future meeting of the Commission at the appropriate time.



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 30 JANUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Kitterick (Chair)

Councillor Aldred
Councillor Chamund
Councillor March

In Attendance:

Councillor Clarke, Deputy City Mayor - Environment and Transportation
Councillor Dempster, Assistant City Mayor - Health

* * * * *

54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fonseca (Vice Chair), Dr Sangster and Westley, and from Micheal Smith (Healthwatch).

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

63. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 TO 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted the draft report due to be considered by Council on 19 February 2020, which outlined the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2020/2021.

It was clarified that the proposed budget was for one year, as significant changes that were expected to local government finance, including the Fair Funding Review and delayed decisions concerning the extent of future Business Rates retention remained unclear.

It was noted that revised funding of the Public Health Grant had been cited within the review of business rates, but that decision had not been made by Government.

In response to questions the Director of Public Health confirmed that no significant changes had been included in the budget, although some pressures existed in terms of the delivery of some services. In this regard it was clarified that the provision of pre-exposure treatment to prevent HIV transmission will be a responsibility of the Council's Public Health service from 1 April 2020, but details of the likely funding stream had not been identified to date. It was confirmed that the necessary funding of the service would need to be met by the Council and would not be part of wider NHS budgets. It was currently unclear whether there would be any earmarked funding from NHS England or the Department of Health to support the Council and it was confirmed that the service would not be inexpensive and would likely have an adverse effect on the budgets of city authorities such as Leicester.

In terms of other pressures, the adverse effect on the budget of NHS salary increases to meet inflation was explained and recognised, where the Council acted as an employer through commissioning. It was noted that the Council was responsible for the uplift in payments with no support from government.

In conclusion, the Spending Review Programme was discussed and the Assistant City Mayor (Health) confirmed that items would be submitted to and discussed by scrutiny. It was noted that there were no expected items during the period of the proposed budget that involved any significant impacts on existing services.

AGREED:

1. That the report and proposed budget to Council be noted.
2. That updates concerning the impact of the Pre-exposure to HIV service and its funding be submitted to a future meeting of the Commission at the appropriate time.
3. That any other significant impacts on services as a result of the Spending Review Programme be submitted to a future meeting of the Commission at the appropriate time.



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 4 FEBRUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor March (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillor Batool
Councillor Kitterick

Councillor Kaur Saini
Councillor Thalukdar

In Attendance

Councillor Russell – Deputy City Mayor, Social Care and Anti-Poverty

* * * * *

45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the Chair Councillor Joshi. Councillor March as Vice Chair to the Chair for the meeting.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Khote and Ruth Lake.

Members wished Councillor Khote a speedy recovery.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

51. DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET REPORT 2020-21

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2020/21 to 2021/22. The Commission was recommended to consider and comment on the Adult Social Care element of the budget. The Commission's comments would be forwarded to the Overview Select Committee as part of its consideration of the report before presentation to the meeting of Council on 19th February 2020.

Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor, Social Care and Anti-Poverty introduced the report. The Commission was asked to note the budget presented was for

one year, with no financial certainty beyond 2020/21, leaving the budget for Adult Social Care vulnerable. It was further noted that steadily increasing demand, with increased costs had made it a volatile service budget area.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance, said the Service was reliant on the Better Care Fund monies of £28.5m each year and the budget had to factor in the increasing needs of existing service users at 5.5% (£10m) per annum. A growth in service user numbers was also expected of 0.5% per annum and an increase in the National Living Wage at 6%, which equated to an annual overall growth in costs of rate of 11.5% for 2020/21. As a result an additional £3m of growth has been included in the 2020/21 budget. Beyond 2020/21 there would be an increasing gap between resources and expenditure of at least £15m per annum unless a long-term funding solution was provided by central government.

It was noted that £2.5m had been achieved towards a £5m savings target under the Spending Review 4 Programme so far, and work was ongoing to find further savings and the remaining £2.5m was not attached to any particular review.

The Deputy City Mayor informed the meeting that a report on the charging policy would be brought to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission. She noted the Enablement Service costs were approximately £1m but believed it offset costs of £1m and if funding was ceased the Department would see an increase in costs elsewhere in the budget in future years. It was noted the Department was currently meeting need but was under immense pressure as demand rose.

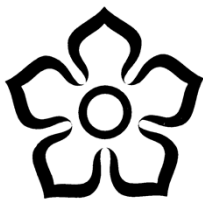
The Chair asked if the Council sought assurances from other health and social care providers in the city, for example, Leicester Partnership NHS Trust, that adequate, timely support and budgeting was provided to the increasing needs of vulnerable adults. The Deputy City Mayor affirmed that the range of partners working with the Council functioned together to maximise resources.

The Commission acknowledged the difference between available budget and expenditure and the lack of ability to forward plan, and the growing complexity of needs for people below retirement age with deep concern.

AGREED:

that:

1. The Commission note the report;
2. The Commission raise concerns relating to severe cost pressures on Adult Social Care services for the future.
3. Comments and recommendation from the Commission on the budget item go to Overview Select Committee to inform Budget Council.



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND TOURISM SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 5 FEBRUARY 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Waddington (Chair)
Councillor Sandhu (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Broadwell
Councillor Rae Bhatia

Councillor Valand

In Attendance:

Sir Peter Soulsby – City Mayor

* * * * *

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fonseca and Councillor Joel.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Broadwell declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting in that she was the Acting Chair of the Leicester Transport Users Union. In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, this interest was not considered so significant that it was likely to prejudice Councillor Broadwell's judgement of the public interest. She therefore was not required to withdraw from the meeting.

59. DRAFT GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 - 2021/22

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed General Fund Revenue budget for 2020/21 to 2021/22. Members noted a summary of revenue budgets for 2020/21 that were relevant to this Commission's areas of work that had been tabled at the meeting. A copy of

the summary is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

The Deputy Director of Finance introduced the report, explaining that the Council had approved a one-year budget for 2019/20, as it had been expected that the system of local government funding would change during that period. It had been announced that there would be three elements to this, namely a “fair funding review” (determining the distribution of funding between councils), a review of business rates retention (to increase the proportion of business rates collected that local authorities could retain), and a review of total government funding. However, due to other national political priorities during the year, all three issues were deferred and would be implemented from 2021/22 at the earliest. Consequently, it was proposed that a one-year budget be agreed for 2020/21.

The Deputy Director of Finance drew attention to the proposed 4% increase in Council Tax for 2020/21, noting that 2% of this was for adult social care funding and the remaining 2% was for general expenditure.

It was recognised that cuts in government funding to local authorities made an increase in Council Tax necessary, but concern was raised at the impact this increase would have on households and the consequent effect on the local economy. As there was a projected £0.7m reduction in spend on the Council Tax Support Scheme, it was suggested that consideration could be given to using the Collection Fund surplus to support vulnerable households, for example by transferring it to the Council Tax Support Scheme.

During discussion on this, Members noted that the Council’s policies on the collection of Council Tax were sensitive to those who could not pay what they owed, including strict policies regarding enforcement and the use of bailiffs. However, it was recognised that some people were able to pay their Council Tax but chose not to do so.

The Commission noted from media reports that intensive lobbying was being undertaken by some authorities as part of the “fair funding review” regarding perceived extra costs in rural areas. It was suggested that similar lobbying should be done by urban authorities, to seek recognition of the costs faced by those authorities. The Deputy Director of Finance assured the Commission that opportunities were taken to do so.

The following points also were noted during discussion on the report:

- The proposed budget for 2020/21 included a provision for inflation, as this was an anticipated pressure on the budget;
- Each year an estimate had to be made about what business rate and Council Tax income would be received in the Collection Fund during the following year. Any amount above this was a surplus, but was described as a one-off surplus, as it was not guaranteed that a surplus would be received and, if it was, the amount varied from year to year;

- Reductions in the cost of the Connexions and Education Welfare Services were projected due to continued pressure to devolve funding to schools, who now had to commission their own services. This would have implications for young people not in employment, education or training;
- The Adult Education Grant was not included in the grants referred to under paragraph 8.12 of the report, as those listed were corporate, or had a wide impact on the Council's finances, but the Adult Education Grant was ring-fenced to a specific service;
- Fine income from bus lane enforcement cameras reduced following the initial period after their introduction, as drivers' behaviour adjusted. Previous experience showed that fine income reduced quite quickly, but then stabilised;
- Savings had been made on Highways expenditure, as the Council no longer had to illuminate all bollards. Changes in regulations meant that high luminosity materials could now be used instead, thereby reducing power and maintenance costs;
- The future Revenue Support Grant settlement would arise from the "fair funding review". The Local Government Association had prepared a number of models of the proposals known about so far and figures recently reported in the press were based on those models, but to date no decisions on the review had been taken;
- The uncommitted balance of the managed reserves strategy would be fundamental to managing budget reductions in future years;
- The Council had a detailed treasury management strategy, which was reported annually to Council for adoption;
- At this stage, an Equality Impact Assessment had only been done for the whole budget, as Assessments were made on a scheme-by-scheme basis as they came on-line;
- When submitted to Council for approval, the final report on the General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 to 2021/22 would be updated with any new information received in the final Local Government Finance Settlement; and
- Councillors were encouraged to actively participate in the determination of the financial envelopes within which the City Mayor had authority to act.

AGREED:

- 1) That the draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 to 2021/22 be received; and
- 2) That the Overview Select Committee be asked to:

- a) support the suggestion that consideration be given to using the projected Collection Fund surplus to support households particularly affected by the proposed Council Tax increase, for example by transferring it to the Council Tax Support Scheme;
- b) support the suggestion that lobbying be undertaken by urban authorities under the government's "fair funding review", to seek recognition of the particular costs faced by those authorities; and
- c) take the comments recorded above into account when scrutinising the draft General Fund Revenue Budget 2020/21 to 2021/22.

Investment Strategies

Overview Select Committee 12th February 2020

2020/14373

Leicester City Council ₁

1

Purpose of Presentation

To describe our investment strategies.

Since 2019, we have been required to have two:

- Treasury strategy (as always)
- Commercial investment strategy

2020/14373

Leicester City Council ₂

2

Treasury Investment Strategy

- Governs how we manage cash balances
- Security of money is paramount

2020/14373



3

“Commercial” Investment Strategy

- Governs investments such as commercial property and loans to businesses
- Investments need not be solely for financial reasons
- We can take greater risk to secure other aims

2020/14373



4



5

Why do we have cash to invest?

Previous Capital Programmes:-

- Government used to support borrowing
- Have to raise money in budget to repay debt
- Actually repaying debt is too expensive

Cash Flow:-

- Council tax raised before spent
- Capital grant in advance
- Reserves

It is not money we can add to the budget.

2020/14373

Leicester City Council 6

6

Cash Availability

Balances fluctuate considerably: £250m to £300m.

Some money has to be available at short notice.

We would prefer to repay debt with the rest, but can't.



2020/14373

7

Treasury Investment : Priorities

- **Security** : we must ensure we can get our money back.
- **Liquidity** : money available when we need it. Some investments are short term.
- **Return** : the interest rate (lowest priority).



2020/14373

8

Security Issues

Strength of lender:-

- Government/local authorities
- Banks/building societies

Additional security sometimes available:-

- Government underwriting
- Charges on assets

Regulatory changes and “Bail In”.
Diversification.

Length of investment : shorter term is more secure.
Credit ratings/treasury advisors.



2020/14373

9

Some Changes

Balances continue to grow.

We can lend more to other authorities.

PWLB rate rise.

Municipal Bonds Agency

- LGA creation
- Years in development
- First loan agreed (Lancashire)
- We are more likely to lend than to borrow

Environmental and Socially Responsible Investment – investment being considered.

