

# **Leicester City Council's Coronavirus response**

Overview Select Committee

Date of meeting: 21 May 2020

Lead director/officer: Miranda Cannon

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## Useful information

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## 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"><li>• 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;</li><li>• stop all gatherings of more than two people in public excluding people you live with;</li><li>• stop all social events, including weddings, baptisms and other ceremonies, but excluding funerals; and parks remaining open for exercise, but gatherings will be dispersed.</li></ul>
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 24<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 (5<sup>th</sup> May 2020) and put back in business the Gypsum Close Trade Waste Facility (30<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.amica-counselling.uk) a central hub for online resources
- Headspace resources [www.headspace.com](http://www.headspace.com)
- IPRS muscular skeletal services
  - exercises and advice around back and posture
  - access to [www.myiprshealth.com](http://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](http://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 them 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](mailto: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 Adatia, 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