

**Report of the Chief Executive  
Report to Executive Board**

**Agenda Item 17**

**Date: 21 October 2020**

**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**

- Coronavirus (Covid-19) continues to have a significant impact on the UK, the city and the Council. Since the last report to Executive Board in September, a number of national developments have led to additional government restrictions in Leeds, and many other areas of the country, as rates of infection continue to rise despite considerable action to tackle the spread of the virus. Transmission of the Covid-19 continues to be widespread across all wards of the city, but particularly high in younger people. General transmission across the community is contributing to cases in settings such as care homes, education settings and workplaces, which are being managed well through our strong public health partnership arrangements. We need to continually emphasise the importance of everyone playing their part so that **more people do more of the right thing, more of the time, because they choose to**. This includes clear messaging to encourage people to reduce contact with others, make space, wash hands, wear a face covering, get a test if you have symptoms, and self-isolate when required.
  
- Since the last report to Executive Board the national Covid-19 alert level has moved to level 4, which means that the Covid-19 epidemic is in general circulation, transmission is high or rising exponentially. New national restrictions have been introduced, which are described in this report, to address the rapid increase in rates of infection. This has included new Government restrictions on people and businesses in Leeds. In addition,

local authorities have been given new responsibilities to administer self-isolation payments to eligible individuals, and the police have new enforcement powers. On 12 October the Government introduced a three-tier approach to restrictions, with Leeds placed in Tier 2 on High Risk Alert from 14 October. Discussions with Government are ongoing as to whether Leeds, the rest of West Yorkshire, and other large cities, will move into the top, Very High Alert, tier. Given the dynamic nature of this situation, a verbal update will be provided to Executive Board on the most recent position. Whilst the level of restrictions tends to dominate, we continue drive the widest range of public health measures, most notably testing, tracing, support to self-isolate, managing outbreaks, preventative work, communications and engagement, compliance and enforcement.

- The impact of restrictions on health and wellbeing and the economy remain a significant concern, however it is also clear that if cases continue to rise there will be significant pressure on local health services and the virus continues to pose a significant health threat, particularly to those with clinical vulnerabilities. Our focus remains on minimising the effects of the virus for everybody, but particularly the most vulnerable, to keep the people of Leeds safe. As we learn to live with the virus we continue to influence national Government and advocate for a compassionate approach to restrictions that takes into account public health, with a focus on health, wellbeing and the economy. We have also consistently advocated for more localised testing and tracing, greater local involvement in decision making about local restrictions and financial support for businesses and individuals. 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. We welcome the new self-isolation support payment (see Citizens & Communities section for more details), but there remain significant concerns about the financial impacts of the pandemic and national restrictions on individuals and business.
- The multiagency arrangements established at the start of the pandemic continue to respond to emerging issues and develop our recovery approach, and these arrangements continue to be reviewed and updated to reflect the current circumstances. Reinforcing clear communications is a priority across the partnership to ensure that people understand the new restrictions introduced by the Government as well as the public health interventions to help keep the city safe. We have worked to make these messages as simple as possible so that people understand the importance of keeping distance from others, wearing a face covering, washing hands and accessing testing and self-isolating in order to reduce the spread of the virus. As well as responding to the impacts of Covid-19, each of the groups are looking ahead to the risks and challenges of the months ahead, including winter pressures on the health and care system, extreme weather and flooding, latent demand on services, and continued uncertainty around EU Exit (please see a separate report on the Executive Board agenda on this subject).
- The main sections of the report provide an update under each theme of the Response and Recovery Plan as to how each area is responding to new national requirements, in addition to preparations for the months ahead. A timeline of key national developments since the last update to Executive Board is included at Annex A. The updated Response & Recovery plan details the current areas of focus for each thematic area and actions that have been undertaken to meet response and recovery aims. The plan is included at Annex B. At Annex C, the Leeds Strategic Coordination Group (SCG Gold) Covid-19 reporting dashboard sets out key data and analysis from the past month. Finally, the current high level risk assessment is included at Annex D.

- The financial implications of responding to Covid-19, additional costs and lost income, remain a significant concern. A separate paper about the council's finances on the Executive Board agenda outlines the latest position. On 12<sup>th</sup> October the Prime Minister announced an additional £1 billion for local authorities and we await further information about this funding and the allocations. Leeds is also due to receive £485,826 to support enforcement activity, including Covid Marshals to support engagement with businesses. Further funding is expected through the new Covid-19 Alert System; the level is dependent on which tier an area is in.
- 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:
  - 279 people supported from emergency accommodation into more permanent accommodation.
  - Guidance on compliance with regulations (before the three-tier system was introduced) sent to 2,100 licensed and food businesses across Leeds.
  - £6,621,440 paid through the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund Scheme, assisting 715 Leeds businesses.
  - £154.1m paid in 12,584 grants through the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund, which closed on the 30<sup>th</sup> September.
  - 250 applications received to the Self-Isolation Support scheme in the first two days of it launching.
  - 1,788 people supported into work and 3,902 completing skills training (April to September 2020).
  - A record-breaking 294 virtual events took place as part of The Leeds Digital Festival from 21<sup>st</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> October, with estimates of 30,000 attendees from over 60 countries.
  - 9396 service users with an active support plan, with 7313 receiving community based support and 2083 in permanent residential care.
  - 10,000+ Covid-19 tests took place at Temple Green and over 5000 tests took place at the Bridge Street Community Church local test site in September. Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October, over 6000 tests took place at Temple Green, over 2000 at Bridge Street Community Church, over 4000 at the Gryphon Sports Centre, and over 5000 at Mobile Testing Units at sites across the city.
  - £4.5m received by 26 Leeds culture and arts organisations from the Culture Recovery Fund.
  - 13 leisure centres are open offering a range of activities.
  - A live digital campaign appealing to younger people to help keep infections down received 7,814 engagements, reaching 144,174 people and gaining 401,812 impressions, and was accompanied by a billboard poster in Hyde Park.
  - September saw the largest volume of media enquiries since the pandemic began, more than double those received in August and with just over 60% attributable to Covid-19.
  - A weekly GovDelivery bulletin continues to be issued to 114,500 residents.
  - 632,000 items of PPE were distributed in 7 days.
  - 11,000 items of equipment have been provided since March to support LCC staff to work from home.
  - All 197 playgrounds and outdoor gyms in the city are open with a sanitisation regime in place.
  - 19% reduction in weekday traffic approaching the city centre compared to pre-Covid-19, equating to around 70,000 fewer vehicles.