Smaller building societies.



2020/14373

10

Some Lessons from the Past

BCCI.

Iceland.

Importance of member scrutiny.

2020/14373



11

11

“Commercial” Investments

2020/14373



12

12

Commercial Investments: **Why a Strategy?**

New Government requirement.

Response to some authorities making big investments:-

- Often outside own area
- Borrowing substantial sums

Government believes transparency and member oversight crucial.



2020/14373

13

For example : Spelthorne BC

Net revenue budget £11m.

Borrowing from PWLB of £1bn, spent on offices (Spelthorne and London).

Income set to exceed council tax revenue in 20/21.



2020/14373

14

Other Examples

Woking, Runnymede and Eastleigh: borrowed more than 10 times net revenue (LGC).

Asda in Ystalyfera, Wales: owned by Mole Valley DC (Surrey) (£11.5m).



2020/14373

15

What does the Strategy Cover?

Assets, such as investment property
and
Loans to third parties
which
“the Council holds primarily or partially to generate a profit”.



2020/14373

16

What have we got?

The corporate estate:-

- Over 300 local properties
- Held for decades
- Valued at £122m
- Net profit for general fund of £6.3m

Some loans to businesses.

Strategy doesn't cover:-

- Growing Places Fund
- HRA



2020/14373

17

Where does the money come from?

Options include:-

- Mainstream capital programme
- “Prudential Borrowing”
- “Income Strips”

“Borrowing” really means using the investments covered by the treasury strategy.



2020/14373

18

Priorities

Security : balanced with service considerations (e.g. new jobs).

Return : the amount we get back – more complex than interest.

Liquidity : less important than for treasury investments.



2020/14373

19

Our Principles

Seek to maximise income on corporate estate.

Apart from corporate estate, investment is never solely for financial reasons.

Investment outside LLEP area highly unlikely.

Expert advice where necessary.



2020/14373

20

Controls

Future investment must comply with this strategy (but decisions still taken in normal manner).

Financial evaluations.

Concept of “exposure” – borrowing and other underwriting of risk.

Controls over exposure:-

- In aggregate;
- By project.

Formal reporting to members.

Strategy changes need Council approval.

2020/14373



21

Corporate Estate

Officers encouraged to invest/disinvest.

Some borrowing permitted.

Routine monitoring:-

- Voids
- Return
- Bad debt
- Change in capital value

Comparison with benchmarks.

2020/14373



22

Other Allowable Investments

- Commercial/Industrial Properties.
- Non-HRA housing.
- Development land and infrastructure.
- Economic development loans to businesses.
- Loans to/on behalf of LLEP.
- Low carbon.

2020/14373



23

Summary

- These areas of work have always been important.
- New Government interest due to behaviour of some authorities.
- Approach now more regulated/greater member oversight.
- Transparency.

2020/14373



24



Investment Strategies

Overview Select Committee 12th February 2020

2020/14373



Leicester City Council ₁

1



Purpose of Presentation

To describe our investment strategies.

Since 2019, we have been required to have two:

- Treasury strategy (as always)
- Commercial investment strategy

2020/14373



Leicester City Council ₂

2

Treasury Investment Strategy

- Governs how we manage cash balances
- Security of money is paramount

2020/14373



3

“Commercial” Investment Strategy

- Governs investments such as commercial property and loans to businesses
- Investments need not be solely for financial reasons
- We can take greater risk to secure other aims

2020/14373



4

Treasury Investments

2020/14373



Leicester
City Council 5

5

Why do we have cash to invest?

Previous Capital Programmes:-

- Government used to support borrowing
- Have to raise money in budget to repay debt
- Actually repaying debt is too expensive

Cash Flow:-

- Council tax raised before spent
- Capital grant in advance
- Reserves

It is not money we can add to the budget.

2020/14373



Leicester
City Council 6

6

Cash Availability

Balances fluctuate considerably: £250m to £300m.

Some money has to be available at short notice.

We would prefer to repay debt with the rest, but can't.



2020/14373

7

Treasury Investment : Priorities

- **Security** : we must ensure we can get our money back.
- **Liquidity** : money available when we need it. Some investments are short term.
- **Return** : the interest rate (lowest priority).



2020/14373

8

Security Issues

Strength of lender:-

- Government/local authorities
- Banks/building societies

Additional security sometimes available:-

- Government underwriting
- Charges on assets

Regulatory changes and “Bail In”.
Diversification.

Length of investment : shorter term is more secure.
Credit ratings/treasury advisors.



2020/14373

9

Some Changes

Balances continue to grow.

We can lend more to other authorities.

PWLB rate rise.

Municipal Bonds Agency

- LGA creation
- Years in development
- First loan agreed (Lancashire)
- We are more likely to lend than to borrow

Environmental and Socially Responsible Investment – investment being considered.

Smaller building societies.



2020/14373

10

Some Lessons from the Past

BCCI.

Iceland.

Importance of member scrutiny.

2020/14373



11

“Commercial” Investments

2020/14373



12

Commercial Investments: Why a Strategy?

New Government requirement.

Response to some authorities making big investments:-

- Often outside own area
- Borrowing substantial sums

Government believes transparency and member oversight crucial.



2020/14373

13

For example : Spelthorne BC

Net revenue budget £11m.

Borrowing from PWLB of £1bn, spent on offices (Spelthorne and London).

Income set to exceed council tax revenue in 20/21.



2020/14373

14

Other Examples

Woking, Runnymede and Eastleigh: borrowed more than 10 times net revenue (LGC).

Asda in Ystalyfera, Wales: owned by Mole Valley DC (Surrey) (£11.5m).



2020/14373

15

What does the Strategy Cover?

Assets, such as investment property
and
Loans to third parties
which
“the Council holds primarily or partially to generate a profit”.



2020/14373

16

What have we got?

The corporate estate:-

- Over 300 local properties
- Held for decades
- Valued at £122m
- Net profit for general fund of £6.3m

Some loans to businesses.

Strategy doesn't cover:-

- Growing Places Fund
- HRA



2020/14373

17

Where does the money come from?

Options include:-

- Mainstream capital programme
- “Prudential Borrowing”
- “Income Strips”

“Borrowing” really means using the investments covered by the treasury strategy.



2020/14373

18

Priorities

Security : balanced with service considerations (e.g. new jobs).

Return : the amount we get back – more complex than interest.

Liquidity : less important than for treasury investments.



2020/14373

19

Our Principles

Seek to maximise income on corporate estate.

Apart from corporate estate, investment is never solely for financial reasons.

Investment outside LLEP area highly unlikely.

Expert advice where necessary.



2020/14373

20

Controls

Future investment must comply with this strategy (but decisions still taken in normal manner).

Financial evaluations.

Concept of “exposure” – borrowing and other underwriting of risk.

Controls over exposure:-

- In aggregate;
- By project.

Formal reporting to members.

Strategy changes need Council approval.

2020/14373



21

Corporate Estate

Officers encouraged to invest/disinvest.

Some borrowing permitted.

Routine monitoring:-

- Voids
- Return
- Bad debt
- Change in capital value

Comparison with benchmarks.

2020/14373



22

Other Allowable Investments

- Commercial/Industrial Properties.
- Non-HRA housing.
- Development land and infrastructure.
- Economic development loans to businesses.
- Loans to/on behalf of LLEP.
- Low carbon.

2020/14373



23

Summary

- These areas of work have always been important.
- New Government interest due to behaviour of some authorities.
- Approach now more regulated/greater member oversight.
- Transparency.

2020/14373



24



Investment Strategies

Overview Select Committee 12th February 2020

2020/14373



Leicester City Council 1

1



Purpose of Presentation

To describe our investment strategies.

Since 2019, we have been required to have two:

- Treasury strategy (as always)
- Commercial investment strategy

2020/14373



Leicester City Council 2

2

Treasury Investment Strategy

- Governs how we manage cash balances
- Security of money is paramount

2020/14373



3

“Commercial” Investment Strategy

- Governs investments such as commercial property and loans to businesses
- Investments need not be solely for financial reasons
- We can take greater risk to secure other aims

2020/14373



4



5

Why do we have cash to invest?

Previous Capital Programmes:-

- Government used to support borrowing
- Have to raise money in budget to repay debt
- Actually repaying debt is too expensive

Cash Flow:-

- Council tax raised before spent
- Capital grant in advance
- Reserves

It is not money we can add to the budget.

2020/14373

Leicester City Council 6

6

Cash Availability

Balances fluctuate considerably: £250m to £300m.

Some money has to be available at short notice.

We would prefer to repay debt with the rest, but can't.



2020/14373

7

Treasury Investment : Priorities

- **Security** : we must ensure we can get our money back.
- **Liquidity** : money available when we need it. Some investments are short term.
- **Return** : the interest rate (lowest priority).



2020/14373

8

Security Issues

Strength of lender:-

- Government/local authorities
- Banks/building societies

Additional security sometimes available:-

- Government underwriting
- Charges on assets

Regulatory changes and “Bail In”.
Diversification.

Length of investment : shorter term is more secure.
Credit ratings/treasury advisors.



2020/14373

9

Some Changes

Balances continue to grow.

We can lend more to other authorities.

PWLB rate rise.

Municipal Bonds Agency

- LGA creation
- Years in development
- First loan agreed (Lancashire)
- We are more likely to lend than to borrow

Environmental and Socially Responsible Investment – investment being considered.

Smaller building societies.



2020/14373

10

Some Lessons from the Past

BCCI.

Iceland.

Importance of member scrutiny.

2020/14373



11

“Commercial” Investments

2020/14373



12

Commercial Investments: **Why a Strategy?**

New Government requirement.

Response to some authorities making big investments:-

- Often outside own area
- Borrowing substantial sums

Government believes transparency and member oversight crucial.



2020/14373

13

For example : Spelthorne BC

Net revenue budget £11m.

Borrowing from PWLB of £1bn, spent on offices (Spelthorne and London).

Income set to exceed council tax revenue in 20/21.



2020/14373

14

Other Examples

Woking, Runnymede and Eastleigh: borrowed more than 10 times net revenue (LGC).

Asda in Ystalyfera, Wales: owned by Mole Valley DC (Surrey) (£11.5m).



2020/14373

15

What does the Strategy Cover?

Assets, such as investment property
and
 Loans to third parties
which
 “the Council holds primarily or partially to generate a profit”.



2020/14373

16

What have we got?

The corporate estate:-

- Over 300 local properties
- Held for decades
- Valued at £122m
- Net profit for general fund of £6.3m

Some loans to businesses.

Strategy doesn't cover:-

- Growing Places Fund
- HRA



2020/14373

17

Where does the money come from?

Options include:-

- Mainstream capital programme
- “Prudential Borrowing”
- “Income Strips”

“Borrowing” really means using the investments covered by the treasury strategy.



2020/14373

18

Priorities

Security : balanced with service considerations (e.g. new jobs).

Return : the amount we get back – more complex than interest.

Liquidity : less important than for treasury investments.



2020/14373

19

Our Principles

Seek to maximise income on corporate estate.

Apart from corporate estate, investment is never solely for financial reasons.

Investment outside LLEP area highly unlikely.

Expert advice where necessary.



2020/14373

20

Controls

Future investment must comply with this strategy (but decisions still taken in normal manner).

Financial evaluations.

Concept of “exposure” – borrowing and other underwriting of risk.

Controls over exposure:-

- In aggregate;
- By project.

Formal reporting to members.

Strategy changes need Council approval.

2020/14373



21

Corporate Estate

Officers encouraged to invest/disinvest.

Some borrowing permitted.

Routine monitoring:-

- Voids
- Return
- Bad debt
- Change in capital value

Comparison with benchmarks.

