



Report of the Chief Executive

Report to Executive Board

Date: 18 September 2020

Agenda Item 10

Subject: Update on Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic – Response and Recovery Plan

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- Six months on from the start of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic in the UK, Leeds has navigated unprecedented challenges, which have evolved over the course of the pandemic and particularly since the last update to Executive Board in July. Along with the rest of the country, we now face an entirely new set of circumstances, with schools welcoming pupils back to classrooms, the new university term starting at the end of this month and more people returning to work in Covid-secure workplaces. The nature of transmission of the virus has also changed; as restrictions eased we saw some geographical clusters earlier in the summer, but now have widespread community transmission with sporadic and dynamic infection that is rapidly increasing across the population. This is particularly prevalent in young adults across communities and geographies. With this pattern, there are increasing numbers of cases in settings such as care homes, schools, workplaces caused by the community transmission rather than caused by an outbreak in the setting.
- In responding to these changing circumstances, our priority has not changed, and our focus remains resolutely on minimising the effects of the virus for everybody, but particularly the most vulnerable, to keep the people of Leeds safe. Considerable learning has taken place over recent weeks and months which will shape a refreshed Leeds Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan, and will inform our approach to the months ahead, in

which a balance must be sought between public health and moving forward with our recovery and resumption, while retaining the ability of our health services to flexibly respond to the virus as we move towards winter.

- Over recent months national policy has shifted towards more targeted action in local areas to curb the spread of the virus. Steps in the Government's plan to lift restrictions as part of its Covid-19 recovery strategy have also been completed, with most businesses allowed to operate with Covid-secure measures in place, schools, colleges and nurseries open to all children and young people from 1 September, and universities to reopen later in September. However, while the national easing of restrictions has continued, localised restrictions have been introduced in the areas with highest rates of prevalence of Covid-19 to slow rates of transmission. On 14th September, in response to increasing rates of Covid-19 across the country, a limit on the number of people to meet in any setting to no more than 6 was introduced (with some exceptions, including workplaces, education, Covid-secure events and ceremonies, and single households/support bubbles larger than six).
- On 4th September, in response to rising rates of infection in the city, Leeds entered the Government's watchlist for the first time as an area of concern. On 11th September, Leeds became an area of enhanced support. This means the city will be working more closely with central government to form a plan to address the increase in infections, including receiving more support and resources. Enhanced actions had been undertaken for several weeks prior to entering the watchlist, and further action will now be required to slow the increase in rates of transmission. The new circumstances require the support and cooperation of everybody in the city to reduce levels of transmission. On 7th and 8th September, the city hosted a visit from a Cabinet Office C-19 Taskforce, who reported positively on the work being undertaken in Leeds. This is further described under the Local Outbreak Control section.
- This report describes how our multiagency arrangements have continued to develop to progress the city's recovery over the summer months; our response to the current challenges presented by increasing rates of infection; and preparations for the months ahead as the Council and partners face a number of concurrent pressures including Covid-19, EU exit and winter health and care pressures. The main sections of the report provide a narrative of main issues for consideration under each theme of the Response and Recovery Plan. Our recovery and service resumption approach continues to be driven by our shared ambition and values, with the overriding priority of tackling poverty and inequalities consistent with our vision of a strong economy and a compassionate and caring city. The current high level risk assessment is included in annex D.
- The financial implications of responding to Covid-19, additional costs and lost income, remain a significant concern. A separate paper on the Executive Board agenda outlines the latest position and details the findings of service reviews that took place during August.
- Some examples, since the last report, of activity and impact across the city are as follows and are depicted in an infographic at the end of this section:
 - 5800+ enquiries from members of the public dealt replied to by the social media team with an average response time of under 7 minutes

- Over 200 Facebook posts, mainly around coronavirus information, reaching 2 million people
- 2.3 million pieces of PPE distributed in week ending 4th September
- 300 food hampers delivered to families each week during the summer holidays
- 153m+ paid in business support grants up to 15th September
- £2m invested through Leeds City Council's arts@leeds funding programme to maintain critical financial support to the creative sector through lockdown
- 14 schools piloting School Streets to support safe walking, cycling and scooting to school
- 100+ courses available online through Leeds Adult Learning to support digital and work-related skills development
- 2500 views of Child Friendly Leeds Live online show in August
- 239 people supported from emergency accommodation into more permanent accommodation
- 90+ school uniform exchange programmes set up by parents, councillors, schools and community groups over the summer, supported by Zero Waste Leeds
- 196 people achieved level 1 social care qualifications through We Care Academy, to increase capacity within the social care sector
- 294 online events planned for second Leeds Digital Festival, following the success of the first event
- 200 bars, restaurants and takeaways engaged with to ensure Covid-secure compliance ahead of the new university term

Coronavirus – summary of council and city response

September 2020



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Figure 1: Coronavirus- Summary of council and city response



Figure 2: Stay Safe Save Lives infographic used to share our six main coronavirus messages.



Figure 3: Poster designed for display in hospitality venues.

2. **Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The newly updated Best Council Plan 2020-2025 reflects the current Covid-19 context, while maintaining the three pillar priorities of **inclusive growth; health and wellbeing; and climate change**, under the overarching priority of **tackling poverty and inequalities**. Covid-19 continues to have a hugely significant impact on all areas of the Best Council Plan, with the economy, employment, education, community resilience and health and wellbeing all detrimentally affected by the pandemic, which will undoubtedly limit progress towards our ambitions. Our city ambitions, particularly our overarching priority of tackling poverty and inequalities, will be key to guiding the recovery period, particularly as we begin to better understand the long-term health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

2 **Resource Implications**

- The financial impact of the pandemic, in terms of both additional costs and lost income, remains a significant concern, with an estimated impact of £52.5m in 2020/21 and £66.1m in 2021/22, after the application on government contributions. Reduced income has been experienced, and is anticipated to continue, across sports, arts and heritage, visitor attractions and car parking, and the Council has experienced significant increased costs in responding to the pandemic; examples include additional cleaning across the Council's estate, and increased numbers of Children Looked After in external placements. The Council received £4.1m from Government to support outbreak control. This is being used to increase our capacity across a Public Health, Environmental Health, Infection Prevention Control, the voluntary sector, communications, etc. The financial resilience of the third sector remains a considerable concern. A separate Financial Health monitoring report is on the Executive Board agenda, which sets out the financial situation in much greater detail.

3 **Recommendations**

Executive Board is requested to:

- Note the updated context, progress and issues as we move into a new phase of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Note the emerging issues for consideration during the next phase of recovery including the new school and university term, winter pressures, and the concurrent pressure of EU Exit.
- Recognise the need for new levels of engagement with the public, and everybody taking ownership of the need to be safe and responsible in order to reduce levels of transmission.
- Use this paper as context for the more detailed financial health monitoring paper on the financial implications of coronavirus