# Coronavirus - summary of council and city response



October 2020



**£6,621,440**  
paid to 715  
businesses

via the Local Authority  
Discretionary Grant Fund



**10,000+**  
Covid-19 tests

at Temple Green in  
September



**£4.5m**  
from the Culture  
Recovery Fund

received by 26 Leeds  
culture and arts  
organisations



**1,788**  
people

supported  
into work  
(April - Sept 2020)



**144,174**  
people reached  
through live  
digital campaign

aimed at younger people



**13**  
leisure  
centres  
open



**9,396**  
people  
being  
supported

with care plans



**2,100**  
licensed and  
food businesses

received guidance on  
regulations



**70,000**  
fewer vehicles

approaching the city  
centre on the average  
weekday compared to  
pre-Covid



**11,000**  
items of  
equipment

provided since March  
to support LCC staff  
to work from home



**197**  
playgrounds  
and outdoor  
gyms  
re-opened

with enhanced cleaning



**632,000**  
PPE items

distributed  
in 7 days

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

- The 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.

## 3. **Resource Implications**

- The financial impact of the pandemic, in terms of both additional costs and lost income, remains a significant concern. 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 Public Health, Environmental Health, Infection Prevention Control, the voluntary sector, communications, etc. Since the last report to Executive Board, the Council has received additional Government funding for Infection Control and is due to receive £485,826 to support enforcement activity in relation to new Covid-19 regulations. On 12<sup>th</sup> October an additional £1 billion was announced for local authorities; further information and allocations are awaited. 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.

## 4. **Recommendations**

Executive Board is requested to:

- Note the updated context, progress and issues as we move into a period of increased national government restrictions to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is anticipated to last for at least six months, combined with the outcome of discussions about the new Covid-19 Alert system which could bring further government restrictions.
- Note the emerging issues for consideration during the next phase of response and recovery including winter pressures on the health and care system, flood risk and extreme weather, local government finance and capacity concerns and EU Exit.
- Recognise the need for a city-wide approach to controlling transmission, given high rates of prevalence across all the city's wards, plus enhanced actions and engagement in those areas with the highest rates.
- Note the new responsibilities of local authorities to implement self-isolation support payments and new powers of the police to enforce Covid-19 regulations.
- Use this paper as context for the more detailed financial health monitoring paper on the financial implications of coronavirus, and for the economic recovery framework paper that is also on the Executive Board agenda.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This seventh 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 Since the last update to Executive Board in September, rates of transmission of Covid-19 have continued to rise in Leeds and across the UK, prompting the Government to introduce new national restrictions and legal requirements on individuals and businesses. Since 18 September, premises and venues across England are required by law to have a system in place to record contact details of their customers, visitors and staff. On 20 September a new £500 Isolation Support Payment was announced for people on low incomes who face loss of income due to testing positive or being asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace.
- 2.2 In response to rising cases of Covid-19 across the country, on 21 September the UK Chief Medical Officers and Joint Biosecurity Centre recommended that the UK Covid-19 alert level moves from level 3 (Covid-19 epidemic is in general circulation) to level 4 (Covid-19 epidemic is in general circulation, transmission is high or rising exponentially).
- 2.3 On 22 September the Prime Minister announced new national measures, including advising that people who are able to work from home should do so, and a pause to the planned reopening of conferences, exhibition halls and large sporting events from 1 October. From 23 September the wearing of face coverings became mandatory for taxi and private hire customers; within hospitality venues except when seated; and for retail staff, with fixed penalties enforceable by the police.
- 2.4 Since 24 September, hospitality venues are legally required to display the NHS QR code, ensure that no individual group larger than 6 enters the premises, and close at 10pm. Licensed premises can only offer table service, plus takeaway, which can continue beyond 10pm. Businesses that fail in these duties may be fined £1000, rising to £10,000 for repeat offences.
- 2.5 On 24 September, the NHS Covid-19 app launched across England and Wales. The Chancellor unveiled the Winter Economy Plan, including a Job Support Scheme to replace the furlough scheme from 1 November, and an extension to the Self Employed Income Support Scheme.
- 2.6 On 25 September, Leeds became an area of intervention on the Public Health England weekly surveillance [watchlist](#), and the government imposed additional restrictions to limit social contact with other households (outside of a support bubble, and with some exceptions).

- 2.7 From 28 September, a new legal duty to self-isolate came into force for people who test positive or come into contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19, with fines of £1000 enforceable by the police for breaches, increasing to £10,000 for repeat offences. The maximum number of people who can attend a wedding ceremony or reception reduced from 30 to 15.
- 2.8 On 9 October the Chancellor announced details of support for businesses that are legally required to close due to Covid-19. On 12 October the Prime Minister announced a new three-tier system to national restrictions, with Medium, High and Very High tiers effective from 14 October. £1 billion of additional funding was promised for local authorities, plus additional support for those local authorities, and businesses, in the Very High tier. Leeds is categorised as part of the High tier, which means that from 14 October people from different households or support bubbles cannot mix indoors in private homes or public venues. People will be able to mix with others from different households in groups of no more than six in outdoor public spaces and private gardens, which is in line with some of the more compassionate restrictions we pushed for.
- 2.9 A summary of key national developments since the last report to Executive Board is included at Annex A. Full details of guidance and communications issued by the government can be found on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).
- 2.10 The number of Covid-19 cases are being updated daily on the .gov.uk website [Covid-19 cases by local authority](https://www.gov.uk/covid-19/cases-by-local-authority). Nationally, as at 15<sup>th</sup> October there have been 673,622 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the UK and 43,293 deaths. Leeds has had 14,732 confirmed cases as of 14<sup>th</sup> October. Up to 15<sup>th</sup> October there were 688 deaths where 'Covid-19' or 'coronavirus' was mentioned on the death certificate. Of these, 380 (55%) were in hospitals, 270 (39%) were in care homes, 13 (2%) in a hospice, and 25 (4%) in their own home. To date, 17% of all deaths registered have been Covid-19 related. Excess deaths have increased from a low of 0.14 Covid-19 deaths registered per day in July/August, to 1.14 as at 14 October. In the 4 weeks up to 14 October excess deaths have increased. The latest excess deaths figure shows a 22% increase in registered deaths compared to 2019.

### **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. An additional Bronze group has been established to ensure a consistent approach to proposed events.
- 3.2 Social distancing, testing, tracing and managing outbreaks and community transmission are essential components in our response to the virus to enable safe travel, safe public spaces, safe delivery of services, and safe education. Effective communications are central in the period ahead to encourage everybody to take the required steps to keep themselves and others safe while the virus remains in broad circulation in the community. This includes making space and staying 2 metres away from people you do not live with; washing your hands regularly and

for 20 seconds; covering your face in enclosed spaces; getting a test if you have symptoms; and isolating when you need to or are advised to. 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 5<sup>th</sup> October 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, finding ways to live with the virus in general circulation 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. A separate report on the Executive Board agenda for this month details the Council's preparations for EU Exit. For other events, we are using our normal emergency planning approach to prepare for, and manage, these events.