2020/14373



22

Other Allowable Investments

- Commercial/Industrial Properties.
- Non-HRA housing.
- Development land and infrastructure.
- Economic development loans to businesses.
- Loans to/on behalf of LLEP.
- Low carbon.

2020/14373



23

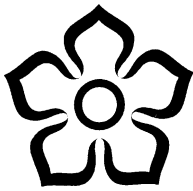
Summary

- These areas of work have always been important.
- New Government interest due to behaviour of some authorities.
- Approach now more regulated/greater member oversight.
- Transparency.

2020/14373



24



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All Wards - Corporate Issue

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Overview Select Committee

21 May 2020

Tracking of Petitions - Monitoring Report

Report of the Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update on the current status of responses to petitions against the Council's target of providing a formal response within 3 months of being referred to the Divisional Director.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the current status of outstanding petitions and to agree to remove those petitions marked 'Petition Process Complete' from the report.

3. Report

The Committee is responsible for monitoring the progress and outcomes of petitions received within the Council. An Exception Report, showing those petitions currently outstanding or for consideration at the current Overview Select Committee meeting is attached at Appendix B1.

The Exception Report contains comments on the current progress on each of the petitions. The following colour scheme approved by the Committee is used to highlight progress and the report has now been re-arranged to list the petitions in their colour groups for ease of reference:

- **Red** – denotes those petitions for which a pro-forma has not been completed within three months of being referred to the Divisional Director.
- **Petition Process Complete** - denotes petitions for which a response pro-forma has sent to the relevant Scrutiny Commission Chair for comment, subsequently endorsed by the Lead Executive Member and the Lead Petitioner and Ward Members informed of the response to the petition.

- **Green** – denotes petitions for which officers have proposed a recommendation in response to a petition, and a response pro-forma has been sent to the relevant Scrutiny Commission Chair for comment, before being endorsed by the Lead Executive Member.
- **Amber** – denotes petitions which are progressing within the prescribed timescales, or have provided clear reasoning for why the three-month deadline for completing the response pro-forma has elapsed.

In addition, all Divisional Directors have been asked to ensure that details of **all** petitions received direct into the Council (not just those formally accepted via a Council Meeting or similar) are passed to the Monitoring Officer for logging and inclusion on this monitoring schedule.

4. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

There are no legal, financial or other implications arising from this report.

5. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

The Council's current overall internal process for responding to petitions.

6. Consultations

Staff in all teams who are progressing outstanding petitions.

7. Report Author

Angie Smith
Democratic Services Officer
tel. 0116 454 6354

73

Date Petition referred to Divisional Director	Received From	Subject	Type - Cncr (C) Public (P)	No. of Sig	Ward	Date Receipt Reported to Council (C) / Committee (Cttee)	Lead Divisional Director	Current Position	Scrutiny Chair Involvement	Date of Final Response Letter Sent to Lead Petitioner	Current Status	Ref. No.
16/09/2019	Kashif Munir (via Keith Vaz MP)	Parking issues arising from traffic calming measures i.e. double yellow lines on Gainsford Road and Highwood Drive near Falcolns Primary School	(p)	11	Troon		Andrew L Smith	The request for a Residents' Parking scheme is added to the council's database of requests for residents parking to be considered after the current residents' parking strategy priority areas have been consulted on and any schemes implemented. Officers will reply back to the lead petitioner with information that regarding problems with school run parking, the Road Safety Team will continue to work with the school to address the problems caused by parents dropping off and picking up children at the beginning and end of the school day. Local councillors have indicated support for a residents' parking scheme on these streets and it would be helpful to agree a preferred time for this restriction, The council have recently submitted a residents' permit scheme that is in force from Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm. the lead petitioner has been asked to indicate if the times are suitable. The council also remains amenable to a single yellow line proposal and would be happy to take this forward as an alternative to residents parking.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair	12/02/2020	PETITION COMPLETE	19/9/02
27/09/2019	Ms Reba Taylor	Petition requesting the Council develop sustainable parking solutions for residents at Hassal Road / Falconer Crescent junction	(c)	25	Western	Petition to be presented to Full Council 3/10/19 - Cllr Cole	Andrew L Smith	Action proposed is to include this scheme in the prioritised list of layby and parking area requests for consideration to be included in a future annual layby programme, subject to necessary budgets being available.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair	21/02/2020	PETITION COMPLETE	19/9/05
17/10/2019	Mr Hafiz Patel	Petition to remove a single yellow line in Baggrave Street	(p)	62	North Evington		Andrew L Smith	The Council can treat this enquiry as a request to amend the single yellow line restriction on Baggrave Street. To reduce the length of the single yellow line restriction would provide up to three additional placed for residents. The reduction would be to shorten the restriction length from 22 metres to 11 metres, taking 14 metres from the Southern Side and extending it 3 metres Northbound. To ensure the costs of amending the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) are minimised and proportionate, it is proposed to include the request alongside other TRO changes in the area when the next opportunity arises and subject to necessary funding being available, the timing of which tbc.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair	12/02/2020	PETITION COMPLETE	19/10/01

RED - Pro-forma not completed within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

PETITION PROCESS COMPLETE - Scrutiny Chair commented on Pro-forma, Lead Executive Member signed off response and final letter sent to Lead Petitioner.

GREEN - Lead Executive Member consulted on proposed response and Pro-forma sent to Scrutiny Chair

AMBER - Petition response progressing within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

Date Petition referred to Divisional Director	Received From	Subject	Type - Cncr (C) Public (P)	No. of Sig	Ward	Date Receipt Reported to Council (C) / Committee (Cttee)	Lead Divisional Director	Current Position	Scrutiny Chair Involvement	Date of Final Response Letter Sent to Lead Petitioner	Current Status	Ref. No.
07/02/2020	Mr Mahomed Afzal Mussa	Petition asking the Council to take action against ASB in Montreal Road / Russell Square	(p)	14	Wycliffe		Chris Burgin	The Lead Petitioner to be informed that local policing have appointed PCSO Karen Reed to liaise with the lead petitioner with all the actions they have taken - they are now looking to close the case by Friday 6th March 2020 as there have been no further incidents in this block. The council have reported the security door repairs and they are due to be completed by Monday 9th March 2020. The door keeps getting vandalised by the youths. It has been arranged for local police to carry out additional high-visibility patrols in the area. CCTV signs have been put in the communal area. The Police have been encouraging residents to report incidents when they happen so that they have the best possible chance of identifying the perpetrators.	Proforma returned by the Scrutiny Chair		GREEN	20/02/01
11/03/2020	Brenda Worrall (on behalf of Leicester CND)	Petition asking the council to make Leicester a Nuclear Ban Community	(p)	96	City-wide	19/03/2020 (C)	Miranda Cannon / Kamal Adatia	Following a question on the topic raised by the petition, at full Council on 19 March 2020, the City Mayor confirmed that he intended to bring a motion to the Council seeking to resolve a clear position in relation to the global threat of nuclear weaponry and the particular developments referred to in the petition. Due to the current abeyance of Council meetings, it is not currently possible to indicate when that will be.			AMBER	20/03/01

74

RED - Pro-forma not completed within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

PETITION PROCESS COMPLETE - Scrutiny Chair commented on Pro-forma, Lead Executive Member signed off response and final letter sent to Lead Petitioner.

GREEN - Lead Executive Member consulted on proposed response and Pro-forma sent to Scrutiny Chair

AMBER - Petition response progressing within 3 months of being referred to Divisional Director

Questions received from Scrutiny Commission Members

Councillor Rae Bhatia (EDTT)

- Will the consultation and hence the implementation of local plan be delayed and by how much? And given the market conditions now how would this impact the house building work undertaken by the council itself?
- Given the expected change in the way we'll work mainly by reduced presence in the offices (wfh) there will surely be positives out of it but also a negative impact vis-a-vis retail and commercial property development and council's investment strategy. This must be impact assessed.

Councillor Manjit Kaur Saini (ASC)

- What is the situation in our care homes with Covid 19? Do we have statistics for those who have been affected in the Care Homes and how it is being treated?

Councillor George Cole (HCLS)

- What are the City Council's plans for opening leisure centre/sporting facilities and museums in light of social distancing when the government start to relax the lockdown down?
- When does the council envisage De Montfort Hall reopening again?

Councillor Melissa March (ASC and HWB)

- How are we monitoring sheltered housing units, and what could we do in incidences where there were cases of covid to protect others living independently in these places?
- What is the current death toll in care homes, i.e. excess deaths that are atypical numerically at this time of year?
- Are we concerned about the impact of lifting the lockdown on domiciliary care, for example, if carers working in people's own homes suddenly become more exposed to the virus whether they realise it or not?
- There are dreadful reports in the county of larger provider (Leicestershire county care) cutting terms and conditions in the face of this crisis whilst simultaneously asking carers to do more, eg extra pay for unsociable hours have been cut whilst those still at work (whilst colleagues and their households shield) are having to work longer shifts, more shifts etc. Are there any incidences of this kind of behaviour in the city? How would we act to ensure a good outcome for carers and cared for if this were to be a scenario?

- I also have a couple of questions about the new covid specific discharge from hospital care home. I would like to check that this is a new care setting, i.e. not attached to any existing ward, and that staff are not switching from working here into other settings at all, please? Is it being staffed by our own staff, and if so how are we ensuring that we are protecting them and their families as best we can?



Leicester City Council's Coronavirus response

Overview Select Committee

Date of meeting: 21 May 2020

Lead director/officer: Miranda Cannon

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Miranda Cannon
- Author contact details: miranda.cannon@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 0.2

1. Summary

1.1. This report provides the Overview Select Committee (OSC) with a summary of the Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic locally within the city, the way in which services have responded, impacts and implications for our employees, and most importantly how the Council has supported residents to date during the crisis. Specifically, this report is structured into the following areas:

- Local Resilience Forum (LRF) response
- Business continuity and Council service response
- Workforce impacts
- Community support
- Volunteering and engagement of the voluntary and community sector
- Business support
- Communications
- Recovery

1.2. Work is currently underway in relation to the actions needed as existing restrictions start to ease and this report also covers the work to date on this and highlights some of the emerging themes. It is proposed that this will be the subject of a further report once more detailed work has been completed.

1.3. This report does not consider the specific financial impacts which is the subject of a separate report for this meeting.

1.4. This report does not set out the specific case numbers or deaths related to COVID-19 for Leicester City as these are updated on a daily basis and the most up to date figures can be found at <https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/#category=nations&map=rate>

2. Recommended actions

2.1 The Overview Select Committee are recommended to:

- Consider the Council's local response to the Coronavirus pandemic and comment as appropriate including those areas they see as good practice and any aspects where lessons can be learnt, or things can be improved going forward.
- Note the ongoing work relating to 'recovery' and the intention to provide further updates to scrutiny as this work progresses.