1. **Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This sixth report updates Executive Board on the coronavirus (Covid-19) work across the city including the recovery approach, outbreak management, and current issues and risks. The city's multi-agency command and control arrangements continue to be used with the Response and Recovery plan aiming to mitigate the effects of the

outbreak on those in the city, especially the most vulnerable, and prepare for the longer term planning of stages of recovery including local outbreak planning.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Over summer, the Government has continued to lift restrictions on what people can do, and which types of businesses and services can operate, in line with its [Covid-19 recovery strategy](#). Since 15 August, most types of businesses and services (with notable exceptions including nightclubs) are now able to operate with Covid-secure measures in place in areas of England not subject to localised restrictions. From 1 September, schools and colleges began to reopen Covid-secure classrooms and learning settings to all children and young people. The advice for clinically extremely vulnerable people to shield from coronavirus was paused on 1 August, and employers were given discretion to decide whether employees should work from home or from a Covid-secure workplace. Government contributions towards furloughed employees' wages under the job retention scheme have gradually reduced each month, with the scheme expected to finish at the end of October. These factors have contributed to more people resuming elements of normal activity such as going to work, travelling on public transport and socialising. A more complete timeframe of national developments since the last Executive Board update is available at Annex A, and full details of guidance and communications issued by the government can be found on the [gov.uk website](#).
- 2.2 Following a national decline in the incidence of Covid-19 over the summer, in recent weeks cases of the virus are increasing across the UK. In order to avoid widespread restrictions imposed nationally, the Government pursued the implementation of localised restrictions in the areas with highest rates of infection. The government's [Contain Framework](#) describes the approach, together with national and local roles, and descriptions to help deal with rising rates in local areas. Public Health England's weekly [surveillance report](#) provides an updated position of the national and local picture. In recent weeks, Leicester, Birmingham, Greater Manchester, East Lancashire, and Kirklees, Calderdale and Bradford have all been subject to additional restrictions because of high infection rates.
- 2.3 On 9th September, in response to increasing rates of infection across the country, the Government announced a national ban on gatherings of more than six people, excluding at school, work or in sports clubs, effective from 14th September. In addition, new enforcement measures were announced, including a legal requirement for venues to record the contact details of customers to share with NHS Test and Trace if needed, and a requirement for local authorities to implement 'Covid Marshals' to support with business engagement and enforcement in city centres.
- 2.4 The number of Covid-19 cases are being updated daily on the .gov.uk website [Covid-19 cases by local authority](#). Nationally, as at 17th September there have been 381,614 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the UK and 41,705 deaths. Leeds has had 5,830 confirmed cases as of 17th September. Up to 14th September there were 665 deaths where 'Covid-19' or 'corona virus' was mentioned on the death certificate. Of these, 364 (54.74%) were in hospitals, 265 (39.85%) were in care homes, 12 (1.80%) in a hospice, and 24 (3.61%) in their own home. To date,

19% of all deaths registered have been covid-19 related. No excess deaths were reported in the week up to 4th September.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The Leeds multi-agency command and control arrangements for the outbreak, as described in previous Executive Board reports, have continued to evolve to the changing situation, working alongside the wider governance and delivery framework at a sub-regional level including the West Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, and the West Yorkshire & Harrogate Health and Care Partnership. Additional groups are being established for universities and colleges in the city, alongside the existing school Bronze groups.
- 3.2 Social distancing, testing, tracing and managing outbreaks and community transmission are essential components in our response to the virus enabling safe travel, safe public spaces, safe delivery of services, and safe education. The attached Response and Recovery Plan (Annex B) details the scale of activity and updates from across the multi-agency arrangements. The Leeds Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG Gold) Dashboard for w/c 7th September highlights the most recent position, at Annex C.
- 3.3 The section below provides Executive Board with a specific update on the key emerging issues under each strand of the Response and Recovery Plan, which highlight a range of key considerations for the council as we move forward in our recovery, while responding to the challenges of autumn and winter ahead. During this period, we continue to be conscious of concurrent events, such as: winter pressures on the health and social care system, alongside recovery on planned surgery, and Covid-19; extreme weather and flood risk; and the end of the EU exit transition period, with uncertainty about future trade arrangements. These factors and others, including spending reviews and budget planning, election planning, and dealing with suppressed demand as services reopen, present local authorities with a 'perfect storm' of concurrent pressures in the months ahead. For Brexit, the working groups will recommence soon, with an update report due at October Executive Board. For other events, we are using our normal emergency planning approach to be prepared for and manage these. In our recent submission to the LRF, the main risks identified were increased Covid-19 cases; the pressures of concurrent events such as Covid-19, EU exit, severe weather etc; and the ongoing risk of cyber-attack.
- 3.4 **Local Outbreak Control Management**
- 3.5 Although in July and early August the infection rate in Leeds has been low, over recent weeks and in line national trends, rates of infection in Leeds have increased significantly over late August and September. As at 17th September, the Leeds 7 day rate of infection is 78.3 per 100,000 and the 7 day positivity rate is 7.1%.
- 3.6 We receive a range of data on a daily basis to inform our local position and response, including information on testing by test site, new positive cases and

any outbreaks affecting workplaces, education or care settings, and geographical areas. Three of the main data sets used to assess the impact of Covid-19 are Department of Health & Social Care (DHSC) & Public Health England (PHE) reporting, Leeds City Council death registrations, and ONS excess deaths. Each data set is based on different indicators, and need to be considered together to give an overall picture of the impact of the pandemic on the city.

- 3.7 DHSC death reporting covers deaths that took place in a hospital or care home setting where the individual had tested positive for Covid-19 within 28 days of their death. There is therefore a strong likelihood that these deaths were caused, or highly influenced, by Covid-19. However, deaths of people who tested positive at home, or who had never had a test, are not captured in this data. Death registration reporting covers deaths where Covid-19 (or 'coronavirus') is recorded as the main or a contributing factor in the death by a medical professional. While this is a more subjective indicator than a positive confirmatory test, this data set includes a broader range of settings and is becoming an increasingly reliable data source as testing becomes more widespread. Excess deaths compares the number of deaths to a five-year average. This data set gives an indication of the overall impact of the pandemic, as it includes deaths both directly and indirectly caused by Covid-19 (for example, death by another illness where hospital capacity was affected by the pandemic would be an indirect result of Covid-19). This data set is more useful when considered over a longer time frame. As we are around six months into the main impact of the pandemic in the UK, this data set may be more useful in future when a greater amount of data is available for year-on-year comparison.
- 3.8 The Weekly Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) Surveillance Report, produced by Public Health England, summarises information from a variety of surveillance systems covering national data on cases, age, gender, rates, ethnicity, NHS111, google searches, general practice consultations, emergency attendances, hospitalisation rates deaths (age, ethnicity, excess mortality) antibody testing, global data. There is also regional data and weekly rates of cases by local authority including a Public Health England (PHE) list of Upper Tier Local Authorities with the highest weekly rate of cases ([link here](#)).
- 3.9 In early September there have been challenges nationally in the provision of tests, with periods of low test availability followed by tests becoming available again. In response, there has also been a shift from in-person testing to postal testing, which increases the time gap between symptom and result. This volatility of test availability has had a knock-on impact on the data as labs push to clear backlogs. This background partially explains very high rises in reported cases nationally over the week commencing 7th September. While the data may not reflect the true level of infection at present, an overall increase in cases is real and appears to be highest in young adults.
- 3.10 Since the last update to Executive Board in July, the profile of coronavirus transmission in Leeds has changed. Following an extended period in which levels of transmission in Leeds were below the national average, two community clusters emerged in Kirkstall and Harehills in early August, linked to household transmission. The city's resources were swiftly mobilised to respond to the clusters, including enhanced communications, liaison with Department of Health

and Social Care to ensure that Mobile Testing Units (MTUs) were deployed in affected areas, and securing an additional pop-up testing site in Harehills. Third sector partners and Elected Members played a crucial role in securing the engagement of local residents in accessing testing when symptomatic, and self-isolating where needed. Teams from local charity Barca undertook door-knocking on the ground in affected areas, and received a positive response from local communities. As a result of this enhanced action, the clusters in Kirkstall and Harehills were successfully brought under control in a matter of weeks.