#### 3.4 **Local Outbreak Control Management**

3.5 **Rates of infection** in Leeds have increased significantly over September and October, mirroring the trend in other large Northern cities. As at 15<sup>th</sup> October the Leeds 7 day rate of infection is 404 per 100,000, and the 7 day positivity rate is 13.7%. The 7 day moving average of individuals who have been tested is 445 per 100,000. On 25<sup>th</sup> September Leeds became an **area of intervention** on the Public Health England weekly surveillance [watchlist](#) and government regulations were introduced to make it illegal (other than exemptions) for people in Leeds to mix with other households (with the exception of households in a support bubble) in private homes and gardens. On 12<sup>th</sup> October the Government introduced a new three-tiered approach to restrictions, with Leeds entering the **High tier**. As part of this new framework, from 14<sup>th</sup> October, it is illegal for people in Leeds to meet with other households (other than their support bubble) indoors in private homes or public venues (with exemptions). People can, however, meet in groups of up to six from different households outdoors in public spaces or private gardens.

3.6 We continue to work closely with the other West Yorkshire local authorities and UK Core Cities to influence Government policy for the benefit of residents and business. On 6<sup>th</sup> October the Leaders of Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester and Liverpool councils wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care outlining a proposal for a five-point plan to improve the effectiveness of current restrictions in place to respond to Covid-19. The proposal requests: local decision making to agree additional local restrictions; locally controlled test and trace systems; an improved business compensation package to support those most affected; financial support for all people required to self-isolate; and improved monitoring of the impacts of additional restrictions.

- 3.7 On 8<sup>th</sup> October the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council, together with the local hospitality sector, called on the Government to urgently review restrictions on the sector and to consider sector specific support. In addition, a joint statement of Northern council Leaders and Local Enterprise Partnerships as part of the Convention of the North and NP11 called on the Government to initiate urgent dialogue with Northern leaders to develop a plan of action to protect communities and economies in the North. Further information about concerns about the economic impact of the pandemic are set out in the Business & Economy section of this report.
- 3.8 Between 24<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October a **technical issue** with the national reporting system meant that 15,841 positive cases identified via Pillar 2 testing were not included in daily reporting figures. This led to a significant increase in local rates of infection after the issue was identified and resolved, with the reported rate in Leeds increasing from 134.8 per 100,000 on 2<sup>nd</sup> October to 216.3 on 5<sup>th</sup> October. The 15,841 positive cases had all been contacted and asked to self-isolate, but their contacts had not been traced. The technical issue has now been resolved. The impact for Leeds was almost 2000 missed cases, which we are now responding to in order to understand and minimise the impacts on local settings.
- 3.9 The data is changing rapidly, and is being included in regular updates to members and MPs, as well as on social media. Infection rates are high in all **wards** of the city, with most above 200 cases per 100,000 people, indicating that transmission is widespread across geographical areas, but with rates of infection highest in Headingley & Hyde Park and Little London & Woodhouse. A multiagency meeting between local ward members, businesses and the voluntary, community and faith sector has taken place to coordinate the local response and support to people in these wards. There continues to be particularly high rates of transmission amongst young adults, particularly those aged 16-29. Cases of Covid-19 are seen across all ethnicities and this changes dynamically, however the majority of cases are amongst people of white British ethnicity.
- 3.10 Approximately 30,000 **university students** arrived in Leeds in late September, which has inevitably impacted the number of cases, with wards with large student populations seeing the largest increase in cases. Extensive partnership work is ongoing with the city's universities to support students who need to self-isolate and share data and intelligence so that the local impacts can be understood. Public Health England epidemiology suggests that the peak of cases in university halls occurred in early October, and cases have been reducing since this date. Across all universities enhanced cleaning is taking place and students are being provided with guidance and support, including support with contact tracing. Visitors and mixing between households within university halls is not permitted and socially distanced social events have been organised. The majority of students are complying with restrictions and taking the appropriate steps to protect themselves and others. Universities are working with partners about the impact on the wider community.
- 3.11 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. As at 15<sup>th</sup> October, twelve of the city's care homes have at least one active case of

Covid-19 and are receiving support. A large number of mainly individual cases of Covid-19 are being reported across the city's educational settings, with schools receiving support from the Council's Schools Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team, Department for Education, Public Health England and the Health Protection Team. The overwhelming majority of the city's pupils and staff remain in education settings, with around 5% of pupils and 4% of staff self-isolating. More information is set out in the Citizens and Communities section of this report.

- 3.12 National issues with **testing capacity** over recent weeks have affected people's ability to access tests and caused delays in receiving results. In response, a workaround solution was rapidly implemented with a temporary test site for key workers at the Mandela Centre, which has since moved to Cinder Moor on Woodhouse Lane. The site was exclusively for symptomatic key workers and their immediate families who were unable to access testing through the national system, in order to minimise disruption to schools, the NHS and social care. The issues with the national testing system appear to have improved more recently, although there have been significant delays in the turnaround time for whole care home testing which is a concern in terms of controlling transmission. The workaround test site for key workers will close on 16 October given that the issues with accessing tests appear to have improved.
- 3.13 Data from October suggests that more people are managing to access test sites. In September, over 10,000 tests took place at the regional testing site at Temple Green, and over 5000 tests took place at the Bridge Street Community Church local test site. Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October, over 6000 tests took place at Temple Green, over 2000 at Bridge Street Community Church, over 4000 at the Gryphon Sports Centre test site on the University of Leeds campus, and over 5000 at Mobile Testing Units at sites across the city. Negotiations continue about additional local test sites for Leeds.
- 3.14 Deloitte have confirmed that the **Temple Green** test site will soon include temporary laboratories to process tests, which is anticipated to speed up processing test results. Leeds is one of only a few sites across the country where this will be happening.
- 3.15 A range of **data** is received on a daily basis and used proactively to inform our local position and response. For example, recent data that suggests transmission is taking place in social elements of workplace settings such as car sharing, smoking shelters, canteens, locker rooms and socialising within or outside the workplace is being used to inform targeted communications. Data has also been used to determine where cases are situated within high risk or sheltered housing to allow for targeted messages to tenants.
- 3.16 A city-wide communications campaign has launched to engage younger people in response to evidence of high rates of transmission amongst this demographic; more information is provided in the Media and Communications section of this report. Environmental Health and Licensing teams continue to undertake visits and inspections of licenses premises, initially with a focus on student areas of the city but with plans to roll this approach out to other areas, to provide advice and support and enforce where necessary. More information is provided in the Citizens & Communities section of this report. A team of Incident Management Coordinators are in place to undertake activity to support local outbreak

management. Recently this has included supporting Environmental Health in undertaking visits to businesses in target localities, and supporting community engagement around the Mandela Centre testing site.