3. Background

3.1. Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus in December 2019, there has been an increasing number of cases recorded across the world, including the United Kingdom. The World Health Organisation declared the outbreak as a pandemic on 11 March. Since then the response nationally has been moving quickly and changing almost daily. As a reminder here are some of the key events that have provided a back-drop to the local response and many of which local government has had to respond to with very little notice:

16 March	Guidance issued relating to self-isolation for households and to minimise contact for those in more vulnerable categories (such as those over 70 and pregnant women).
18 March	Announcement that schools were to close at the end of 20 March to most pupils except those whose parent is a key worker or where the child is vulnerable. It was confirmed that the exam regulator, Ofqual and exam boards would work with teachers to provide grades to students whose exams have been cancelled.
20 March	The government announced further restrictions that all pubs, cafes and restaurants, gyms and theatres required to close.
22 March	Major new measures to protect people at highest risk from coronavirus announced. Up to 1.5 million people in England who face the highest risk of being hospitalised by the virus were now required to “shield” themselves and stay at home. People with specific underlying health conditions, including some being treated for cancer would be contacted directly by the NHS.
23 March	Government announced further plans to ensure compliance with the instruction to stay at home, with an additional set of measures to be implemented, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• close all shops selling non-essential goods, including clothing and electronic stores and other premises including libraries, playgrounds and outdoor gyms, and places of worship;• stop all gatherings of more than two people in public excluding people you live with;• stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals; and parks remaining open for exercise, but gatherings will be dispersed.
25 March	Coronavirus Bill received Royal Assent.
26 March	Further guidance on what premises may remain open issued. The government issued further measures on social distancing with entertainment and hospitality premises required to close temporarily and people urged to only travel if absolutely essential.
27 March	Government launched a new drive on coronavirus tests for frontline NHS staff to help ensure they will be first in line for a new coronavirus testing programme.

31 March	The government announced a voucher scheme for schools providing free school meals with weekly shopping vouchers worth £15 to spend at supermarkets while schools are closed due to coronavirus.
2 April	The government announced a five-point plan to accelerate coronavirus testing, setting a goal to achieve 100,000 tests per day by the end of April.
6 April	Local authorities were sent a letter from MHCLG explaining two sets of regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020; The first enables all local authority meetings before 7 May 2021 to be held remotely and removes the requirement for the annual meeting this year; the second set postpones until 6 May 2021 local by-elections and other polls, either scheduled or which would otherwise arise before that date.
7 April	The government has announced a package of support to help schools deal with the challenges posed by coronavirus. The additional funding for schools will be available on top of core funding allocations that will be paid as normal to schools for the 2020-21 financial year.
8 April	The government announced a £750m package of support for frontline charities, including hospices and those supporting domestic abuse victims.
10 April	A cross-government UK-wide plan was published to ensure that critical personal protective equipment (PPE) is delivered to those on the frontline responding to coronavirus.
11 April	The Home Secretary launched a new public awareness raising campaign (#YouAreNotAlone) highlighting the support available for anyone at risk of/or experiencing domestic abuse. It was also announced that the Home Office is working with charities and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to provide an additional £2 million to immediately enhance domestic abuse helplines and online support.
15 April	The government announced that care home residents and social care staff with coronavirus symptoms will be tested as capacity is increased.
23 April	Testing was further extended to all key workers and to other groups.

3.2. In addition to this, the government also announced a series of financial packages to support businesses and the economy during this period including for example two grant schemes for businesses; the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, a new Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS) allowing larger firms with a turnover of up to £500m to become eligible for help and a package of measures through the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme.

4. Detailed report

4.1. Local Resilience Forum (LRF) response

4.1.1. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is the multi-agency partnership which plans, trains and prepares for major incidents including pandemics. It has a defined set of structures for responding to incidents and sits alongside the Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP) which co-ordinates and leads the health system response.

4.1.2. The LRF first started meeting in relation to Coronavirus in February 2020, and then in common with other LRFs across the country, declared Coronavirus a major incident which led to the formal and ongoing response. The response has been overseen by a Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) initially chaired by the County Council's Director of Public Health but taken on by the Deputy Chief Constable once a major incident was declared. This group has set the strategy and dealt with significant issues including those which required escalation to Government, and the SCG has representatives from MHCLG who facilitate this. The most significant of those issues has been access to supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Both the City Council's Director of Public Health and the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance sit on the SCG. Reporting to the SCG are a series of key groups, each with appropriate representation from the City Council, and these include:

Tactical co-ordinating group	Meeting daily to manage the day to day tactical response across agencies
PPE cell and PPE Procurement cell	To help in securing supplies of PPE and acting as a source of emergency supply where necessary
Mortality cell	To plan around the process to manage the number of deaths including provision of additional mortuary capacity
Community, Voluntary and Faith cell	Supporting the engagement of voluntary and community organisations and the community volunteering response
Business cell	To gather intelligence on the business impacts and to assist in support to affected businesses
Blue Light and Criminal Justice cell	Focusing on impacts for emergency services and wider criminal justice sector including prisons, courts and probation
Recovery Co-ordinating Group	To work on the cross-agency issues relating to recovery and help ensure consistency of approach to recovery
Communications cell	To ensure consistency of key messages and stakeholder engagement

4.1.3. The Council has played an active role in the LRF response as well as the LHRP where we have led on a social care cell in terms of the issues across adults and children's social care, and played an active role in other key aspects of the LHRP response including the testing cell and hospital discharge cell.

4.1.4. Some of the most significant issues for the LRF have included the availability of PPE which has been escalated to Government via many routes through the LRF and beyond, co-ordination of testing of key workers as this was scaled up, and the impacts in relation to care providers including care homes. Much of the current focus and work is now on recovery.

4.1.5. It should be noted that the Council has had access to sufficient PPE to date for its own workforce and has importantly acted as an emergency supplier for care providers where they have been unable to access supplies via any other route.

4.2. Business continuity and Council service response

4.2.1. Within the Council, early on the corporate business continuity plan was activated and the corporate business continuity group involving senior officers representing all areas of the Council was convened. This has been meeting twice a week and more recently weekly, chaired by the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance to co-ordinate the internal council response. In addition, a smaller core group of senior Council officers has met and continues to meet on a daily basis, and this group then brief the City Mayor and Executive, in the first instance daily and more recently twice a week now the response has settled into a routine.

4.2.2. The Council has aimed to keep as many services as possible running including for example, protecting our weekly waste collections and the garden waste collection service, and maintaining key enforcement activity to protect the safety of our residents including for example parking enforcement and noise service. Many of our services have been able to operate well and without significant disruption through home-working which has been supported by the significant work of the ICT division to achieve this.

4.2.3. Although some services have had to close in accordance with Government regulations including Libraries, Community Centres, Leisure Centres, De Montfort Hall, Adult Skills and Learning and the Customer Service Centre, many of these service areas have been creative and innovative in their response to keep an offer available for service users via digital and on-line channels, for example:

- Libraries making available a wide range of e-resources including eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines and eComics
- Leisure Services providing on-line videos to support people in keeping active and undertaking exercise at home
- A significant majority of adult learning courses moved to an online or distance learning offer via phone, email and resource packs.

4.2.4. There have been a number of key services which have been critical in terms of the Council's response and further detail on those is set out below:

a) Adult Social Care

The Council's Adult Social Care offer has continued to function well, taking into account the impact of social distancing measures. The majority of care management staff are able to work from home using existing equipment. The Department has continued to offer a community 'front door', taking enquiries from people not already receiving support; initially 'new' care requests reduced although this is now returning to usual levels. The Department has supported hospital discharges 7 days per week and 12 hours per day and provided assessment, care planning and responsive reviews to people needing new services or adjustments to existing care. Where possible, assessments have been made over the telephone or, more recently as the technology has been approved, using Microsoft Teams for video-conferencing. Home visits have continued to take place where this is required to assess an individual's needs.

The provision of assessments under the Mental Health Act has continued, although these have been challenging on occasion due to the substantial distress that people with severe mental illness are facing. Access to Care Homes has understandably been restricted and this has impacted on the completion of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) assessments; the team is following national guidance on DOLS during Covid-19.

All safeguarding functions are fully operational and there has been no notable change in activity (referrals or investigations).

Specifically, to support the Covid-19 response, a helpline for people with social care needs was established, providing support, advice and linking people into the wider corporate offer where needed, for example for access to food. Teams have been proactively contacting all people known to ASC as well as those on the 'vulnerable' or shielded lists who have previously been known to ASC. Staff from areas unable to work as usual were redeployed to help with this.

The Council's direct care staff in Reablement and the Integrated Crisis Response Service have continued to provide services including to people who have been diagnosed as Covid positive, wearing appropriate PPE. This has been critical in supporting people to return home from hospital or remain at home safely when unwell.

The Council continues to work in partnership with the external organisations to ensure the ongoing support to a range of vulnerable people. This includes supporting nearly 1,000 people who live in residential care and helping nearly 500 people with a learning disability or mental health issue to live independently.

The shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has been a national issue. However, the Council has been able to purchase items from both local and national suppliers, to create an emergency stock PPE. All the local care organisations are providing regular updates detailing the number of days of PPE they have available. If an organisation has less than 72 hours left and cannot secure the required items through their normal supply routes, they can access the Council's stock. Also, face masks were delivered to 104 care homes on 24th April 2020 after updated national guidance was issued requiring care home staff to use them at all times.

The Council acknowledges the additional cost pressures caused by Covid-19. This includes the cost of agency personnel covering vacancies caused by permanent staff self-isolating or being off sick, the purchase of PPE and the extra time required to deliver care safely, whilst following infection control guidance. To date the Council has paid out an additional £3m to the existing care providers. These are temporary arrangements and will be reviewed after 7th May 2020.

The department is also working closely with the Council's Employment Hub to recruit new employees to work in the care industry, taking advantage of the government's latest national advertising campaign, and to support the use of volunteers in local care homes. Due to care home staff self-isolating or being absent due to sickness, the care home organisations have identified a range of tasks that could be completed by volunteers. Therefore, the Council has provided the required training and DBS checks to enable the volunteers to provide this support, which is working very well. It should be noted that these are individual volunteers, undertaking specified roles, with full recognition of infection control requirements.

The authority funds a range of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to provide day care opportunities for individuals needing social care support. Since the services were temporarily closed in March 2020, the Council has continued to fund these services to ensure their long-term financial viability. However, these organisations have been asked to continue providing support in a safe manner, such as making welfare telephone or skype calls.

The Council's Hastings Road Day Centre supports a range of individuals with complex physical and learning disabilities. Although the service is currently closed, the staff continue to make regular welfare calls and to provide an outreach service to families and carers to prevent carer breakdown and to give them a break from their caring role.

Officers from the Council's Enablement Service continue to make welfare telephone/skype calls to vulnerable individuals to support improved mental wellbeing. They have also been assisting with contacting individuals identified as requiring shielding.

b) Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care and Early Help has continued to be fully operational, while implementing social distancing measures. There are very low numbers of staff absent from work, with the vast majority able to work from home using personal or work equipment.

After an initial decrease in referrals, this has now increased with social care seeing an increase of 10% in contacts in April compared to March and Early Help seeing an increase of approx. 20% in April compared to March and 30% compared to February. The expectation is that this may continue to increase due to hidden harm and well-being issues, however it is too early to draw any firm conclusions at this stage of the pandemic.

Specifically, in response to Covid-19, the division has:

- Made contact with the families of approx. 400 children from the NHS discharge list to offer support and signposting.
- Daily communication and working together with schools and settings to manage safeguarding issues for children not attending school/setting - weekly system

set up across schools, safeguarding in education and children's social care/early help workers to cross-reference intelligence regarding families and make sure children are safe.

- Using online resources to support the vast majority of those children who are in contact with services, with exceptions as identified by social workers or edge of care services that are doing some face to face work with our most vulnerable children, young people and families.
- Identified key management information that needed to be regularly reported on during Covid-19 to ensure ongoing safeguarding of young people, e.g. Covid-19 flags built into children's recording systems to manage appropriate response and have management oversight. There is an additional focus in domestic abuse contacts and responses to these are overseen by Heads of Service.
- Bespoke process in place to identify vulnerable families who need access to emergency food, with practitioners in early help delivering these, totalling over 6,000 lunches delivered to date.
- Assessments and interventions have been completed over the phone or using Microsoft Teams for video-conferencing.
- Frontline practitioners doing home visits in gardens, parking outside houses to do sessions over phone with family in the window to enable face to face work remotely. Families have reported valuing this, as they then have that alternative 'face to face contact'.
- Child protection conferences, Team around the Family Meetings for Early Help Assessments and reviews for looked after children are taking place virtually with attendance from partners improved.
- Virtual offer put together by Children Centres, Youth Service and Family Support Service which includes, delivering groupwork programmes on a 1:1 basis and group activities via social media.
- Some Children Centre and Youth Centres have been kept open for use by essential services, e.g. midwifery, and for use by practitioners to do specific essential work, such as drug testing, meetings with Legal in advance of court proceedings.
- Youth Council and Care Experienced young people have developed a range of resources and tips to improve wellbeing using social media to promote this for all.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) equipment has been made available via adult social care for social workers and early help practitioners completing essential face to face and edge of care activity to prevent family breakdown.