- 3.11 The multiagency response to clusters in Kirkstall and Harehills demonstrates the strength of Leeds' local public health system and partnerships across the public sector, third sector, communities, faith and the voluntary sector. However, the city now faces a new challenge as the profile of transmission now reflects broad, sporadic transmission across the population rather than geographically-based clusters. Recent figures show the highest cases in the West, and to the North of the city centre, but this is very volatile. Alongside responding to community clusters, the city's public health and incident management resources have swiftly responded to clusters and outbreaks associated with workplaces and care and educational settings as they arise.
- 3.12 On 4th September, due to increasing rates of infection in the city, Leeds was added to the Government's watchlist for the first time as an area of concern, and on 11th September became an area of enhanced support. This means that Leeds will receive additional support and resources from central government to address high prevalence of Covid-19, including managing outbreaks and reducing community spread of the virus to more normal levels.
- 3.13 The latest intelligence suggests that transmission of the virus is now predominantly amongst younger adults across the city. Our efforts must now focus on effectively engaging this demographic to reverse the increase in infection rates, while taking care to avoid stigmatisation and community tension between different generations.
- 3.14 A city-wide communications campaign will target younger people, working alongside schools and universities in preparation for the autumn term. The Environmental Health team will be undertaking targeted work in the Headingley and Woodhouse areas prior to Student Welcome Week, to support businesses and remind them of their role and responsibilities. A new walk-to test site has been established on the University of Leeds campus and is now operational ahead of the new university term. The site is open to both students, staff and the local community and is accessed through the national system via 119 or the NHS website.
- 3.15 Leeds received a visit by the Covid-19 Field Team on 7 & 8 September, a taskforce run by the Cabinet Office. The visit aimed to observe our multiagency working, outbreak control management arrangements, and share our challenges and best practices. They met (mostly virtually) between 80-100 officers and members over the two days, visited Harehills for a community walk-about, and an evening walk around the city centre to observe the night time economy. This enhanced support is offered to all local authorities on the watchlist.

- 3.16 We received positive feedback in the report that was produced following the visits, with main headlines taken back to the Cabinet Office including a greater localisation on Test and trace; an empowering local response, highlighting our excellent partnerships and trust with communities, with lots of great collaborative work and approaches; potential for more enforcement opportunities; the need for more clarity in national messaging to the public, which we can build bespoke, targeted and coherent communications; the challenges that we have met welcoming back 70,000 university students to Leeds in the coming weeks, as well as the significant challenges implementing 'business as normal' service resumptions; integration between our teaching hospitals and our Clinical Care Group to facilitate more community testing; and the continued need to assist and protect residents and businesses more, in both complying with the most up-to-date regulations and helping to stimulate economic recovery.
- 3.17 More generally, the Field Team fed-back their appreciation for putting on an excellent and informative programme of engaging sessions at short notice (notification of the visit was received on Friday 4 September), as well as receiving a warm Leeds welcome. The task force noted the determination shown by all, and observed some excellent examples of best practice, and the visit provided excellent clarity and a strong argument for taking a localised approach when fighting the virus.
- 3.18 The Leeds Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan is being refreshed to reflect best practice, including learning from successful interventions in Leeds, other Local Authority areas and best practice and research shared through national organisations. While Leeds has strong, established local systems for outbreak management, a key challenge remains securing the additional capacity needed to strengthen proactive and preventative work whilst managing emerging local situations. A team of Incident Management Coordinators have been recruited to be flexibly deployed to undertake key supporting actions in the event of local outbreaks and clusters emerging. A proactive approach to Community Champions is also in development, in recognition of the important role of formal and informal community leaders in encouraging and supporting the required behaviour changes amongst communities.
- 3.19 Weekly incident management team meetings continue to review any incidents or outbreaks occurring across Leeds, look at the local data and intelligence and use this to support a timely operational response to any emerging issues.
- 3.20 Throughout the pandemic and particularly as rates of infection have started to rise, we have endeavoured to be as prepared as possible with the information and resources available. Sharing knowledge, experience and best practice has been an important element of these preparations, including learning from local authorities that entered the Government watchlist earlier than Leeds, and expert reports into the likely impacts of localised restrictions. This knowledge-sharing and best practice has informed our decision-making at each stage as we respond to rapidly changing circumstances.
- 3.21 **Health and Social care**

- 3.22 Leeds health and care organisations have been working together to enable system resilience in preparation for winter 2020/21. This work is being overseen by the Stabilisation and Task Force (STAR) with accountability to Health and Social Care Gold, which has assumed the responsibility of the System Resilience Assurance Board during Covid-19 Leeds Multiagency arrangements.
- 3.23 Subject to planning guidance, Leeds is required to plan for increased Covid-19 related activity until January 2021. The Leeds health and care system have produced early modelling, which has been shared across all partners and is undergoing a series of iterations ahead of a citywide Winter Stress Test event in late September where it will be tested.
- 3.24 On 31 July 2020, the Chief Executive of NHS England and NHS Improvement wrote to NHS organisations and partners to set out the national priorities and expectations for phase 3 of the response to the pandemic from August 2020. This letter was followed on 7 August 2020 by further national guidance on implementing these priorities. This included details of the urgent actions to be taken to address inequalities in NHS provision and outcomes, patient initiated follow ups to hospital care, community services and very detailed requirements for mental health planning.
- 3.25 On 20 August 2020, details were published of a set of financial incentives and deductions that will be applied at the level of our partnership to support the achievement of national expectations on the levels of planned care to be provided. The expected activity levels include returning by October 2020 to 90% of normal levels of planned care procedures, 100% of diagnostic procedures, and 100% of outpatient attendances. NHS Trusts and Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are working to determine what is operationally achievable to get as close as possible to meeting these expectations.
- 3.26 The NHS guidance for the remainder of 2020/21 is not yet complete. While the priorities have been identified and there is some understanding of the financial framework within which the Leeds health and care system will operate, the full details of what will resources will be available, including for capital investment, have not yet been confirmed. The preparatory work that partners in West Yorkshire and Harrogate Integrated Care System (WY&H ICP) have undertaken already has meant that Leeds is well placed to respond to the national requirements to date. A WY&H ICP level plan will be finalised and provided to NHS England on 18 September 2020.
- 3.27 The recovery process for the health system involves keeping the things that have worked well and not returning to processes that prevented integration and consequently person-centred care. Feedback from residents suggests that there has at times been a belief that services have been closed, and a small minority still believe that services are closed. This is not the case; GP practices have continued to provide primary care services, and urgent and emergency care including urgent cancer treatment have also continued. There has been considerable effort to communicate this information to residents, using different methods and formats, including translated messages to reach all communities.
- 3.28 During the pandemic, difficult decisions were made to suspend some services. As these services now begin to reopen in Covid-secure ways, residents have an

important role to play to help keep services running and protect patients and staff. This approach is designed to encourage people to make the right choice when needing unplanned (urgent or emergency) care, particularly encouraging the use of NHS 111 or primary care (GPs or pharmacies) for urgent care, and communicating that emergency care should be considered only when people are seriously ill or injured. We continue to encourage people to seek health help at the earliest opportunity such as any concerning cancer symptoms. In addition, people have been reminded of the varied ways to access mental health support, given the significant impact of the pandemic on people's emotional health and wellbeing.