### 3.17 **Health and Social Care**

- 3.18 The Health and Social Care Gold group continues to support and prepare for **system resilience** ahead of winter, including preparations for the concurrent pressures of flu, Covid-19 and other winter pressures (led by the Stabilisation and Reset Group). Primary Care Networks are being used to promote flu vaccinations to those who are eligible, in line with the broader eligibility announced on 5<sup>th</sup> August, as well as reinforcing communications around hand washing. Scenario planning of potential winter / flu/ Covid-19 interactions are being explored to support the agreement of actions in the winter plan.
- 3.19 The focus of the Stabilisation and Reset Group over the past month has been about managing **increasing activity** in line with NHS England planning requirements. This is balanced carefully with the rising number of patients with Covid-19 and winter planning. Non-Covid-19 related activity at Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust has increased, with A&E admissions higher in August and September 2020 than 2019. Elective, diagnostic and outpatient activity has continued to increase above national expectations for recovery. Challenges remain to return to average levels of activity due to the limitations associated with additional social distancing, infection control and testing required for Covid-19. The number of Covid-19 positive patients admitted to Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust has increased significantly during September and October, rising from 7 on 9 September to 122 on 15 October, with an increasing number in critical care. Surge plans and preparedness for winter are being put in place to increase capacity in and out of hospital.
- 3.20 On 12<sup>th</sup> October the Medical Director of NHS England announced that the **Nightingale hospitals** in Harrogate, Sunderland and Manchester are to increase their state of readiness. If the sites are made active, a local decision can be taken as to whether they are used for Covid-19 treatment or maintaining elective and diagnostic work.
- 3.21 In response to the latest transmission data, **enhanced communications** are planned with a particular focus on young people to highlight the potential implications of community transmission. Health and care staff will be encouraged to be ambassadors for sharing the messages. Examples of recent enhanced communications actions include resources for parents and carers of children to help them make an informed decision about their child attending school, the Feel Better campaign targeting Further and Higher Education students updated to align with citywide Covid-19 messages, and a newspaper wrap with the Yorkshire Evening Post and Asian Express (Leeds edition). A Facebook live panel event took place in September with Public Health and clinicians to address myths and misinformation around Covid-19, and the next session will cover cancer myths and screening. Future communications and engagement work planned includes a citywide maildrop based on insight from local people, a community engagement exercise working with third sector partners, and work with local faith leaders and Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust staff to develop videos to promote messages about how to attend services and access urgent care during winter.

- 3.22 **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 15<sup>th</sup> October, 12 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 15<sup>th</sup> October, the total Covid-related deaths in care homes in Leeds is 270, or 39.24% of all Leeds residents Covid-19 deaths. Supply of PPE is continually being monitored through the government's portal with local arrangements in place for emergency back-up if necessary.
- 3.23 After ceasing **day services** in March in line with government guidance, staff continued to support individuals through telephone calls and socially distanced support throughout the summer. Building based services resumed during the week beginning 14<sup>th</sup> September with reduced capacity to comply with Covid-secure measures. Service provision has been reviewed and risk assessed and further risk assessments were undertaken in the light of increased community infections; however day services have continued to be provided.
- 3.24 Further support is being given to **carers** with additional respite services where they are willing to take these up but also purchase of tablet computers to support digital contact. There will also be a £100,000 investment in community-led mental well-being support in recognition of the impact Covid-19 is having on people.
- 3.25 The second round of the **Infection Control Fund** has been received and is in the process of being distributed. This is targeted at providers' steps to mitigate the risk of infection through staff movement and to cover wages if people have to self-isolate either because they have Covid-19 or have been in proximity to someone with Covid-19. We have also had our first care home give notice as they can no longer operate as viable business.
- 3.26 **Infrastructure and Supplies**
- 3.27 In preparation for the safe return of students to Leeds, a City **University Collaboration Taskforce** was established, chaired by the Vice Chancellor of Leeds Beckett University. The group meets weekly and has representation from all six Leeds universities, plus West Yorkshire Police, Public Health and other LCC professionals. The group share key communication messages, best practices and experiences.
- 3.28 Leeds universities, student unions and Councillor Judith Blake released a joint message welcoming the students to Leeds, outlining their responsibilities and the support that's available to them. We continue to work closely with the University community and are amplifying key communication messages. We will continue to ensure that the student voice is included in these conversations and to highlight the positive contributions that the student community makes to our city.
- 3.29 Targeted work has been undertaken on reporting cases and have identified a way to get messages out to occupants of houses of multiple occupancy through existing NHS student welcome communications. The University of Leeds are hosting a testing facility at the **Gryphon Centre** for students and the local

community to use. In the first week of October around 400 tests were undertaken at the site each day.

- 3.30 The city's six University campuses are considered Covid-secure sites, with appropriate measures in place to avoid transmission, meaning that it has not been necessary to move all learning online. Students testing positive for Covid-19 are being supported by universities to self-isolate.
- 3.31 The Council has worked with the University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett University (on behalf of all Leeds Universities and colleges) to develop a new service level agreement which provides an additional dedicated **patrol capability** which commenced on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, enhancing and supplementing existing work on this priority issue. The enhanced service will operate over the weekend until the end of the academic year and will involve police officers and Safer Leeds officers deployed in an intelligence led way with the capacity to exercise both Civil and Police powers as appropriate.
- 3.32 Bus and rail **public transport capacity** is at about 80% overall. This is not expected to increase much more due to Covid-related issues, for example training for train drivers has stalled due to social distancing restrictions and staff self-isolating or shielding. Recent rail timetable changes have gone well. As usual at this time of year, there has been a drop off in leisure travel as children returned to school; normally this would be compensated by an uplift in commuter trends but this has not occurred, most likely due to Government advice to work from home.
- 3.33 The return to schools has gone well due to extensive planning and contingency plans put in place by relevant partners. Services are coping with demand and additional buses have been supplied when needed. Advice is being given to contact the Combined Authority with any specific issues. There have been some complaints regarding **face covering** compliance issues on public transport, mainly buses, which customers have provided feedback on. Operators have no power to enforce the wearing of face coverings, but some have re-commenced distributing free face coverings, where supplies are available, in an attempt to increase compliance. Communications are being stepped up to reinforce the requirement to wear a face covering unless exempt. Footfall at Leeds train station remains at approximately one third of its usual level, and approximately 45% over the weekend.
- 3.34 From 4th October buses returned to two way operation on the Headrow, allowing some cross city services to return. Elland Road Park and Ride patronage has seen a slight decrease following the Government advice to work from home. Temple Green Park and Ride remains closed for the foreseeable future; it continues to operate as an important regional testing facility.
- 3.35 To date, no significant problems with movement or people congregating have been reported with the new 10pm curfew on hospitality. The situation will be kept under review and monitored.
- 3.36 **Traffic flows** are still not back up to pre-Covid levels. Whilst all day traffic flows are closer to pre-Covid levels, being 19% down, morning peak hour traffic flows remain significantly down, being circa 30% down on pre-Covid levels. Traffic

flows on Highways England Motorways are down on pre-Covid levels, but are increasing to 87-92% levels. Major works to Lofthouse interchange were completed successfully whilst traffic flows were reduced and is a good example of partnership working to accelerate a project which under normal traffic flow conditions had the potential to cause significant issues. All road collision casualties are down by 37%; there have been 173 killed and seriously injured casualties in 2020 (263 throughout 2019) and 7 fatalities in 2020 (22 in 2019).