The division acknowledges the additional cost pressures caused by Covid-19 and has been recording spend in this area, which is in the process of being collated. Additional spend is minimal, mainly due to no additional staffing costs and with income generation from traded services stable. There are also no notable increases in placement costs for children as a direct result of Covid-19. Associated costs are in the region of £25k to date and include the following:

- Increased personal allowance of £20 per week per care leaver who hasn't received their benefit entitlement or living in semi-independent accommodation. This covers approx. 25 young people.
- Food being provided to vulnerable families not eligible for free school meals or CSG 19. Approximately 6,000 lunches have been provided to date.
- Formula milk and nappies for any family identified by CSG 19 and those open to social care and early help.

Services commissioned by social care and early help have produced business continuity plans and an alternative service offer which has been approved.

c) Education

The council's Education and Special Education Needs (SEN) divisions have continued to function well providing clear and coherent leadership and guidance in response to expectations placed on provision of education for key workers and vulnerable children and young people as a result of Covid-19.

Schools and Early Years settings across the city have continued to provide for those vulnerable children with a social worker, those with an Education Health Care Plan and children of key workers. Most parents heeded government advice and kept their children at home. Schools risk assessed all children and worked with parents to identify which children should be in school. The SEN division worked very closely with special schools to protect the most vulnerable children and young people through detailed risk assessments undertaken with each family.

Initial numbers of children attending was very low, but we are now seeing just under 2% of children attending schools and settings. Most schools remain open for these few pupils. Individual and group online discussions have been held with the majority of schools over the past 6 weeks to support decision making. Schools are providing both online resources and resource packs to support those children's learning at home. The new Department for Education (DfE) laptop scheme will provide limited resource to city children when compared to identified need.

The Education division is providing daily communication to all schools, including special schools, academies and independent schools and early years settings across the city providing clarity and updating advice on all aspects of the current situation. Schools and settings are providing daily information about which children are attending and weekly information about their contacts with vulnerable children who are not in school. This data is collated, analysed and shared across the wider department to triangulate information about vulnerable children and update risk assessments. As DfE advice and guidance changes the council has had to play an active role in supporting school leaders to ensure provision meets need. Weekly structured calls with the DfE, and Regional Schools Commissioner have been held to share intelligence, clarify guidance and escalate issues. Work is underway to begin to plan how return to school can be managed effectively.

Settings are being supported with advice and guidance from the council's Early Years Development team to ensure that there is sufficient provision for children who require it. They are providing support to help parents find provision if they take on new key worker roles. A similar service is provided by the Admission service for parents needing school places. There has been a significant increase in the applications for free school meals which officers have to check and pass onto schools. At January census 19% were eligible for free school meals but there has been an increase of almost 1,500 new applications taking the proportion to 22%. The provision of free school meals which has been of concern to all is now improving for both food parcel schemes and the DfE voucher scheme.

Education Welfare and Connexions services are maintaining contact with those vulnerable children and young people they work with who are not in school. Education

Welfare Officers are supporting schools through visiting the homes, observing social distancing, of those families that schools have struggled to contact. This is enabling families to be more connected and provides reassurance that children are safe and well. The Connexions service has been providing one-to-one support for those 15+ young people who are struggling with securing college places or employment.

On 16th April parents were told which primary or infant school their child had been allocated for September. The admissions service offered 91% of children their first preference and 97.2% were offered a place in one of their preference schools. To support parents who want to appeal Admission Appeals have now successfully moved to an online service.

In addition to the actions for all schools the SEND team has delivered the following, in response to Covid-19:

- Creating a clear framework for risk assessment, to identify children, risks, and how the authority can continue to deliver education or care to children as part of their education, health and care (EHC) plan.
- Weekly calls set up across special schools, to ensure issues are addressed, pupil risks are identified, and intelligence is shared and triangulated across departments.
- Limited approved alternative provision has been allowed to re-open, whilst observing social distancing to allow courses to be completed and children to achieve valuable end of exam certification.
- Daily calls with our external providers, to ensure care is continued to be delivered for our Disabled Children's Service (DCS).
- Developed a clear and structure contingency plan to ensure staff were available to deliver front line service for special school and the DCS service continue to function
- Through a structured Business Continuity Plan, we ensured our Specialist Education Service has continued to deliver ECHP plans, both in the form of annual reviews and new plans. Good levels of statutory compliance were delivered throughout March.
- Provided clear structure and support to ensure school were able to deliver annual reviews for children who had an ECHP plan through, calls, conference calls or video calls.
- All governance panels for statutory assessments and specialist placements have continued to function.
- Re-deployment of Educational Psychologists to offer telephone support for schools and families, to discuss concerns.
- Continued to operate the SEND transport service to key children, to ensure they could travel to school, whilst maintaining social distancing.
- We have managed to maintain the short breaks service. From the pupil list we have identified those with highest risk/complexity/care etc and prioritised their needs and have managed to maintain the home service through the DCS service.
- Maintained regular contact with the Parent and Carer Forum to ensure feedback from parents and carers is identified and addressed quickly.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) equipment has been made available to special schools where gaps have been identified and across the disabled children service to ensure there is not disruption to service.

d) Housing and homelessness

The Council's housing service has worked exceptionally hard in very challenging circumstances to support some of the most vulnerable in the city. The first priority initially was to ensure government guidelines were followed by closing all dormitory style accommodation in the city, and that appropriate social distancing could be actioned in all temporary accommodation. This was a huge task with 54 individuals needing accommodation - comprising 16 dormitory beds at Andover Street Safe Space, 14 dormitory beds at the Council's Outreach provision, as well as helping our partners who had 14 dormitory beds at the One-Roof Shelter and reducing capacity by 10 at the Action Homeless hostel.

The service then sourced an additional 186 units of accommodation as well as a block hotel booking to provide 26 units to accommodate people who were symptomatic.

The service has helped in excess of an additional 150 individuals with advice and assistance, including accommodation in most cases and when needed. While the increase is not linked to those sleeping on the street it is important to note that prior to the Covid-19 epidemic the service had identified 18 individuals as rough sleeping, so have seen since then a 700% increase because of people losing accommodation tied to jobs, those sofa surfing or in unsafe accommodation requiring help from the Council.

In addition to the above the service has also provided:

- Via the Midland Langar Seva Society a 1,000 meals have been delivered to people housed in bed and breakfast accommodation
- Covid-19 support packages (providing food, other essentials and fuel vouchers) to those in self-contained properties
- All 45 residents at the Dawn Centre have been receiving hot meals cooked and prepared at Taylor Road school and delivered by our Passenger and Transport Team
- The Passenger and Transport team are also delivering the Covid-19 support packages to those in self-contained properties.

Alongside the City Council response, Help the Homeless have also been providing another important source of support to those allocated accommodation.

The Homelessness Outreach Team, alongside Inclusion healthcare and Turning Point have provided help and advice as required and the Homeless Emergency Duty line has been available seven days a week to ensure anyone facing homelessness can get help.

The Number 5 Day Centre has managed to continue to open, invoking social distancing arrangements, this has enabled ongoing alcohol support for rough sleepers and the venue has been used as an access route for health and day centre services. Turning Point continue to provide a service and are running the homeless team from Eldon Street as opposed to the outreach venues, including some continued face to face work. They have adjusted some prescriptions safely to a less frequent collection and have reported no significant issues and actually a more concerted effort by some service users to collect medication and stay on prescription than before Covid-19.

District Housing staff have continued to work behind the scenes to ensure that we successfully maintain important Fire Safety checks and work with a focus on larger

tenanted buildings safety, and in addition emergency repairs have continued with up to 100 jobs being carried out daily.

e) Public Health

The Public Health response to COVID-19 has been taking place both across the authority and as part of the local authority support, to the wider local system response where public health professionals sit within a number of the LRF response cells. It has worked closely with ASC on issues including PPE, testing and infection control as well as providing advice and guidance to other key departments such as housing, schools and HR teams.

Maintaining contracted services

Efforts have been made to maintain key contracted services over the outbreak period as many of these support vulnerable populations. To achieve this, services have had to adapt to meet social distancing and reduced staffing requirements. A number of our services are now making use of telephone consultations, online services and revised operating procedures to prioritise those who may be particularly vulnerable. Planning is already underway for any easing of lockdown, with evaluation of some of the new ways of working currently associated with these services.

Sexual Health Services provided by Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust has adapted its way of working. There are telephone consultations and provision of online services including contraception and Sexually transmitted infection testing. There is still some face to face service provision which has to be booked via a telephone booking This is for urgent issues only.

GPs are not providing the Long Acting Reversible contraception consistent with national guidance. Emergency Coils provided in some places.

Emergency Hormonal Contraception provided by pharmacies has seen a massive reduction in demand.

Work with the vulnerable continues include information to the homeless and access to phones for support via inclusion and outreach workers. Information given to sex workers, via other partners.

The drug and alcohol service, operated by Turning Point's hub at Eldon Street, remains open to support service users but face to face contact is restricted to all but the most essential services, such as people who need medical assessment for Methadone or those who need to access clean injecting equipment. Overall referrals have dropped but the service is maintaining contact with current users via the phone.

The day services for street lifestyle/rough sleepers-based at 'No.5' remains in operation and has now incorporated, with support from the YMCA, the services previously provided at the Dawn centre. There is close and positive working between Inclusion healthcare, Turning Point, the housing outreach team, and the homeless provision in the city to signpost and support people who are rough sleeping or in hostel accommodation with substance misuse issues.

Probation Health Trainers have also adapted services to a telephone-based model. They are responding to needs related to COVID-19 through supporting clients to continue to access support for substance misuse, food parcels, mental health support and financial advice.

The community food growing scheme commissioned from TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) has developed an innovative approach to encouraging food growing throughout lockdown by launching a telephone helpline to support people to grow their own produce. Videos and other support tools have been made available on-line and public health funding is being used to purchase seeds for the public to encourage participation.

Healthy Together (0-19 Healthy Child Programme)

Healthy Together is currently operating under the COVID-19 Prioritisation Model as part of Leicestershire Partnership TNHS Trusts work alongside the wider NHS to enact and plan changes to services to best respond to COVID-19. The model has been informed by national guidance around service prioritisation for community health services and mental health.

Throughout the 0-5 offer, mandated contacts are still taking place, either by phone, via a digital platform or face to face. Prior to each contact, practitioners will undertake a telephone triage as part of a COVID assessment and all face to face contacts are undertaken in line with clinical and PPE guidance. Access to PPE has not been a problem to date.

Universal Partnership Plus or Safeguarding cases are appropriately risk assessed and a face to face contact will be undertaken if required in line with clinical and PPE guidance.

At this point, Healthy Together has had information that UHL have had a 75% increase in referrals to Local Authorities from Children and Young People attending A&E with an injury. A significant number of these have identified historic old injuries not previously reported which presents further concerns.

As a service, Healthy Together have seen a specific drop in the number of face to face contacts being undertaken for this cohort of families. Specific caseload review and contact guidance has been disseminated into practice and will be monitored for evidence of increased face to face contacts being undertaken.