- 3.29 Social care is seeing an increase in the number of staff testing positive with Covid-19 and a smaller number of care home residents testing positive. As at 17th September, 19 out of 151 care homes have either staff and/or residents who have tested positive. As a result, some homes have placed a restriction on new admissions and relatives' visits. Some care homes are experiencing slow turnaround times on getting test results back, of 7 days or more. As at 18th September, the total Covid-related deaths in care homes in Leeds is 265, or 39.85% of all Leeds residents Covid-19 deaths. There is a good supply of PPE, which is all now available via the government's portal with local arrangements in place for emergency back-up if necessary.
- 3.30 After ceasing day services in March in line with government guidance, staff have continued to support individuals through telephone calls and socially distanced support throughout the summer. Building based services are beginning to resume during the week beginning 14th September with reduced capacity to comply with Covid-secure measures. Service provision has been reviewed and risk assessed.
- 3.31 **Infrastructure and Supplies**
- 3.32 The Infrastructure Silver Group has continued to meet fortnightly throughout the summer, with a major focus on preparations for the return to schools, colleges, universities and work in September. West Yorkshire Combined Authority, bus and rail and train operators and the Children and Families directorate have developed preparations and contingency plans for resuming public transport and school transport. To work towards bus and train timetables returning to near normal levels, additional transport capacity is being commissioned by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to meet anticipated demand and to enable a rapid response to be deployed should any significant issues arise at specific locations across the city.
- 3.33 Cross boundary school transport arrangements have been a particular challenge considering the numbers of pupils that travel across the city's boundaries each day. Contingency arrangements are in place with Northern Rail to prevent overcrowding on rail services that are known to carry significant numbers of pupils. Dynamic assessments have been made to flex cover and support across the city with bus providers proactively supporting the rail provider if pinch points occur.
- 3.34 Communication plans have also been developed to highlight the services available and the precautions to be followed. There are good links into relevant

partners and authorities to enable remedial action to be taken should any issues arise. We continue to work with WYCA and operators on further communications to promote the wearing of face coverings, travelling safely and maintaining social distancing. All operators are taking steps to ensure that buses have extra cleaning, are sanitised and safe.

- 3.35 Similarly, engagement and collaboration is taking place with the local universities and colleges to support the return of students and the communications needed to ensure safe movement of this population around the city. Active travel options will be emphasised and promoted for the majority of students who live within reasonable travel distances of their universities and colleges.
- 3.36 Communication remains a key priority across this work stream and this is anticipated to continue as local issues develop and partners and authorities respond accordingly. Good links with communication teams across the partners has been established to aid this process.
- 3.37 To further support the full return to schools, the Council has initiated the second phase of the School Streets trial with a further ten schools. School Streets encourages more sustainable approaches to travel to school and reflects the increase in physical activity that took place during the lockdown period. The schemes involve local access restrictions during school opening and closing times which enable greater social distancing, space for walking and cycling, and better management of school gate issues.
- 3.38 The Elland Road park and ride site opened on 24 August, including the car park extension which increases the provision of the site to 1,350 spaces. The site is running on the regular pre-Covid timetable and operating in a Covid-secure manner. Demand will be monitored and this will inform the delivery of the service to ensure passenger safety. Communications to promote the site will now be stepped up following its successful launch.
- 3.39 The Temple Green park and ride site remains a regional testing centre for the DHSC. The situation is being reviewed on a monthly basis and any decision will be made based on the emerging evidence of demand from Elland Road and the continuing requirement for the medical testing provision, including the provisions within the leasing of the site to DHSC. Funding has been secured to progress the work to extend the park and ride at Temple Green, and the work on Stourton Park and Ride continues to progress well.
- 3.40 Social distancing measures have been implemented in more than 12 locations plus the City Centre, where measures are in place on New Briggate, Great George Street, Mill Hill and Call Lane. The contractor delivering the city centre package for Connecting Leeds accelerated their programme to increase the rate of construction, taking advantage of the reduced traffic and footfall. This has allowed earlier completion and availability of widened footways and improved public realm at key locations to assist social distancing, in particular on the Headrow and Park Row. Works on the Corn Exchange started late August to provide improved public transport, pedestrian and cycle facilities and an upgrade to the public realm. Further works are now being planned and sequenced for completion in 2020/2021. Work on other schemes continues at pace; Greek

Street public realm scheme was completed in August; A64 Regent Street work to replace the flyover has made good progress with significant demolition work of the existing structure; East Leeds Orbital Route is progressing well and the public realm scheme at Cookridge Street recently commenced.

- 3.41 Working with the City Centre Management and the Communities District Centres Liaison Officers, measures have been put in place to assist business re-openings. From a highways perspective a key aspect has been to advise on safety measures—and the oversight of Temporary Pavement Licences for street cafes under the provisions of the Business and Planning Act 2020.
- 3.42 West Yorkshire-wide transport trends have shown a gradual increase, with bus use generally recovering faster than rail, and weekend travel recovering faster than weekday. The pace of recovery of bus use slowed slightly in August, potentially a result of summer holidays. Weekday MCard and concessionary travel use is currently around 35% of the level in early March 2020. Traffic around Leeds is steadily returning to pre-lockdown levels. A recent WYCA survey of public transport in the region found that just 50% of people living in more deprived areas of West Yorkshire had been able to work from home, compared to 78% in more affluent areas.
- 3.43 During June a trial scheme, planned prior to the pandemic, was implemented on the A65 Kirkstall Road/ Commercial Road to provide additional segregation of the existing cycle lanes. This is testing physical delineators known as Orcas and Wand which are designed to emphasise the presence of cycle lanes and channel traffic to remain outside the cycle lanes. The first phase of this work is completed and amendments and an extension of the measures to the remaining cycle lanes is planned to take place during September. Monitoring is in place to assess the impact of these measures. Further expansion of these trial measures to the A660 route is now planned as part of the Emergency Active Travel Fund as described below.
- 3.44 From the Government's £250 million Emergency Active Travel Fund, Leeds has received a capital allocation of £710,000 and £20,000 revenue plus a locally agreed funding contribution of £160,000 from the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan for short term measures within a 12 week delivery timeline. Following a public engagement exercise through the Connecting Leeds website, a package of measures has been approved, and implementation commenced at the beginning of September. Ward Members engagement on all the proposals is continuing. Within the constraints of the above conditions, where appropriate and using largely remote communication techniques, further confirmatory public engagement and communication is being undertaken during the planning and construction phases.
- 3.45 Further attention is being given to the potential for early intervention measures ahead of the longer term plans for the City Square area, such as the Neville Street dark arches route, as an area where despite reduced traffic levels air quality remains a cause for concern.
- 3.46 Second round bids for £225 million balance of the Emergency Active Travel Fund were submitted to the Department for Transport during August and a decision is

anticipated imminently. It is anticipated that West Yorkshire will receive an allocation of c£12 million of which Leeds share is expected to be c£3 million.