- 3.37 PPE stock levels remain good, and the first deliveries of stock from Department for Health and Social Care have arrived at the central storage facility at Waterside, with distribution commencing in the week beginning 12 October. More information is at section 3.3 of the Response & Recovery Plan (Annex B).
- 3.38 Civic Enterprise Leeds continue to serve schools with provision adjusted in many cases to accommodate new school arrangements, support additional cleaning requirements, and ensure continuity of school meal provision for those pupils required to self-isolate. More information is at 3.2 of the Response & Recovery Plan (Annex B).
- 3.39 As part of the planned transition to new food provision arrangements, the Council's food warehouse has now been stepped down and closed. The Community Care hubs in partnership with their food providers, including FareShare, have transitioned to new arrangements to maintain food provision to the vulnerable. Further details about these arrangements are provided in section 3.4 of the Response & Recovery Plan (Annex B). These 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 or a return to the advice to shield.
- 3.40 **Business and Economy**
- 3.41 The Council has now paid out all **grants** to those who qualified through the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. The scheme closed on the 30th September, and the final amount paid was £154,100,000 in 12,584 grants. Although the latest government figures only report payments made up to the 30th August, Leeds still remained in the top three local authorities for the amount paid to businesses. Phase 2 of the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Scheme Fund closed to applications on the 28th August, although applications received by this date could still be processed and payments made up to the 30th September. As at the 30th September, £6,621,440 had been paid with 715 Leeds' businesses assisted.
- 3.42 On the 2nd October the Leader of the council wrote to the Rt Hon Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Leader requested that residual funds from the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure and Small Business Grants, and the Local Authority Discretionary Grant Fund, of £8.044m and £1.174m respectively, be retained by the council to provide additional support for business impacted by Covid-19, especially in response to the further restrictions applied from September.

- 3.43 The Council's proposed **framework for economic recovery** will be considered as a separate item on the Executive Board's agenda and the full details of the proposed approach to economic recovery and renewal is set out in that report.
- 3.44 In our emergency response, 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.
- 3.45 Key concerns being reported by local business networks have centred around the impact of the recent tighter **restrictions** including the new advice for employees to work from home and the consequent impacts on small businesses, especially in the city centre. The closure of restaurants and bars at 10pm has also placed significant pressure on city centre hospitality businesses reliant on evening footfall. Restaurants can no longer realistically sit anyone after 8.30pm and many bars and pubs in the city are now operating at 20-30% of their pre-Covid revenues. Any further measures without additional support will cause serious problems for hospitality, leisure and retail.
- 3.46 Many Leeds hospitality venues have started consultation exercises with 30-40% reductions in staff numbers anticipated. On the 6th October the Leader of the Council, together with her counterparts in Newcastle, Manchester and Liverpool, wrote to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care outlining a proposal for a **five-point plan** to improve the effectiveness of current restrictions in place to respond to Covid-19. The proposal requests: local decision making to agree additional local lockdowns; locally controlled test and trace systems; an improved business compensation package to support those most affected; financial support for all people required to self-isolate; and improved monitoring of the impacts of additional restrictions.
- 3.47 With the end of the **EU transition period** less than 100 days away, business preparedness has also featured strongly in discussions, with a number of webinars provided by business network agencies with advice and guidance, as well as advice and links available on the council's website. The impact on the supply of labour from the EU also remains unclear.
- 3.48 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has reported that the UK **labour market** has lost almost 700,000 jobs since the start of the Coronavirus outbreak, with more than 5 million workers still temporarily away from work, the biggest increase in redundancies since the financial crash. A recent CBI survey polled almost 250 firms, of which 51% are expecting to maintain or increase their permanent recruitment in the next 12 months, whilst 46% are planning to either reduce permanent recruitment or not recruit at all. Figures from the ONS show that the UK unemployment rate increased to 4.1% in the three months to July, compared with 3.9% previously, with 16-24 year olds suffering the largest drop in employment.
- 3.49 Worker **footfall** had fallen most in Leeds, London and Oxford across the UK. In Leeds, city centre footfall has fallen with the most recent data showing footfall is 47.5% of 2019 levels. However, ONS figures show that the proportion of people travelling into their place of work in the UK has risen above 60% for the first time

since March. A recent survey published by West Yorkshire Combined Authority found that an increasing number of people had no concerns about using public transport - 34% compared with 24% two months ago. Additionally, only 35% were now working from home, down from 47%. The Leeds City Region fortnightly monitoring report shows that the return to work in the region remains gradual, with the majority of workers in some office-based sectors still away from their usual place of work. This may begin to reduce following recent government announcements regarding working from home.

- 3.50 The **Leeds Digital Festival**, the largest tech event in the UK took place between the 21st September and the 2nd October with a record-breaking 294 events. The Festival was officially launched by the Minister of State for Digital and Culture in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. 294 virtual events were held with estimates of 30,000 attendees from over 60 countries with speakers ranging from organisations such as the Chinese tech giant Alibaba to the Royal Shakespeare Company. Sessions ranged from Fintech to health tech, artificial intelligence to virtual reality and start-ups to careers. The trend of more "non-tech" organisations involved has continued, showcasing their use of technology, e.g. Arup in engineering and construction and Opera North in the arts and cultural world. The virtual platform has enabled the Festival to widen its reach both across the UK and globally increasing international attendees, speakers and organisers, including from the Embassy of Israel, Eurocities and two Estonian tech festivals, promoting Leeds Tech sector onto the global stage.
- 3.51 A new report by the Arts Council highlights a growing body of evidence which demonstrates that **culture** will promote social cohesion and help support local economies in towns, cities and villages across the country after the pandemic. Leeds Heritage Theatres has been given a lifeline grant to support the re-opening of its venues. The company, which includes Leeds Grand Theatre, City Varieties Music Hall and Hyde Park Picture House, has been given a £119,000 grant by the National Lottery Fund. Since the venues closed earlier this year, the company has lost 99% of its income.
- 3.52 Cultural leads across West Yorkshire authorities continue to collaborate to understand the long-term impacts of Covid-19 on the region's sector including attendance at WYCA's Economic Recovery Board to report the outcomes of the Covid-19 sector survey and discussion around supporting the sector towards recovery.
- 3.53 A number of grants have been awarded to organisations in the culture sector since the last report. Of £160m funding available across England, Leeds' creative individuals and organisations benefited from the Arts Council's Emergency Response Fund with a total £1.13m through 183 grants. This support was additional to the £1.4m awarded previously to Leeds Playhouse, Northern Ballet, Slung Low and The Tetley.
- 3.54 Following the government's announcement of £1.57bn support for the sector, ACE then launched the **Culture Recovery Fund** to distribute grants between £50,000 and £3m to cultural organisations adversely impacted by Covid-19 to cover funding shortfalls up to March 2021. On 12<sup>th</sup> October it was announced that in the first tranche of awards 26 Leeds businesses will benefit from funding

of £4.5m with further announcements (for awards of over £1m) to be announced later in October. The list of Leeds recipients so far is as follows:

Organisation Name	£ Award offered	Organisation Name	£ Award offered
Akito Limited	£64,645	Northern Ballet Limited	£744,798
Alchemy Leeds LTD	£229,605	Northern Guitars Cafe Bar Limited	£55,171
AYRE LTD	£80,000	Orchestras Live	£92,846
Brudenell Social	£220,429	Project Space Leeds	£123,000
East Street Arts	£245,000	Pyramid of Arts	£67,867
Futuresound Events Ltd	£219,368	Seven Arts Leeds CIC	£50,000
Harewood House Trust	£695,556	Slam Dunk Limited	£175,981
Interplay Theatre Trust	£53,838	Slung Low Limited	£98,255
Hyde Park Book Club	£91,000	Thackray Medical Museum	£373,281
Leeds Craft Centre	£50,000	The Domino Club	£100,000
Lord Whitney	£111,689	The Music Consortium Crewing Ltd	£50,000
Lumen Arts	£55,000	The Wardrobe	£174,787
MINT WAREHOUSE LTD	£166,738	Wharf Chambers Cooperative Club	£103,842
			<b>£4,492,696</b>

- 3.55 Separately a number of Leeds organisations have benefitted from funding from the **National Lottery Heritage Fund**. These include Leeds Heritage Theatres, Harewood House, Middleton Railway and Bramley Baths.
- 3.56 Despite these successes the **long-term future** of the sector continues to be fragile and remains hugely dependent on the return of audiences to venues at full capacity, particularly after March 2021. In line with the Government’s guidance for the performing arts, venues such as Leeds Town Hall and Leeds Playhouse are now open and managing to host a small number of performances with vastly reduced capacity. Freelancers in the sector remain particularly vulnerable with little work available.
- 3.57 There has been a boost for **regional indie TV and film production** companies, with the LEP announcing that it has fully allocated its Indie TV and Film Development Fund which launched in May. It is intended to help production companies across the region to get ahead of competitors and develop content. The fund has supported 22 projects across 13 businesses located in Leeds City Region and created significant opportunities for freelancers working in the region’s TV and film industry with production companies now producing content to pitch for commissions. An employment tool launched by Channel 4 has attracted 3,000 members since the summer. The Facebook group called TV Talent North aims to bring together independent production companies and freelancers. The tool offers up-to-the-minute job vacancies and has already hosted more than 300 jobs since its launch in June.
- 3.58 The **Universal Credit** (UC) claimant figures for September, published on 13<sup>th</sup> October, show the provisional count of people claiming Universal Credit (in and out-of-work) in Leeds was 69,490. This is an increase of 1,740 on the previous

month and an increase of 96% since March. Of these claimants, 42,782 were not in employment in August, an increase of 361 on the previous month and an increase of 81% since March. All wards in Leeds have seen an increase in unemployment. The most affected wards are Gipton and Harehills with almost 6,000 UC claimants in September and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill with almost 5,000.

- 3.59 The number of **job vacancies** has risen from a significant fall between February and May reflecting the partial re-opening of the economy, but remains at 50% of the pre-crisis level. Nationally the number of HR1 forms submitted by employers notifying of redundancies has risen to five times the 32,000 monthly average reported between 2008 and 2020. Although more than half of those furloughed returned to work by mid-August, latest UK estimates suggest that take-up of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was around 3 million, highlighting that while there are significant numbers returning to work, there continues to be a very real risk of a large rise in unemployment as the scheme ends in October which could see further increases in redundancies and a second wave of unemployment in Leeds.
- 3.60 From April to September, the Council supported 1,788 people into work including 127 Apprenticeship across all sectors with the largest numbers in health and care, food retail, logistics, distribution and transport. Over 130 new businesses were supported to recruit new staff and to provide support for staff facing redundancy. Recruitment continues in the health and care sector as it gears up to deal with winter pressures, and in digital roles across all sectors.
- 3.61 The Council's **Employment and Skills** Leeds website, launched in July 2020, is proving effective in signposting individuals to support with over 6,704 visitors and 33,000 views by the 30th September. The site provides information on vacancies and services offered by the Employment Hub, Learning Hub and Apprenticeship Hub in a single place. Over 1,500 individuals are on tailored employment support programmes and 2,831 adults enrolled on 169 online skills courses. However, positive outcomes have generally fallen by at least 25% reflecting the challenging labour market.
- 3.62 From April to September, 3,902 adults completed online **skills** courses through the Council's Adult Learning Programme 2019/20. Delivery of the 2020/21 programme commenced in September with 16 commissioned providers delivering online courses with an increased focus on digital skills and work focused courses. 2,831 adults have enrolled on 169 courses to date. Preparatory work is underway to ensure the 2021/22 programme meets new and emerging community needs and aligns to the West Yorkshire Adult Education Budget Strategy for the management of the devolved funds subject to approval of the Mayoral Combined Authority arrangements.
- 3.63 In early September, a **virtual careers fair** was held on Facebook for the health and care sector with 18 employers participating including Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and Leeds and York Partnership Foundation NHS Trust along with a number of independent care providers, offering videos, live chat and Q&As throughout the day and providing information on job roles and opportunities for career progression. Over 940 local residents participated on the day and video views continue to build with positive feedback received. Work continues to

promote events and build online resources, promoted through Community Committee Facebook pages. Learning from these will inform the development of a series of online events to be held between 8th and 14th February during National Apprenticeship Week in place of the annual Leeds Apprenticeship Fair.