The current video consultation platform available to teams across Healthy Together can impact on data usage for the client which can be a barrier for this vulnerable low income group.

Local concerns on the impact for Children and Young People from not being within a nursery or school setting echo those being raised nationally regarding health, development and educational attainment.

Healthy Together have linked with the Local Authority to promote the digital and text service offer within their communication bulletins to schools and nurseries.

All the websites have had new material and insertion of national recommended articles added onto them under specific COVID 19 sections. For example, The Health for Kids Grownups Section has had over 1000 page views in less than two days on 'Looking After Yourself' kit. The service is currently gathering the data on hits for COVID material in April.

Staff redeployment to Covid-19 response:

- PH Nurses -Health Visitors:12
- PH Nurses -School Nurses:12
- Band 3 and 4 staff: 9

Adapting in-house services

Live Well Leicester which is the integrated lifestyle service continues to provide support to people. The smoking cessation team reacted quickly to the early evidence that health outcomes were worse for smokers with COVID-19. They have developed bespoke communications to encourage and support people to quit smoking during the pandemic. All smoking cessation support is now being provided over the telephone with nicotine replacement and e-cigarettes being sent via post.

Rather than running group-based physical activity sessions, healthy lifestyle advisors are now contacting clients via phone to provide advice and support about maintaining their physical and mental wellbeing. They have also produced a number of low intensity exercise videos for clients to follow. These are available via the Leicester City Council You Tube channel.

The adult weight management services have seen an increase in GP referrals, due to publicity around possible links between obesity and poor outcomes related to COVID-19. Telephone and online support are now offered with a focus on preventing further weight gain for some, whilst supporting others to lose weight.

Support to helplines and other council departments

Public Health staff provided support and PHE guidance while the LCC internal phone line was in operation at the start of the Pandemic. Public Health staff are team leaders and volunteers on the Virtual Humanitarian Assistance Centre (VHAC).

Public health has been involved in the community food provision and free school meals support (section 5.4.3. & 5.4.4), providing advice on infection control, PPE and dietetic advice in conjunction with dieticians from LPT (Leicestershire Partnership Trust). The relationship with Feeding Britain has brought in £50,000 of additional funding, 1000s of ambient meals and 500 activity packs for inclusion in food parcels to the most vulnerable.

Public health have worked with the communications team to get messages out to the public regarding the importance of continuing to take their blood pressure medication, the risks of smoking and highlighting that smoking advisors are still there to support them in their quit attempts and publicising the new phone-based support for those feeling socially isolated.

Public Health have taken a lead role in interpreting, adapting and advising on guidance for the use of PPE for both directly provided and commissioned services. This has included writing flow charts to explain PPE requirements for homecare staff, writing a comprehensive FAQ on PPE, and writing a message for senior managers from the CE to both protect staff and residents and to protect the supply of PPE by ensuring it is used in accordance with official guidance.

Public Health have also taken a lead role in updating the generic Coronavirus FAQ page on InterFace and act as a source of advice for other LCC Departments and Unions on interpretation of guidance on self-isolation, social distancing, cleaning and maintaining safe work-places.

Public health data and expertise

The analysts within the public health team are interpreting, developing and disseminating data to support the local COVID-19 response for both internal and external partners. This includes supporting the Data Cell within the LRF response structure to undertake modelling to support roll out of testing and the move towards recovery.

Influencing other partners

Public Health continues to work with LRF and NHS partners to support them with their COVID-19 responses by providing public health support and expertise to various cells and task groups set up to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

Information and advice from national bodies related to clinical changes and advice re contraception and other services have been sent to GPs.

Mental wellbeing response to COVID-19

The public mental health response has been to work with different organisations to lead a coordinated approach to support mental wellbeing while people are social distancing. Public mental health leadership continues with Time to Change (TTC) Leicester and the LLR Suicide Audit and Prevention Group. The TTC Champions group continues to meet weekly online. The meetings have been well attended and focused on maintaining morale and sharing practical ways to improve mental wellbeing.

Suicide prevention

Early information indicates that there has been an increase in local suicide numbers over the pandemic period. Public Health leads the LLR Suicide Audit and Prevention Group [SAPG], a partnership of statutory and community organisations, such as the NHS, Leicestershire Police, the Samaritans and the NHS Regional Coordinator for Suicide Prevention.

The SAPG is liaising with NHS Commissioners and Primary and Secondary Care to ensure that people with mental health problems receive clear information and timely support from their GPs and specialist mental health practitioners. Primary and Secondary Care organisations will share communications around public mental health issues, supportive advice on a range of issues (such as finances, domestic violence, bereavement, and drug and alcohol misuse). Primary Care practitioners will be encouraged to adopt a suicide risk assessment for registered patients with pre-existing mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety.

Social isolation and loneliness

In response to concerns that social isolation and loneliness could increase or be exacerbated by the requirements to socially distance, shield or isolate because of COVID-19, two new schemes have been established. The befriending line '*distant companions*' is for people in the city who would benefit from a regular friendly conversation and '*distant socialising*' provides advice about activities that can be undertaken in the home. Both initiatives are being run in partnership with Leicester Ageing Together. In addition, work is currently underway on initiatives to support the

needs of care experienced young people who are isolated and lonely because of COVID-19.

Domestic and sexual violence

The public mental health team is working closely with the Domestic and Sexual Violence team in the Council and other partners across LLR to provide an emergency response for domestic abuse during coronavirus. This has included contributing towards the development of resources for those experiencing domestic abuse and for practitioners who are on the frontline, who may require additional support.

The focus is now on developing a resource outlining the 'local offer' in Leicester, connecting with pharmacies to share key supportive messages and promoting the services available.

Community infection prevention control (care homes)

Public Health is working with partners across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to coordinate infection prevention control advice to Care Homes in the locality.

- (a) Partners include Public Health England, local authority Adult Social Care Teams, Clinical Commissioning Groups and Care Homes;
- (b) The response includes engagement with local COVID-19 response Cells, including the Resilience Forum, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Care Homes Cells;
- (c) The work includes development of an on-call rota, shared documentation and up to date information about infection control as applied to Care Homes. Care Homes with COVID-19 cases are now contacted regularly with information.
- (d) The LLR Community Infection Prevention Control for Care Homes work is now part of the strategic response to COVID-19.

f) Neighbourhood Services

The Council's Neighbourhood and Environmental Services Division covers a number of the front facing services within the Council.

The following gives a brief overview of some of the Division's activity during these unprecedented times: -

Waste Management and Cleansing

Throughout this period and to date the City's weekly kerbside refuse and recycling collection service has been maintained alongside other services such as the optional green waste collection service, clinical waste service, bin delivery and removal and the dedicated refuse collection service for flats (many of which have more than one collection a week). Over 60 bring bank sites in various locations across the City have also remained available and have been fully serviced.

Across April (w/c 30/03/20 – w/e 26/04/20) the service collected an additional 1,257 tonnes of waste (Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR), refuse and green waste) compared to 2019 (7,835 tonnes in 2019 vs 9,092 tonnes in 2020). This represents a 16.04% increase.

In week commencing 13/04/20, the service saw a 38.1% uplift in DMR tonnages and a 25.7% uplift in refuse tonnages.

The service has recently restarted the City's bulky waste collection service (5th May 2020) and put back in business the Gypsum Close Trade Waste Facility (30th April 2020). An agency referral scheme has also been introduced to facilitate the appropriate disposal of household waste that is identified either by the Council, the police or Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services as presenting a risk of injury, illness or harm if stored on a householder's property and cannot be stored in any other way safely. In addition to this, plans to open Gypsum Close Household Waste Recycling Centre from 20th May 2020 (initially opening on a Wednesday to Sunday schedule) have also been developed with the same safety guidance in mind should the public feel they need to dispose of waste outside of the routes that are available, such as the weekly kerbside service.

Cleansing Services have retained their cleansing operational activities in neighbourhoods and the city centre covering the City's 487 miles of streets, whilst continuing to monitor and as appropriate empty 3,200 bins (of which 354 are in the City centre). The team has also continued with graffiti and fly tipping removal.

More recently street-washing and gum removal has returned to the City Centre in order to further drive up standards of cleanliness, in readiness for some return of people to what were previously high footfall areas.

Parks and Allotments

The City's 156 parks and open spaces (including 12 key parks) have remained open throughout the pandemic to date. Social distancing signs have been deployed and City Wardens alongside Park Wardens have been utilised to ensure monitoring of these areas whilst key equipment such as green gyms, ball courts and play areas (totalling 247 facilities) had to be taken out of use. To support a joined-up approach to park usage the service developed a protocol that has been shared with the police in order to promote appropriate use of parks and open spaces.

The City's 45 allotments have remained open and accessible. Allotment societies have been supporting social distancing messages and City Wardens have been assisting with monitoring work. Signs have also been made available with key messages around mitigating steps to safeguard against Covid-19.

Bereavement Services

Bereavement Services has received understandable increased attention and demand during the pandemic with April this year seeing 346 burials and cremations compared to 224 burials and cremations in April 2019. This represents a 54.4% increase. Appropriate social distancing and other measures have been put in place in accordance with Government guidance to support services at Gilroes Crematoria and the City's cemeteries have remained open which again conforms with Government guidance.

Libraries and Community Services

Recognising the importance of supporting community well-being libraries and community services have responded to the current situation by moving their offer online reaching out and significantly expanding and re-developing their online services. There has been a significant surge in e-book borrowing for example, which has increased by 100% and continues to rise. Support for young families and children has been particularly well received with over 3,500 views of online story telling sessions delivered by libraries staff and with deliveries of reading packs for children organised

through the distribution centre and community foodbanks. The service has kept communities updated and connected through weekly newsletters and extensive social media posts. In excess of 13,000 people now receive the book news e-letter every week. Neighbourhood Services staff are routinely contacting service users who may be isolated or in need of support such as home library service, lunch club and friendship groups and community group leaders.

During lockdown many staff have been utilised for other new services such as support for the City's foodbanks, assisting Adult Social Care to contact vulnerable residents and helping digitally challenged/excluded individuals to complete online forms that offer access to support.

Regulatory Services and Community Safety

The Council's Regulatory Services have been leading on monitoring compliance of businesses with the Coronavirus regulations. They have been dealing with referrals since the 23rd March and in this time, they have logged 131 referrals. 62 relate to potential breach of the Health Protection Regulations 2020 – Business/Premises Closures and 69 relate to social distancing enquiries. All referrals have been reviewed and contact made with the businesses. To date no further enforcement action has been required. Throughout the period work has been assigned to specific areas of expertise for example, Licensing Enforcement has been reviewing any referrals for licenced premises, whilst Food Safety and Public Safety have focussed on those areas relevant to their service areas.

Other aspects of Regulatory and Community Safety Services have advised on concerns ranging from private sector housing, pest and dog control, domestic violence, noise and pollution control, street lifestyles and with the greater emergence of foodbanks for example, food safety. Another example of Covid-19 related work has been seen in Trading Standards who have been supporting the procurement of Personal Protective Equipment advising on certification and product safety requirements as appropriate.

4.3. Workforce impacts

4.3.1. Casual Workforce

A large proportion of our casual workforce work within areas of the organisation which have been closed as a result of Covid-19. We have furloughed these staff, agreeing to pay 100% of their average pay over the last 12 months for all those who demonstrate enough regularity and dependency on their casual income. This will be claimed back through the Government furlough scheme though there is uncertainty as to whether this claim will be successful.