- 3.47 As with preparations for Tranche 1, a further round of public consultation was undertaken through the Connecting Leeds website of measures that were not practical for reasons of delivery and preparation in Tranche 1. The measures are intended to build on those that will be completed in Tranche 1 to deliver a permanent active travel legacy for walking and cycling and improved conditions for active mobility that complements the mainstream capital investments for cycling, walking and place making that are currently either on-site or at an advanced stage of preparation. These include further phases for the cycle superhighway programme for the A6120 Leeds orbital route (complete), the city centre (on-site) and imminently starting in South Leeds and public realm improvements due on Cookridge Street, New Briggate and the New Market Street/ Call Lane as part of the Connecting Leeds public transport programme.
- 3.48 As with Tranche 1 further development and engagement will take place involving Ward Members, local communities and stakeholders as the projects are refined and developed in advance of the delivery phase due to commence later this year.
- 3.49 PPE stock levels are rated as excellent, with six months' stock in place to supply a consistent stream of orders from council services as they continue to reopen. There has been a significant increase in orders from Catering Leeds in preparation for the reopening of school kitchens, and direct orders from schools are similarly anticipated to increase. The Council is now providing all PPE supplies to Leeds City College and is responsible for distributing over 1 million pieces of PPE every fortnight to 95 GP surgeries on behalf of Leeds CCG until the end of 2020. This is in addition to normal deliveries to council and other services. In the week ending 4th September, over 2.3 million pieces of PPE were distributed. A PPE usage tool was developed with the LRF to establish the level of need above business as usual, and this information shared with MHCLG. From 11th September, the Government will cover all PPE costs above and beyond business as usual supplies until 31st March 2021.
- 3.50 Over the summer holidays Catering Leeds supported the Holiday Hunger feeding programme for vulnerable families, with 300 hampers delivered directly to homes each week, and over fifty grab bags per day provided to schools. In advance of the new school term, adjustments have been made to school catering provision to accommodate new requirements around bubbles and changes to school day structures.
- 3.51 As lockdown and shielding measures have eased, and a wider range of council services began to return, work was undertaken to review the emergency food and support provisions that were established at the start of lockdown. Over September, the Community Care hubs in partnership with their food providers, including FareShare, are transitioning to new arrangements which will allow the Council's food warehouse to be stepped down and closed by the end of September. Arrangements are in place to support this transition, and the arrangements will be kept under review to ensure that they continue to meet demand and are able to stand up to any increases as a result of a local lockdown. It is estimated that, over 23 weeks, almost 63,000 food bags have been

distributed by the Emergency Food Service in Leeds which have been made up into 33,900 food parcels.

3.52 **Business and Economy**

3.53 Covid-19 has had an unprecedented impact on the economy locally, nationally and internationally. On 11th August 2020 it was confirmed that the UK economy had entered an official recession for the first time in 11 years, suffering its biggest slump on record between April and June 2020 with GDP shrinking 20.4% compared with the first three months of the year, as well as the Service sector declining by 20% and production down 17%. Forecasts predict it may take between 2021 and 2024 to return to pre-crisis levels. Although there are some potential green shoots, the Bank of England's Chief Economist estimates the UK has already recovered "perhaps half of its losses", going on to state that the recovery in jobs will take longer but the risks to jobs have receded as spending and business confidence has picked up.

3.54 More locally, according to WYCA's latest business survey, the majority of businesses say they are now open as normal, but 40% continue to report operating at significantly reduced capacity. This reduced capacity is having a notable impact on town and city centres. Leeds city centre still has the highest levels of footfall in Yorkshire but this remains below what we would expect for this time of year. The most recent data shows footfall is approximately 67.5% of normal levels but this is steadily increasing. Nationally, larger cities have seen a higher proportional drop in footfall compared to towns and district centres. This is because in cities, footfall is supported by a greater proportion of office workers, students, events and conferences which have all been affected. Footfall in Leeds is comparable to other core cities such as Liverpool and Manchester, and London's West End has experienced a considerably larger fall in footfall.

3.55 The recent outbreaks across West Yorkshire and the increase in Covid-19 cases in Leeds in recent weeks highlight the continued risk of further shocks and we need to be vigilant to local pressures, a potential second wave and any other disruption which may arise as we end the transition period with the European Union. This is why we are proposing an approach to recovery rather than a plan so we can adapt quickly whilst striving to build more resilience into our economy.

3.56 Our recovery approach will be centred around the need to:

- Respond - Where required and continue to take immediate actions to support businesses and the economy as we have done since lockdown in March 2020.
- Reset and Renew - Ensure we understand the challenges and opportunities that we face in recovery and that we have a clear focus and direction on the projects and partnerships that will address them.
- Build Resilience - Maintain a long-term view of our aspirations to deliver Inclusive Growth, address the Climate Emergency and be the best city for Health and Wellbeing, ensuring that our decisions lead us towards these goals.

- 3.57 In our emergency response, as a Council we have been working hard to ensure that we play our part in providing as much support as we can to the residents and businesses in Leeds that require help and advice. We have carried out many economic support interventions, including administering the government's Grant Funds and pivoting our Business Support.
- 3.58 As of 15th September 2020, the Council had paid out £153,490,000 in Business Support grants under the Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) via 12,532 grants. As of 15th September 2020, the Council had paid out £5,087,209.91 under the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund (DGF) to 543 businesses and charities.
- 3.59 Leeds City Council was informed in late July 2020 that the end date for all of the grant schemes would be 28th August 2020. The Council, along with the other West Yorkshire Authorities, wrote to the Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to request that payments be processed up to eight weeks after 28th August 2020 as the DGF requires a significantly higher overhead than the first two schemes in terms of set up, eligibility checking and processing payments, meaning that it requires more Council officer time. Confirmation was later provided that payments could be processed up to 30 September 2020. This one month extension should enable officers to process c.£3m of grant payments throughout September 2020. However, based on the Government's current position, any monies left in the Fund at the end of September 2020 will be returned to the Treasury. Payments will also continue to those eligible and who applied prior to 28th August 2020 under the SBGF and RHLGF schemes until 30th September 2020.
- 3.60 The latest Universal Credit claimant figures for Leeds for July 2020 were published on 11th August 2020. The provisional count of the number of people claiming Universal Credit in July 2020 shows a continued increase to 67,174. This is a 90% increase in claimant numbers (both in and out of work) between March and July 2020. The greatest impact has been on young people, with 19% of claimants aged between 16 and 24 years, 16% aged 25-29 years and 16% aged 30-34 years. The revised figures for June 2020 show that 42,636 were unemployed, an increase of 80.5% in unemployed Universal Credit claimants between March and June 2020.
- 3.61 A new [Employment and Skills Leeds](#) website has been launched to provide a single point of access to employment support programmes, apprenticeships and skills training for communities and businesses seeking support on redundancy and recruitment. The phased reopening of Jobshops over seven sites (Merrion House, Dewsbury Road, Compton, Deacon, Reginald, Armley, Headingley) is enabling some face-to-face support to be provided.
- 3.62 The new academic year commences this month and the Adult Learning programme has an increased focus on digital skills and work-focused courses. This will support over 7,000 local residents through a blended delivery of online and classroom-based provision as social distancing measures permit.
- 3.63 An Employment and Skills Task Group has been established to bring together public and private sector partners in the city including employers from key sectors, Further and Higher Education, the Department for Work and Pensions

and our Inclusive Growth Ambassadors. The Group will produce an action plan to put in place support to priority groups and sectors impacted by the economic shock as a result of the pandemic. This will seek to maximise locally the stimulus for recovery announced through the Government's Plan for Jobs 2020 and ensure a coherent offer to local businesses and communities.

3.64 Leeds has a well-established Inclusive Anchors Network, comprising the largest employers in Leeds which combined employ over 56,000 people. The Anchors are committed to supporting recovery and sharing learning and practice with a wider group of businesses across the private sector in the city. The success of this programme has led us to expand the idea and we have begun engaging with our main private sector firms across the city to determine how best to bring them in to our Anchors Network.

3.65 The Leeds Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration program (MIT REAP) team, supported by the Council, has recently launched its 'LEAP' programme to help individuals facing a change in circumstance, inspiring them to make the leap to become part of a new wave of entrepreneurs. In addition to this, the Leeds MIT REAP team will be launching its 'BUILD' pilot programme in January 2021 to support entrepreneurs from diverse background across the region to turn their innovative, socially beneficial ideas into scalable businesses that investors want to back.