- 3.64 The recovery stimulus package announced through the Government's Plan for Jobs 2020 included measures to address youth unemployment, including the **Kickstart Scheme** which launched in September. The Employment and Skills service is now a registered Kickstart Gateway to support businesses to offer 6 month paid placements for young people currently on UC and at risk of long-term unemployment. 56 businesses have registered to date with an anticipated November start date.
- 3.65 Nationally **apprenticeship** starts reduced by 51% between 23rd March and 30th April compared with the same period in 2019. Starts for people under-19 years fell by 74% on the previous year, with starts for people aged 25 plus falling by 42%. In Leeds, there were 7,395 apprenticeship starts in 2018/19 academic year and in the first two terms of the 2019/20 academic year there were 2,749 Apprenticeship starts. The fall in numbers nationally is reflected locally with college closures and employers unable to start or continue apprenticeships as planned. An increase in apprentice redundancies is anticipated as the Furlough Scheme comes to an end as well as a potential continued fall in demand for apprentices from some sectors.
- 3.66 In September, as part of the Leeds Digital Festival, the Council hosted a live webinar on Apprenticeships in the digital sector with insights from BJSS and Estio Training, covering the recruitment process, available support including grants, working successfully with training providers and a Q&A session to encourage businesses to consider apprenticeships to recruit new talent and upskill their workforce.
- 3.67 The **Levy Match Leeds** was launched on 5th October to boost apprenticeship numbers. Supported by a web based platform, the service enables large levy payers to transfer up to 25% of uncommitted funds to small and medium enterprises wishing to support an apprenticeship. The online brokerage service aims to make this as simple as possible to ensure maximum levy investment is retained and invested locally to create more apprenticeship opportunities. The fund stands at £500,000 with the ambition to grow to £1m before the end of the year to assist in the creation of over 200 new apprenticeships. This can also be aligned with the new payment to employers announced by government of £2,000 for each new apprentice hired aged under 25 or £1,500 for each new apprentice hired aged 25 and over, until 31<sup>st</sup> January.
- 3.68 The Leeds Employment and Skills Task Group brings together public and private sector partners to facilitate the sharing of information; to align and accelerate current and planned programmes and activities; co-design new measures to meet changing labour market needs; and to maximise opportunities to support recovery and longer term growth. Partners include key sector employers, Further and Higher Education, Dept. for Work and Pensions and Inclusive Growth Ambassadors. As the longer term impacts of the crisis are not yet fully understood, the Group has adopted a two stage process. Stage 1 is focused on providing targeted support to reconnect those without work to job opportunities

and/or training by maximising the benefits of the stimulus for recovery at the local level. Priorities have agreed along with a framework for action. Stage 2 will take account of trends towards longer working lives, the accelerated rate of automation and digitisation, harnessing new opportunities and the changing policy environment and align to the City's approach to recovery from the Covid-19 crisis to build a more resilient economy and reflect the changing demand for labour and skills.

### 3.69 **Citizens and Communities**

3.70 On 20 September the Government announced a new **Isolation Support Payment** for people on low incomes who can't work because they have tested positive or have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, further to a new legal duty to self-isolate introduced from 28 September. The payment scheme was introduced in response to feedback from local authorities and directors of public health that financial constraints were likely to limit the ability of some people to self-isolate. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care wrote to local authorities to ask for their support in implementing the scheme by establishing processes to receive applications and make payments by 12 October. The scheme is anticipated to be in place until 31 January 2021. The scheme went live on 12 October as scheduled on a new [Self-Isolation Support](#) webpage on the Council's website. The scheme provides a lump support payment of £500 to eligible individuals to cover their self-isolation period. Eligible individuals are those who are employed or self-employed, unable to work from home and will lose income as a result of being asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace since 28 September, and receive Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income based Employment and Support Allowance, income based Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit or Pension Credit. Up to 10am on 15 October, 250 applications have been received; 150 of these were received on the first day that the scheme went live.

3.71 Environmental Health, West Yorkshire Police and Entertainment Licensing are working collaboratively to identify businesses and areas in need of priority attention. Presently teams are focussing on the LS1, LS3 and LS6 postcode areas, visiting **licensed and retail premises** to educate and ensure that Covid-19 secure measures are in place and practiced. This approach is now being rolled out to other areas of the City using the most up to date public health data to target our resources. In addition, intelligence is being gathered from daily data logs to target individual businesses who are reportedly not adhering to regulations and restrictions. Fines and fixed penalty notices may now be issued for a range of offences, from organised mass gatherings to failing to observe the groups of 6 ruling. Depending on the severity of an offence, the 4E's (Engage, Educate, Encourage, Enforce) will be applied. Guidance on compliance with the regulations (prior to the three-tier system being introduced) was sent to 2,100 licensed and food businesses across Leeds.

3.72 The Environmental Health Team are working closely with our universities and further education colleges to assess and advise on their Covid-19 Management Plans. In addition the team are working in partnership with Leeds Community Healthcare NHS Trust Infection Prevention Control Team to visit businesses to prevent and control workplace outbreaks and transmission.

- 3.73 In late September West Yorkshire Police issued a £10,000 fine to a landowner for breaching Covid-19 regulations by allowing a wedding to take place in New Farnley, with reports of 100-300 people present. The breach and fine was publicised to act as a deterrent to others.
- 3.74 Reported **domestic violence and abuse** incidents have significantly increased during the summer months and there continues to be concern that further lockdown restrictions may have an additional impact on these numbers. The Safer Leeds Executive has agreed the shadow arrangements for the new statutory Domestic Violence and Abuse Local Partnership Board, as outlined in the Domestic Abuse Bill 2020. The inaugural meeting will take place in early October to support the development of a local response to the new duties in the Bill.
- 3.75 As of 7th October, 80 individuals were in **emergency accommodation** (of which 55 in commercial hotels), a considerable reduction from around 240 at the peak of the pandemic. An outbreak plan has been prepared for the population currently in emergency accommodation and for those who are still presenting on street.
- 3.76 Three hotels have been commissioned in Leeds to provide accommodation for **Asylum Seekers** and community tensions are being monitored and any issues responded to by WYP and the Council.
- 3.77 In the **third sector**, recent activity has focussed on working with Voluntary Community and Faith Sector organisations that support young people to tailor engagement and communications to under 30's in response to evidence that rates of transmission are highest amongst young adults.
- 3.78 The **coronavirus helpline** that was established at the start of lockdown is now "ported" automatically to the Local Welfare Support Service (LWSS) and this will continue until the end of November, to then be replaced by a message asking callers to redial the LWSS phone number. Additional Customer Services Officers are being trained in order to support LWSS if needed should demand increase in the event of further restrictions. Preparations are underway to ramp up support to vulnerable people as infection rates rise through the helpline and volunteer hubs, learning from the excellent work done in the first wave.
- 3.79 Through September, targeted communications have been sent to people in the **shielding group** to ensure that they are aware of increasing transmission rates and to advise them to follow the guidelines closely. Work is underway to review how shielding support was delivered both nationally and locally in the first wave and to ensure that we have a more tailored, person-centred offer in place if advice to shield at home is re-issued.
- 3.80 Since the week beginning 5<sup>th</sup> October all **playgrounds and outdoor gyms** have now reopened following a sanitisation programme that is now in place.
- 3.81 In the first few weeks of term, many **schools and colleges** have received notification of positive Covid-19 cases from staff and pupils and this has, in some settings but not all, necessitated the closure of certain year groups or the disbanding of bubbles. This is impacting on the continuity of delivery of the **curriculum**. Some headteachers are reporting that their focus is having to be on

Covid-19 management rather than school improvement. Children and Families officers have produced a comprehensive training package to support school improvement and the delivery of the curriculum.