4.3.2. Holiday Entitlements

Due to the lockdown we are seeing an increase in the amount of unused holiday we would expect to see at this point in the year. We are communicating with staff on the need to take holiday during this pandemic in order to support their own physical and mental wellbeing. Furthermore, we have adjusted our holiday roll over policy to enable the roll-over of additional amounts of holiday as a result of being unable to take it due to service demands.

4.3.3. Staff Testing

We have an effective testing provision in place for staff who are currently off work due to Covid-19 symptoms. The testing allows for either the employee, or a family member (whoever is displaying new symptoms) to be put forward for a test at our local testing facility. So far, we have tested 29 employees with no known positive tests. Staff are also able to refer themselves through the .GOV website and we are aware a number of staff have taken this option.

4.3.4. Redeployment of Staff

We have 682 employees (12% of our workforce) unable to work due to service closures. We are currently utilising these employees to support the delivery of our critical services. Specifically, the following areas where seeking support and we received over 100 volunteers to date;

- Residential Care
- Brokerage Services
- Community Equipment Drivers
- Call Handlers
- Assistive Technology Enablement Officers
- Customer Service Advisors volunteers

4.3.5. Employee Wellbeing

The existing health and wellbeing pages were reviewed and updated during the first two weeks of March following the annual review of the health and wellbeing action plan and in response to the Covid-19. Additional materials including resources, articles, links to further support and guidance was made available during the week of 23rd and 30th March 2020.

These articles included:

- Healthy working from home (quick tips)
- Home exercise programme
- LCC created resources e.g. video on the five ways to wellbeing whilst at home, PowerPoint on leading a resilient virtual team
- Various NHS fitness workout sheets (pillow workout, seated workout, stairs workout, yoga)
- Various mental and physical wellbeing resources
- Working at home with children (quick tips)

We are also promoting links to external resources that include:

- Active Leicester
- Amica employee assistance programme
 - Silvercloud learning resources, an individually tailored programme to include mental wellbeing, resilience and sleep
 - Remote telephone and skype counselling services
 - Access to www.amica-counselling.uk a central hub for online resources
- Headspace resources www.headspace.com
- IPRS muscular skeletal services
 - exercises and advice around back and posture
 - access to www.myiprshealth.com a central hub for online well-being advice, webinars, videos and podcasts
 - remote treatment for physiotherapy, mental health and wellbeing

- LCC external website resources e.g. domestic violence support, financial support etc.
- Mind resources www.mind.org.uk
- NHS resources including change4life

In addition to the above a specific article was written regarding working from home, which linked to various InterFace pages in the health and wellbeing area alongside pages relating to using digital technology from home. We have worked closely with the communications team to link health and wellbeing pages to NewsPod for increased visibility.

For those staff unable to access our intranet pages, we have made our intranet pages available to all staff to access through their personal devices and additionally, sent a letter to each of these employee's homes to make the aware of the support mechanisms available to them.

4.4. Community Support

4.4.1. Crisis and Resident support

This has of course been a challenging time for many of our residents, coping with potential financial hardship and the challenges of lockdown and self-isolation. For residents having difficulty paying their council tax or rent they have been able to contact the Council for advice and support which includes temporary adjustments to household council tax bills and council rent as well as emergency support grants for those worst affected. In addition, no recovery action is being taken to pursue council tax or rent linked to Coronavirus or to evict people from council homes where the impact of the virus has left people unable to pay their rent. The Council has also implemented the Government commitment of an additional £150 credit towards council tax bills in 2020/21 for households of working age in receipt of council tax support. This equates to 17,307 households.

The Council established a priority e-mail address for referrals and direct enquiries related to support for food, fuel, financial hardship, social isolation and vulnerability concerns c19support@leicester.gov.uk. Since it was established over 5,400 contacts have been made and those have been addressed the same working day or if received out of hours on the following working day.

A central food hub was established to prepare weekly food parcels, and which is also able to cater for dietary and other needs. To date the hub has delivered 4,170 parcels to Leicester residents.

4.4.2. Shielding medically vulnerable residents

The national shielding project run by the NHS co-ordinated the contact to some 12,500 medically vulnerable residents in Leicester. The letters were followed up by phone calls from a national call centre. Individuals were then offered the potential for a food parcel to be delivered to their door, delivery of medications/prescriptions, and social contact through the NHS volunteering scheme. The Council received data on those being contacted and where that data indicated some form of support was needed, the Council also proactively made contact.

However, in addition to this the Council proactively used data it holds to identify a further approximately 17,000 residents who we considered may be vulnerable and potentially need support. They were contacted directly by phone where we had a contact number via email or letter, and if needed were then provided with appropriate support including deliveries of food parcels.

4.4.3. Foodbanks

Community foodbanks continue to provide an important source of support for many individuals and families in the city, and during this time they have faced unprecedented levels of requests. The City Council are working with Action Homeless who are commissioned to run the City Foodbank and to coordinate community foodbank support, and with Fareshare, who distribute food to the many of registered foodbanks on a subscription basis. Working with these partners the Council is directly providing ambient food supplies to city foodbanks in the Emergency Food Partnership at a cost of over £100,000 to maintain and increase food supplies. In addition, the Council has worked proactively with foodbanks to provide public health advice on food handling and social distancing, guidance on eligibility and support through the VCS to encourage a home delivery service, and where appropriate to support them in securing additional volunteers.

4.4.4. Free school meals provision

The Council's City Catering service continues to provide cooked meals for schools with keyworker children in attendance, as well as food for those 12,000 or so children eligible for Free-School Meals, and even though most of them are currently not at school.

Food parcels and packed lunches continue to be provided which families with children eligible for FSMs can pick up from their child's school. Each food parcel provided contains recipe cards and the ingredients needed to prepare five nutritious meals per person, per week.

The DfE announced the availability of a centrally co-ordinated voucher scheme for those eligible for FSMs, however this has been plagued by logistical issues and therefore where asked we have continued to provide support to schools and those eligible for free school meals via our City Catering Service.

4.5. Volunteering and engagement of the voluntary and community sector

4.5.1. Working with Voluntary Action Leicestershire (VAL), over 1,200 volunteers have been signed up to support the local response. Those volunteers have been utilised for a range of specific tasks including support to community foodbanks, community pharmacies and other individual, person by person needs.

4.5.2. In addition, working with VAL, a range of guidance and support has been put together to ensure both volunteers and those they support are safeguarded, including for example advice on safe working practices to ensure social distancing and mitigate against risk of infection.

4.5.3. Throughout the response the City Council has worked closely with a number of key voluntary and community organisations across the city to share information and identify where they need additional support, and again deploying additional

volunteers where needed. Information has also been made available about the various different funding opportunities and sources available to VCS and Faith groups, and representations continue to be made to Government about the sector based challenges they are faced by.

4.5.4. There have also been regular discussions with faith groups across the city, county and Rutland focusing on information sharing and addressing issues or concerns, for example around burials and in terms of celebrating key festivals and events safely and in a different way.

4.5.5. The Council also set up the Community Mobilisation fund to allow local councillors to support community groups that are helping vulnerable people in their wards. Along with this has been the good neighbour scheme organised by Councillors and others right across the city, some of this utilising the community mobilisation funding.

4.6. Business Support

4.6.1. Leicester received a total of £85million of funding for the Small Business Grant and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure grant– the highest amount in the East Midlands and one of the 10 highest city allocations in the UK. Smaller businesses who get business rate relief can expect to apply for £10,000, while businesses in larger properties could get a grant of £25,000 in line with the Government’s grants criteria.

4.6.2. The City Council is responsible for allocating the money to eligible businesses and was required in a matter of days to have developed, tested and made live an application process as well as put in place significant capacity to process those applications consistently to ensure prompt and efficient payment but to also minimise any risk of fraud and error.

4.6.3. To date the City Council has received 5,154 applications, processed 4,785 and paid out £55.4m

4.6.4. The Small Business Grant and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant funding are part of a wider package of help and support being made available to businesses across Leicester and Leicestershire who are concerned about their future. The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Ltd (LLEP) via the Business Growth Hub have been capturing data and intelligence from business about the business impacts and have been providing advice and support to businesses and employers both via the Business Gateway website and through a team of advisers.

4.7. Communications

4.7.1. As a trusted source of information, the Council’s communications response supported by has been critical throughout. This has included:

- A direct mailing which went to every household in the city including a message from the City Mayor, reiterated key messages around staying safe and highlighted important sources of further information

- A weekly Coronavirus specific edition of the Your Leicester enewsletter which is now reaching around 65,000+ as well as many more residents via our partner organisations.
- Regular press releases on a range of key aspects of the Council's response including homelessness, children's safeguarding, support for those facing social isolation through to the improvements in air quality and creation of temporary cycle lanes to support key workers
- Ongoing comprehensive messaging on advice for residents and council support via the Council's main social media channels
- Detailed advice, guidance and support on a dedicated section of the Council website
- Short videos and posters which translated key government advice into 10 community languages
- Regular emails to council staff and elected members
- Regular briefings for all Council members, OSC, Executive members, Trade Unions and MPs
- Media briefings for local press and TV
- Close engagement with key voluntary and community organisations, faith organisations and with local media such as community radio stations.

4.8. Recovery

4.8.1. Both the LRF and the City Council have focused in more recent weeks on recovery planning. Recovery can be somewhat of a misnomer as it implies returning back to normal whereas at the current time it is likely that there will continue to be changes to the way we all live and work for some time to come.

4.8.2. In the first instance there has been work done based on a range of different scenarios around how the lockdown may be lifted including in terms of schools, businesses, continued social distancing and ongoing shielding of certain groups. This has helped to identify particularly the shorter-term operational issues both internally and which cut across agencies. These issues include for example:

- Ways in which to reopen buildings to maintain social distancing, operate safely and to protect the workforce and our customers;
- Areas where guidance and support are needed in terms of the workforce ranging from issues such as support for the mental health and wellbeing of staff through to implications for annual leave, training and other practical matters;
- Ongoing management of PPE to ensure sufficient ongoing supplies and stock and a consistent approach to the use of PPE;
- Implications for contracts and procurement;
- Managing and prioritising backlogs in terms of service demand; and
- Being prepared for a significant increase in issues and referrals around Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Safeguarding; many of which have seen a significant fall during lock-down.

4.8.3. A lot of work has already gone into looking at and developing actions and plans in response to these, and individual services have considered what they need to do in terms of the continuation or restarting of specific services

4.8.4. There are also clearly some key longer-term recovery issues which will need more detailed consideration and strategy development. These include:

- Impacts on the local economy including the city centre and wider employment and implications for businesses across the city
- Ways in which we may be able to build on the positive climate change impacts including the improvements in air quality
- Building on the behaviour changes around exercise, volunteering and local level community support
- Harnessing the community volunteer response for longer-term benefit and the sustainability of the voluntary and community sector and learning from how it responded
- Making the most of the significant shift to using technology in the way we work to work more efficiently and effectively in future

4.8.5. What is also evident is that elements of the Council's response will also need to continue for the foreseeable future as well as potentially new areas we will be asked to undertake, such as support on the national contract tracing approach.

5. Financial, legal, equalities and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

It is too early to assess the financial impact of the pandemic for the council and the economy of the city. A separate report elsewhere on the agenda sets out the current costs incurred by the council, an assessment of the loss of income and a high-level projection of the longer-term impact.

Alison Greenhill, Director of Finance tel. 0116 454 4001

5.2 Legal implications

The Council's response to the Coronavirus pandemic has been conducted in such a way as to comply with its statutory responsibilities. These responsibilities have been modified by emergency legislation passed by Parliament, most of which is in force until 2021.

Kamal Adata, City Barrister tel. 0116 454 1401

5.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the enforcement of specific duty reporting obligations has been suspended for 2020, although the Equality and Human Rights Commission are encouraging those organisations that can meet the duty to do so. However, the general duties as outlined in the first paragraph remain in force and are critically important in

ensuring that public bodies consider the needs of people with different protected characteristics as they respond to coronavirus.