3.66 It is a priority to build resilience into our economy as part of recovery. Leeds has many strong assets and the Council will lead, through partnership with stakeholders from across the whole city, our ambition to work through the challenges that we will be presented with. We will also look to make the most of opportunities arising from future growth sectors in our economy, such as Digital and Green sectors, ensuring we have skills programmes and reskilling opportunities in place to support access to jobs that are available in these sectors, thus supporting people to reach their full potential. Furthermore, we are progressing with projects that will help to build our resilience, such as the City Centre Park which received planning permission earlier this month. This will create the largest piece of green space in the city centre, providing a focal point for communities and the redeveloped South Bank, and will boost the regeneration of the area, encourage new jobs, investment and growth and help to tackle climate change, whilst responding to what people said they wanted to see in the South Bank in terms of major green space. It will also provide opportunities to engage with the river and the potential to incorporate sustainable water management, acting as a landscaped catchment for the South Bank. The Leeds Studios, due to open in November 2020, will more than double the existing capacity of studio space in Leeds, supporting high end TV and Film production in the region and forms part of the huge demand and growth in the Film/TV sector anchored by the new National HQ for Channel 4.

3.67 **Citizens and Communities**

3.68 All statutory social care services have been maintained throughout the pandemic as well as much needed Early Help and preventative support. Referrals to the Children and Families Duty and Advice service have slowly increased with an average of 500 contacts a week, comparable to contact levels pre-pandemic. The anticipated decrease in referrals during the school holidays has not occurred, and

core themes of these referrals include domestic violence and abuse, increased referrals from neighbours regarding anti-social behaviour, concerns for children's welfare, parental conflict- particularly where parents are in private proceedings, and increased referrals from the Police regarding teenagers and challenging behaviour. Contingency plans are being developed with key partners to manage an anticipated increase in referrals when schools return.

- 3.69 Children's residential homes continue to manage the challenges of the pandemic well through routinely arranged testing for staff and children. Since the start of the pandemic there has only been one case of a young person in the Local Authority's residential children's homes having tested positive for Covid-19. The homes have remained fully staffed with the support of colleagues from across the directorate.
- 3.70 Extensive positive partnership work between the Children and Families directorate and schools continued throughout the summer and into the new school term to support schools with re-opening buildings and classrooms in a Covid-secure manner. Schools completed comprehensive risk assessments ahead of re-opening, and extensive communications have sought to provide clarity and guidance ahead of the new school term. Whereas in June, when schools re-opened to certain year groups, parents could choose whether they wanted their child to attend, this is now compulsory across all year groups and our communications have sought to reinforce this message and provide reassurance to parents/carers and pupils. On 17th September, a new Department for Education helpline was established to provide schools with advice in the event of positive cases of Covid-19 being reported. Alongside the national helpline, the Children and Families Health, Safety & Wellbeing team are supporting schools to take the appropriate steps to swiftly respond to any cases of Covid-19.
- 3.71 Parks and green spaces have proved vital over recent months as places for people to meet and for recreation, enabling benefits to physical and mental health in being outdoors and connecting with nature. As restrictions have eased it has been possible to reopen facilities and attractions initially to include car parks, multi-use games areas, tennis courts, outdoor bowls and golf courses. Cafés are now all open in line with government guidance at the Arium, Golden Acre, Lotherton, Tropical World and Temple Newsam. More recently, Home Farm at Temple Newsam, Lotherton and Tropical World have reopened (including the retail outlets), along with the Arium all operating with suitably social distancing measures in place. There have been challenges involved in opening playgrounds and outdoor gyms in line with government guidance, however there is now a plan in place to open all of these by the end of October. Finally, the bereavement services team have continued to work throughout to ensure that burials and cremations continue, providing the best available service to bereaved families in difficult circumstances.
- 3.72 As our community spaces have started to open up through recovery there are increasing opportunities to engage different communities in the recovery of the city and to seek their help in that recovery.
- 3.73 Proactive work has been conducted by many services in the council including health messaging in different community languages; promotion of local testing facilities; work with faith communities; work with businesses on local high streets,

district centres and local parades of shops; young people through the use of community influencers; and important work with communities of interest so their needs are understood and to ensure they are supported. A number of task groups have set up with specific remits around this important work both specialising in these areas of work and joining up to provide a consistent approach for the city.

- 3.74 The council's equality hubs have been instrumental in tailoring the communications for specific equality groups and reaching out to citizens in difficulties. These messages and the underpinning support work have been further reinforced by the city's voluntary hubs through their reach into diverse communities across the city and into vulnerable populations. This work has been expanded through the deployment of the wider third sector – both those organisations that are funded for health work and those that are not. A draft proposal for community engagement work by third sector organisations through recovery is being developed by partners a view to securing funding for the work.
- 3.75 The rise in the transmission rate in specific areas of the city over the summer saw a close collaboration between services in the council – public health and communities in particular – to deploy people on the ground in those neighbourhoods for 'door-knocking' to alert citizens to the issues in the area and to improve testing and support for isolation. In addition, a range of TV channels providing content to ethnically diverse communities have worked with the council to secure messaging direct to the homes of citizens in community languages. This approach has had a positive impact and these community clusters have reduced to more normal levels.
- 3.76 Proactive engagement work took place during the August bank holiday weekend when in normal circumstances the Leeds West Indian Carnival would have taken place. Engagement work between the Police and the Council working with the local community in Chapeltown through the use of local street marshals and key local organisations, minimised the opportunities for large gatherings to take place and where they did in a number of areas, the regulations were enforced. Across the city, seven £10,000 fines were issued to individuals who organised prohibited events, through a new enforcement measure introduced by the Government in the run-up to the bank holiday weekend.
- 3.77 Two enforcement Directions were issued over the summer to prohibit events taking place in areas where there were high rates of community transmission, using the additional powers granted to the Local Authority to limit further transmission of the virus and protect local communities.
- 3.78 At the peak of the pandemic in Leeds around 240 individuals were residing within emergency accommodation in hotels. Through an integrated partnership approach, we have continued to support individuals in this temporary placement to find more settled accommodation, and there are now just 103 individuals in emergency accommodation, of which 81 are in hotels, that we are working to support. Up to 28th August, 239 people have moved into settled accommodation as a result of the emergency Covid-19 response.
- 3.79 In preparation for universities resuming and the increase in students coming into Leeds, Safer Leeds are taking a pro-active response to manage the issues

associated with student gatherings, raves and associated anti-social behaviour. Working closely with the universities, guidance on Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and targeted information around noise nuisance and antisocial behaviour is being delivered to a wider audience, including persistent addresses/streets and landlords. Key joint messages will also continue to be communicated via LCC Social Media, Police Neighbourhood Alert system and the University of Leeds student communication and engagement webpages. University of Leeds has also introduced a number of initiatives to educate students on their local impacts and encourage respect for their community. Leeds Beckett continue to work with their Student Union to develop student engagement and community project. The Helpline Partnership will follow up on all complaints once student registration data becomes available. Where necessary and required, further action is taken through the use of PSPOs and dispersal and closure notices.

- 3.80 Along with key partners including West Yorkshire Police, Leeds is actively engaged around the enforcement of the latest national guidance around the Rule of Six, and new requirements for businesses (see Annex A: national policy developments, for more information). The Council's Environmental Health and Entertainment Licensing teams have been providing advice and support and undertaking enforcement inspections of businesses in the city, while the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team provide intelligence to support police enforcement of the Rule of Six, where breaches are identified while responding to noise and antisocial behaviour complaints.
- 3.81 The Safer Leeds Daily Threat report, introduced at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, is being used to aid the deployment of resources in an intelligence led way across the city and where issues/risks arise at a neighbourhood level. Partnership work is being developed to take forward operational response to organised crime groups to protect and safeguard people with a refreshed operational group.
- 3.82 Through the framework of ongoing partnership work, arrangements are being developed to address potential additional pressures of winter and the possibility of further lockdown restrictions. As part of this preparation of arrangements, we continue to work collaboratively with colleagues in Public Health.
- 3.83 **Organisational impact**
- 3.84 Over recent months there have been significant developments to national guidance and work has been ongoing to manage and respond to the implications of this on key organisational processes and arrangements. Plans for service resumption have progressed significantly with a consistent approach to recovery being coordinated by the silver command and control arrangements. Consultation with trade unions remains an early and integral part of this process with the local and national context being a key consideration within the plans for service resumption.
- 3.85 Following a pause to the restrictions for those who are shielding from 1 August, vulnerable staff continue to be supported back to work where it is safe to do so. To complement the written guidance issued relating to vulnerable staff, a number of support sessions have been offered to managers to provide further guidance on the practical implementation of the organisation's approach for supporting staff considered at a higher risk of effects from Covid-19 to return to work. The

sessions reaffirm the importance of the Step-By-Step framework to determine the best course of action based on a person's individual circumstances. The Occupational Health team also deliver a range of targeted sessions to further support vulnerable staff through the transition of returning to work with ongoing support in place where needed.

- 3.86 Guidance will continue to be reviewed regularly and in accordance with the wider national context. Regular communications for managers continues regarding specific and broader developments and there is a dedicated site on Insite for more detailed guidance and information.
- 3.87 As highlighted in previous updates to the Executive Board, business continuity plans have been continuously reviewed in the current context and their implementation has ensured that business as usual functions have been maintained, where possible and in line with government guidance, by the council as the pandemic escalated in March. As the context has continued to develop and evolve the council has also responded to progress new ways of working, enabling services to be delivered differently or resumed. Members continue to be updated on these arrangements including at the Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources) meeting on 7th September. The Scrutiny Board was also updated on progress made in responding to the recommendations arising from the Board's earlier review around resilience and emergency planning.
- 3.88 The council has also consistently engaged with staff including via staff networks and surveys to understand the impact of the current context, what is working well and what can be improved. To further support better understanding of the innovations and pressures within services resulting from the Covid-19 response and recovery work, and to inform wider Best Council work, Chief Officers and Heads of Service across the council have also been asked to consider key areas that relate to how staff work (e.g. buildings, systems, processes) and the current and potential impacts on customers and staff, especially the most vulnerable. These questions covered issues such what have we stopped doing that should remain stopped?; What have we started that should continue?; What are we not doing now that we have never done before, but that we might need?.
- 3.89 The responses to this survey highlighted key opportunities for transformation through flexible working, improved use of technology, stronger communications at all levels across the organisation, strengthened cross-council working and problem solving approach and a greater focus and openness on staff health and wellbeing.
- 3.90 A recent example of highlighting the council's approach in identifying key opportunities is seen with the work underway to increase local Public Health and Incident Management Team capacity. Incident Management Coordinators have been recruited to be flexibly deployed to undertake key supporting actions in the event of local outbreaks and clusters emerging. This highlights our continued work to adapt and achieve practical opportunities to flexible working to respond to the increasing demands on the organisation as a result of the pandemic.
- 3.91 The council also recognises the significance of wellbeing challenges that have been presented to all staff as a result of the outbreak of Covid-19. Over 4,600 staff recently completed the second short pulse wellbeing survey which

highlighted improved work life balance, and that staff are getting used to this way of working. Key themes were repeated around the continued importance of contact, support and communication, with both manager and colleagues. The wellbeing survey will be repeated at regular intervals over the coming months.

- 3.92 The strategic priority of improving and strengthening our health and wellbeing offer to all continues to be a key priority reflecting the developing context. A corporate-wide wellbeing identity and brand #TeamLeedsBeWell will be launched at the end of September to further drive the wellbeing offer with a key purpose of 'enabling a happy, healthy and supported workforce during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond'.
- 3.93 Additionally, we continue to work with other anchor institutions and Public Health on shared agendas across the city. A new online 'learning hub' will also be launched very shortly. Accessible to all staff, this site will contain resources or links to learning which will help people to navigate new ways of working during and beyond this Covid-19 recovery period. This will cover where they can find help with technical issues related to new ways of working or learn to develop new skills which may be needed now or in the future.
- 3.94 Following an easing of the government's advice in returning to workplaces, provisions are also in place to facilitate the option for staff who seek to return to the office to utilise the available space. The survey found that 82% of staff would be happy to work from home half the week or more, but expressed a preference for a greater opportunity to work together from time to time. The results of the survey have been used to shape plans to reopen office spaces, including meeting anticipated demand. Key areas of focus within this work are:
- Updating the capacity of meeting rooms (in accordance with the Covid-19 secure guidelines) so that room bookings through Outlook can resume.
 - The launch of a digital booking system to enable staff to book an available space in the office for the desired length of time.
 - Allocating Covid-19 secure 'home spaces' to services so that teams have a designated area where they can work together.
 - Exploring new ideas for collaboration space, and different zones in offices tailored to different tasks or styles of working.
- 3.95 Building capacity remains limited as a 2 metre distance has been maintained throughout all open offices buildings. The arrangements in place are sufficient to meet the current levels of demand with the Civic Hall now available for use by staff consistent with guidelines, however this will be closely monitored particularly given the potential for demand to increase as a result of children going back to school in September.
- 3.96 The Digital and Information Service (DIS) have continued to enable staff to work from home by providing a range of equipment. In addition to this, the roll out of Microsoft Teams continues, with an initial pilot of Microsoft Teams for 570 Council staff already undertaken reducing pressure on Skype services and supporting better collaboration through conferencing meetings. This is ahead of a wider Council move to Teams and other Microsoft 365 products which will take place in the coming months.

- 3.97 The council also continues to support elected members in relation to decision making, including Licensing Sub Committees recommencing in August, scrutiny functions and by enabling councillors to effectively perform their role in supporting communities in their wards. Democratic Services, DIS and Facilities Management are working closely with Group Whips and Committee Chairs to put in place arrangements whereby Covid-secure Hybrid Committee meetings can be introduced e.g. some participants using Committee Room 6/7 and others joining remotely. Following installation of new hardware in early September, the first facilities are being tested during September with a view to making them available as soon as possible.
- 3.98 The challenges presented by Covid-19 on the council's finances remain a key area of focus. There is a separate and more detailed report included on the agenda for this meeting which describes these financial pressures on the organisation and the savings proposals. It is worth noting the pressure on teams in the council to progress Covid-19 work, alongside the major savings programme and delivering business as usual work.
- 3.99 **Media and communications:**
- 3.100 As the city, and country, moves towards a new stage of the pandemic, in which infection is broad and widespread across the population, communication and engagement will be critical to encourage compliance and behaviour change to reduce the spread of infection. The important role of communications and engagement is reflected in the Leeds Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan.
- 3.101 During the summer, targeted communications were used effectively to respond to clusters of community transmission in specific geographical areas. This included door-knocking and door drop letters, social media advertising, media releases, partner and stakeholder engagement and engagement with community leaders. As the pattern of transmission is now broader and reflects the entire city, with a particular focus on young adults, communications are being targeted at this demographic, including relevant social media advertising, partner and stakeholder engagement and influencers. Ahead of the new university term, the communications teams of the city's five universities and the Council are working together to deliver clear and consistent messages to the student population, as well as local residents, to ensure that the return of university students to Leeds happens as smoothly and as safely as possible.
- 3.102 As communications activity is scaled up over coming weeks and months, managing capacity within the service presents a further challenge.
- 3.103 A weekly GovDelivery bulletin has been sent to residents since the start of lockdown. There has been a small drop in subscribers of the newsletter from 118k to 114.5k and on average open rates of 47-51% at the beginning of lockdown to 34-36% in the last two months (though it is important to note industry standard excellent response 10-20%). Our insight on the subscription and response rates is reflective of national research and insight indicating increased apathy towards and lack of compliance with government guidance, down 72% from the first week in lockdown to 33% in early September. GovDelivery, along with digital, social and marketing campaigns, has been used to provide information on changes to council services, support as well as wider information including health messaging

such as hand hygiene, social distancing, and Your NHS is Here For You to help address lack of patients accessing health services for critical care and life-threatening illness.