There are no direct implications arising from the report recommendations. However, it is worthy of note that the response to date has taken into account the needs of a range of people, particularly those groups who may need additional steps to ensure that they are able access the support available – for example, safety information in a range of languages, BSL videos, food parcels to meet different dietary requirements and other needs, in addition to consideration of the needs of those who may be impacted disproportionately either by Covid-19 (such as people from a BME background) or as a result of the response to Covid-19 (such as the impact on faith communities in celebrating festivals or observing dates of religious significant as they usually would). Services should continue to take active consideration of the equalities impacts of the support they are putting into place before and at the time decisions are taken, ensuring that they have thought about ways to remove barriers to access and proactively putting mitigations in place to address any disparities for staff, service users and members of the general public across all protected characteristics. As has been the case to date, engaging with those affected groups is vitally important. Where appropriate, this may involve a note of the evidence available and considerations that have been made prior to a decision, or a full equality impact assessment dependent upon the proportionality to the impact of the decision that is being taken. Advice can continue to be sought from the Equalities Team throughout.
Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager tel. 0116 454 5811

5.4 Climate change and carbon reduction implications

The direct climate change implications of this report are limited, as it largely covers updates on work already carried out. As noted though, the recovery process presents an opportunity to build on existing changes to achieve significant future reductions in Leicester's carbon emissions. However it should also be noted that there have also been negative climate-related impacts of existing changes, and these will continue to present challenges. Future work should therefore identify and consider these challenges and opportunities and embed a low carbon approach within recovery planning for Leicester.

For example, air pollution and transport emissions have decreased due to a reduction in vehicle use, and there are opportunities to encourage increased walking and cycling in the future as part of the programme of recovery. However there has also been a massive fall in public transport usage, which is also a key part of achieving a more sustainable transport system, which will need to be addressed.

The UK's Committee on Climate Change has produced a set of guidelines for achieving a 'green recovery', which are primarily aimed at central government but are also of relevance for councils, available at: <https://www.theccc.org.uk>
Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, tel. 0116 454 2284

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

None



OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

21st May 2020

IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE 2020/21 BUDGET

Report of the Director of Finance

1. Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this note is to summarise the initial financial impacts of the pandemic on our revenue budget. Costs are expected to be substantial.
- 1.2 Costs shown in this report are early estimates and based on our knowledge in the last week of April. The estimates depend critically on the length of time the lockdown lasts, and the speed of subsequent economic recovery. It is likely that costs will emerge that have not yet been considered, particularly if there is a prolonged lockdown. **The note assumes a lockdown period lasting until 30th June, with economic recovery taking longer.**
- 1.3 The understanding of the local government sector is that the Government originally committed to meet extra costs arising. The Government has recently announced that it guarantees funding for actions that it has asked us to carry out, but there is concern that there will not be sufficient to cover all losses, including income losses. The Government is concerned not to cause “moral hazard” by bailing out authorities who have borrowed for commercial investments which are now under-performing. Grants announced so far will be insufficient.
- 1.4 Some grants have been received to pay for new relief schemes announced by the Government.

1.5 The impact described in this report is divided into the following:

- (a) One off costs;
- (b) Additional service costs which will increase as the crisis continues, and may end as we exit lockdown;
- (c) Lost income from fees and charges;
- (d) The effect of new grants awarded;
- (e) The impact on council tax support caseload, and losses in local taxation collection, which are even more difficult to forecast than other costs;
- (f) Impact on the Housing Revenue Account.

1.6 In summary, the impact on the General Fund is estimated as follows:

	20/21 Cost £m
One Off Costs	2.7
Ongoing Costs	At least 7.2
Loss of Income	14.5
Overspend on hardship fund	1.0
Local Tax and Council Tax Support	10.0
Total	At least 35.4

1.7 I expect costs will eventually exceed £40m, for which unringfenced grant of £21m is currently available. Some cost increases may prove to be permanent.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 Members of Overview Select Committee are recommended to note the report and make comments to the Director of Finance and City Mayor as they wish.
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to support the City Mayor's stance that we expect the Government to meet the full costs incurred.

3. One Off Costs

3.1 Incurred and anticipated one off costs are as follows:

	£m
IT costs to support new ways of working (with potential for significantly more if we now plan to increase our overall organisational resilience)	0.3
Contribution to Fare Share	0.1
Community Mobilisation Fund	0.1
PPE (Adult Social Care)	0.8
Payments to independent social care providers to support cash flow.	1.2
Additional mortuary facilities	0.1
Other	0.1
Total	2.7

4. Ongoing Costs

4.1 The table provides our best early estimate of ongoing costs per month, and of the final cost based on the stated assumptions. Where it is clear that costs will continue after lockdown ends, this is indicated. Estimates over and above the monthly cost are necessarily tentative, and there may be emerging costs we have not yet recognised.

	Monthly Cost £m	20/21 Cost £m
10% increase in rates paid to independent providers of adult social care, for support to existing service users. There is a significant risk that we may not be able to reduce rates to pre-crisis levels when the pandemic is over.	1.0	At least 5.0
Care accommodation for existing service users discharged from hospital (the cost for others discharged from hospital will be met by the NHS). The higher cost assumes the need to keep the accommodation for a full year.	0.1	0.3 to 1.0
Rough sleepers' temporary accommodation. This may increase due to lack of move on permanent accommodation the longer the lockdown	0.1	0.7

continues. Estimate assumes that cost will remain for 6 months.		
Food Hub	0.2	0.5
Total	1.4	At least 7.2

4.2 At present, there is no observed pressure on the budgets of Children's Social Care. However, this may change as children return to school.

4,3 Options to furlough some non-working staff (casuals and those whose costs are met from income) are being explored.

5. Loss of Service Income

5.1 This is easier to estimate than additional expenditure, and has been measured since the end of March.

	Monthly Loss £m	20/21 Loss £m
Bus lane enforcement	0.1	0.4
Car parking charges (car parks and on-street).	0.5	1.5
Planning fees	0.1	0.3
De Montfort Hall (expected to continue until Christmas)	0.4	3.4
Leisure centres (assumed closed for 6 months)	0.5	3.1
Markets	0.1	0.3
Corporate Estate rents (it is assumed it will take a further 3 months after the lockdown ends before rent income rises, but losses will continue for the remainder of the year).	0.2	1.8
Income in respect of school meals and other catering.	0.3	1.0
Interest on monies invested as part of the treasury management function. Persistently low rates will cost around £1m per year from 21/22.		0.3
Other	0.8	2.4
Total	3.0	14.5

6. Available Grants

6.1 The Government has made available a number of grants.

6.2 The following are unringfenced:

(a) Emergency funding of £20.8m. This has come in two tranches – a tranche weighted towards social care authorities, which comes with a strong expectation that the first call is adult social costs; and a tranche weighted towards district responsibilities. Our position has been not to allocate this money to services, at least until the position becomes clearer;

(b) Hardship funding of £3.7m. Whilst this is unringfenced, the Government expects it to be used to pay £150 to every working age claimant of council tax support, for which we believe the fund will be insufficient (an overspend of £0.6m to £1.2m is currently forecast if caseload increases as expected).

6.3 The following grants are ringfenced:

(a) £44.5m to meet the costs of new rate reliefs for retail, leisure and hospitality businesses and for nurseries. All reliefs have now been awarded, and are fully funded;

(b) £85.0m for the Government's business grant scheme. This is a scheme whereby small businesses, and medium size businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sector are entitled to grants of £10,000 or £25,000. This has been a difficult scheme to implement, given the need to collect details of businesses (particularly bank accounts), implement fraud checks, and interpret changing government guidance. We have been concerned that BEIS (who are responsible for this scheme) will seek clawback of sums paid which subsequently turn out to have been made due to fraud/error or in breach of state aid rules. BEIS has very recently provided some assurance, but we have yet to see the small print;

(c) The Government has recently announced further funding of £617m nationally for those businesses needing support who have "fallen between the cracks" of the business grant scheme. This includes those who are not registered as the ratepayer but have property related costs (e.g. tenants at business centres where the landlord pays the rates). Our allocation is currently unknown.

7. Local Taxation and Council Tax Support

- 7.1 The impact on local taxation is more difficult to assess. We anticipate a reduction in the amounts we receive in the coming months, but this does not of itself amount to a shortfall of income – sums charged remain due and can be collected long after the year ends.
- 7.2 In the past, we have found that 98% to 99% of rates and council tax for any given year is ultimately collected, albeit long after the year end. The key question then is how much extra tax we will need to write off as a consequence of the pandemic and the economic hardship that may outlast it. Actual collection performance will inform this assessment over the coming months, but at present it is little more than informed speculation.
- 7.3 The most significant factor, however, is the amount of additional **council tax support** we will have to award to those who lose income, meaning that they pay less council tax. Since government reforms in 2013/14, council tax support has ceased to be reimbursed by the Government and is now met by us from the General Fund budget, with partial recognition of the cost in our finance settlement. The cost of council tax support awarded at the beginning of the year was £24m (our share, after allowing for police and fire, being £21m). Any estimate of additional cost is very speculative, but we may see this cost rising by £6m to £8m if the lockdown lasts 3 months and the economic impact of the crisis lasts longer. We are already seeing unprecedented demand.
- 7.4 Total collectible **council tax** is £147m. Our share (after allowing for police and fire) is £124m. If we estimate that an additional 2% will ultimately remain uncollected, and after allowing for extra council tax support and the hardship grant, income would fall by £2.1m. In the first instance, this charge will hit our collection fund in 20/21, and will not be felt by the general fund until 21/22.
- 7.5 Given the extra relief awarded, the amount of **business rates** to be collected this year has fallen from close to £120m to £74m. Rates collection is expected to be hit harder than council tax collection, as businesses either fold or are unable to pay rates once they reopen. A reasonable estimate at this stage would be that an additional 5% of rates proves to be uncollectable (although based on a lower figure than expected). Given that we bear 49% of this cost locally, this would amount to a cost of £1.4m. Like council tax, this will not hit our general fund until 21/22.
- 7.6 The Council, together with the other Leicestershire authorities, is part of a **business rates pool**. This is a voluntary feature of the business rates retention scheme: the effect of the pool is that rates growth which district councils would otherwise have paid to the Government becomes available locally. By agreement, this funding is managed by the LLEP and has recently amounted

to some £7m to £8m per year. The surplus for 20/21 is likely to be severely affected as district councils collect less rates.

8. Housing Revenue Account

- 8.1 The main areas of loss identified so far are closure of hostel dormitory beds and safe space, lost income at the Dawn Centre and lost rent. This is estimated to cost £140,000 per month for the length of the crisis.
- 8.2 The other area of potential concern is increasing rent arrears. Around £47m per year is collectible after deducting housing benefit. If 10% of tenants defer paying their rent, arrears will increase by £0.1m each week.
- 8.3 There will be a knock-on effect of delays to repairs and maintenance and improvement works, where the workforce continues to be paid but non-essential work is on hold. Some additional costs such as communal cleaning are also being incurred. There is expected to be a longer term impact once the crisis is over, with a catch up period of repair work.
- 8.4 Regard should also be had to the spending of right to buy receipts, as property acquisitions and new build works are deferred. As things stand, the required level of receipts will now not be spent by the end of June, so a mandatory payment plus accrued interest would become due to Government. This is under active discussion with MHCLG officials.

9. Financial and Legal Implications

- 9.1 This report is solely concerned with financial issues.

Report Author: Mark Noble, tel: 0116 454 4041

Date: 7th May, 2020