- 3.104 Working with partners including WYCA, communications have been issued around safe use of public transport, encouraging people where possible to use active travel such as walking and cycling, including a push on new cycling routes and safer infrastructure through the Connecting Leeds brand and consultation. Support has been provided to businesses through regular communication of business grants and support measures, safe reopening guidance, and a #ReDiscoverLeeds campaign to safely welcome people back into the city to address some of the economic impacts, with measures including social distancing, signage, what to expect and what to do.
- 3.105 Media work activity continues to be high, with journalists' queries still in excess of the same period last year and currently on the rise. Proactive press releases continue to be issued at an increased rate, with Covid-19 updates about services, outbreak control and other related matters accounting for a large part of the increase. Following a pause over the summer period, regular press conferences have resumed as needed to help keep the press and public informed of important changes. Considerable extra effort has been invested in monitoring, engaging and messaging on the council's social media channels. Work to support the Leeds Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan continues through community engagement, media, social media and campaign activity. Particular efforts are being made currently to support the bar and restaurant trade with information and to directly communicate with young people, both with schools and universities returning this month and in light of current higher rates of infection amongst this age group. This work is joined up across partner organisations in education, health, police and other city sectors.

Corporate considerations

4. Consultation and engagement

Extensive engagement continues between services within the council, with partners, with elected members, trade unions and with the public on service change. As in previous reports during Covid-19, it has not always been possible to engage in the normal way about service changes as there has been no choice about many of the changes to ensure compliance with national guidance. Ward members continue to play a key role in engaging the public, particularly in encouraging neighbourliness, volunteering to help the vulnerable, and encouraging people to play their part in minimising spread of the virus. We have endeavoured to keep people up to date with developments as best we can. Engagement with stakeholders has continued and in many cases been strengthened with the context of what we have had to manage during this incident. This includes regular written updates to elected members and MPs, partners, weekly messages to the public, regular thank you notes to staff and calls with MPs, head teachers, universities, colleges, VCFS, and businesses. Engagement with staff has continued including via staff surveys, Staff Network groups, and a staff Facebook group.

5. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

These considerations are an implicit part of the planning, particularly given the nature of the incident and this will continue, for example with prioritisation of services for vulnerable people and monitoring of potential community tensions and the impact on inequalities. Snapshot data on this has been provided in previous reports and in the councillor/MP updates. Future reports will also cover this.

6. Council policies and the Best Council Plan

The newly updated Best Council Plan 2020-2025, available [here](#), reflects the current Covid-19 context, while maintaining the three pillar priorities of inclusive growth; health and wellbeing; and climate change, under the overarching priority of tackling poverty and inequalities. Covid-19 continues to have a hugely significant impact on all areas of the Best Council Plan, with the economy, employment, education, community resilience and health and wellbeing all detrimentally affected by the pandemic, which will undoubtedly limit progress towards our ambitions. Our city ambitions, particularly our overarching priority of tackling poverty and inequalities, will be key to guiding the recovery period, particularly as we begin to better understand the long-term health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic.

7. Climate Emergency

In line with our city ambitions, responding to the Climate Emergency is a key priority as we move through the recovery period, with a focus on continuing to improve air quality and work towards a carbon neutral city by 2030. For many people, national lockdown has provided an opportunity to take up walking and cycling, and schemes are underway to support people to sustain these positive changes into the long term. The Infrastructure & Supplies section of this report details a number of active travel schemes being progressed, including a 'School Streets' pilot scheme and segregated cycle lanes. The Leeds Clean Air Zone is currently under review between the Council and central Government, and the outcome will be reported to Executive Board in autumn. The Council and its contractors have taken advantage of reduced traffic flows during lockdown and the summer holidays to progress significant infrastructure schemes that will contribute towards carbon reduction. This includes the Leeds Pipes district heating network, which will provide low carbon heating and hot water to 1,983 council homes and numerous businesses, and the Connecting Leeds work to improve the city centre for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, both of which have progressed well over the summer.

8. Resources, procurement and value for money

The financial impact of the pandemic, in terms of both additional costs and lost income, remains a significant concern, with an estimated impact of £52.5m in 2020/21 and £66.1m in 2021/22, after the application on government contributions. Reduced income has been experienced, and is anticipated to continue, across sports, arts and heritage, visitor attractions and car parking, and the Council has experienced significant increased costs in responding to the pandemic; examples include additional cleaning across the Council's estate, and increased numbers of Children Looked After in external placements. The Council received £4.1m from Government to support outbreak control. This is being used to increase our capacity across a Public Health, Environmental Health, Infection Prevention Control, the voluntary sector, communications, etc. The financial resilience of the third sector remains a considerable

concern. A separate Financial Health monitoring report is on the Executive Board agenda, which sets out the financial situation in much greater detail.

9. Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

With the agreement of the Chair, given the significance and scale of this issue, it is appropriate for the Board to receive an update at this meeting. However, this report is coming to Executive Board as a late paper due to the fast paced nature of developments of this issue and in order to ensure Board Members receive the most up to date information as possible. A further verbal update on developments since the publication of this report will be provided at the Board meeting.

10. Risk management

The risks related to coronavirus referenced throughout this report will continue to be monitored through the council's existing risk management processes. For example under two of the main standing risks of "Major incident in the city" and "Major Business continuity issue for the council". Other corporate risks, such as those relating to the council's budget and the Leeds economy have also been updated to reflect the impact of the outbreak. More specific risks relating to coronavirus are being managed through the Silver Groups, with the more significant ones being escalated onto the corporate coronavirus risk document seen in Annex D. The rating of this risk is difficult given the uncertainty, in light of that, a cautious approach is taken for the target rating.

11. Conclusions

This report provides an update on the ongoing work to respond to the complex and evolving impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on Leeds, which is still having a significant effect on all aspects of life and council business. Our focus is now to balance the need to support a return to aspects of normal life, including supporting the Leeds economy, while ensuring flexibility to swiftly respond to the pressures caused by Covid-19 as they arise. The Leeds Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan provides the backbone to the local approach in managing and reducing transmission. Over the summer, more services have resumed in Covid-secure ways, often using innovative solutions to deliver services differently, which has allowed Leeds residents to access support and resume more of the activities that we enjoy, while supporting the local economy. Looking ahead to autumn and winter, the need to respond swiftly and flexibly will be more important than ever to new and increased pressures on the local health and care system and the economy.

12. Recommendations

Executive Board is requested to:

- Note the updated context, progress and issues as we move into a new phase of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Note the emerging issues for consideration during the next phase of recovery including the new school and university term, winter pressures, and the concurrent pressure of EU Exit.

- Recognise the need for new levels of engagement with the public, and everybody taking ownership of the need to be safe and responsible in order to reduce levels of transmission and avoid further restrictions.
- Use this paper as context for the more detailed financial health monitoring paper on the financial implications of coronavirus for the council.

13. Background documents¹

None.

14. Appendices:

Annex A: National policy developments timeline

Annex B: Leeds Strategic Response and Recovery Plan – coronavirus (Covid-19)

Annex C: Leeds Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG Gold) Weekly Dashboard

Annex D: Corporate risk LCC 5: Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) – September 2020

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.