- 3.82 As at 11.50am on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 124 bubbles or year groups have been closed and 6,174 pupils and 664 education staff are self-isolating. No schools are fully closed. 30 secondary schools have live cases, of which 15 have more than 10 cases; of these 5 schools have 20 cases or more, and of these 2 have more than 30 cases. 76 primary schools have live cases, of which 54 have more than one case; of these 15 schools have more than 5 cases, and of these 4 have more than 10 cases. Health Protection Teams continue to monitor the positive cases across educational settings and advice and support is provided to schools where needed.
- 3.83 **Attendance** for all pupils in Leeds based on school data submission to the Department for Education was 87% and early indications suggest that this is broadly in line with England state-funded schools.
- 3.84 As is being reported by other local authorities in Yorkshire and Humber, Leeds has witnessed an increase in the number of new notifications from parents choosing to **electively home educate (EHE)** their child. Up to Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September the EHE team had received 78 notifications from parents choosing to home educate in comparison to 32 in the same period last year. Further notifications are being received and it is anticipated that numbers of EHE will continue to rise.
- 3.85 Initially, over 1400 children were required to **shield** due to being 'extremely clinically vulnerable'. This has since reduced by 368. The local authority is supporting schools and colleges in making the decision about the safest and most appropriate option for each student in line with medical advice and guidance. This could, for example, be a return to school or college in a safe 'bubble' following an individual risk assessment or remaining at home (with arrangements for home education).
- 3.86 Children and Families have requested that schools ensure **risk assessments** are easily accessible on school and college websites and have reminded school leaders that individual risk assessments are to be completed before vulnerable staff return to work. The Leeds Schools Health and Safety team produced template risk assessment documents for schools and colleges to utilise and have supported them through the publication of regular Health and safety updates, telephone support and on-site visits.
- 3.87 In terms of **remote learning** readiness, the Government guidance states that schools need to provide high-quality online and offline resources that are linked to the school's curriculum expectations and that there should be a strong contingency plan in place for remote education provision by the end of September. Children and Families colleagues have established a Remote Learning Task Group with members from the Learning Improvement Team and representatives from schools. The remit of the group is to ensure all schools are aware of the high expectations in the Government guidance; to clarify advice about the live streaming of lessons; to ensure all schools have an on-line learning

platform and to support them in this; and to quality assure the remote learning provision available, with a view to disseminating good practice.

- 3.88 The Education Secretary has confirmed that most A-level and GCSE **exams** in England will be delayed by three weeks next year due to the pandemic.
- 3.89 Support for **vulnerable learners** continues as teams are developing the 'Implementing Wellbeing for Education Return' package of resources from the Department for Education which seeks to better equip schools and colleges to promote children and young people's wellbeing, resilience, and recovery in response to Covid-19. As well as strengthening and building wellbeing and resilience, this aims to prevent the onset of mental health problems and ensure those with pre-existing or emerging difficulties access the right support.
- 3.90 **Major issues** include headteachers and staff already feeling exhausted and under a great deal of pressure. This is principally as a result of the extra duties they undertake to implement and maintain Covid-secure learning environments and the need to provide work for pupils who are self-isolating. The issues affecting the national test and trace programme are impacting significantly on schools. National issues in testing capacity has caused problems for schools in delaying the return of staff and pupils who test negative but have to self-isolate while awaiting test results. A work-around arrangement has been implemented to provide testing for key workers in education and their immediate families who are unable to access testing through the national portal.
- 3.91 **Secondary school improvement advisers** are currently contacting all heads of LA maintained secondary schools in September to gain an overview of the trends evident in this year's exam results and to discuss the school's recovery curriculum. This offer has also been widened to include academy principals. **Primary school advisers** are in contact with Primary School Learning Alliances to gain an understanding of priorities for curriculum and school development. 'Families of Schools' meetings are currently taking place.
- 3.92 **Educational Psychologist** colleagues are developing the 'Implementing Wellbeing for Education Return' package of resources from the DFE, so this can be delivered as training into schools and colleges reflecting local needs and resources and embedding within Leeds systems and practice.
- 3.93 **Bronze group** meetings (with SILC, Primary and Secondary colleagues) continue to take place regularly, as well as Zoom meetings between school leaders, elected members and LA Officers. A twice weekly Covid-19 related **bulletin** is sent to all settings from the DCS and the Schools Health and Safety team continue to provide advice/guidance to settings through 1-1 contact, meetings and a weekly H&S bulletin.
- 3.94 The Children and Families **social work** service has continued at full capacity throughout the Covid-19 period. Whilst practitioners have largely been home based, they have continued to respond to the needs of their communities, including undertaking home visits. Allocations panel (to allocated targeted services) is taking place twice a week to ensure a responsive approach to meeting the needs of vulnerable children and families. The Signpost, MST, Futures, RES and Family Action services continue to support families using a

combination of face to face and virtual strategies. More information can be found at section 5.7 of the Response & Recovery Plan (Annex B).

### 3.95 **Organisational impact**

- 3.96 The Silver Organisational Impact group has increased the frequency of meetings to ensure a dynamic response to the key issues emerging the progression of the pandemic and national policy developments. On 22<sup>nd</sup> September Government advice changed, with people who are able to **work from home** advised to do so. Communications to managers following this announcement asked that staff who can undertake their roles from home be supported to work from home, unless they are unable to do so effectively. A broad definition of 'working effectively' has been adopted in order to support those staff who may be struggling with their mental health, wellbeing or feelings of isolation as a result of remote working.
- 3.97 Following the national pause to the advice to shield from 1<sup>st</sup> August, reviews of **personal risk assessments** are being undertaken with staff who are clinically vulnerable to Covid-19 or were previously shielding. Staff absences due to Covid-19 or Covid-related symptoms, or due to shielding or self-isolating have seen a modest increase; but the significant increase in transmission across the city has not been reflected in the workforce to date. The impact on the workforce continues to be closely monitored on a daily basis.
- 3.98 Following the return to the advice to work from home there has been a marked decrease in demand for **office space bookings**, particularly in the city centre. As a result of extensive work over the summer to make offices Covid-secure and implement a booking system, there is plenty of capacity for colleagues who need to use office spaces. In response to feedback from the staff working from home survey that colleagues would value spaces to work safely with colleagues, all city centre-based services have now been allocated a Covid-secure 'home space' within Merrion House or the Civic Hall. Collaboration spaces have been created to allow Covid-secure face-to-face working and meetings. These have been used, although plans to make available further collaboration spaces are currently on hold. The work space and collaboration space **booking app** continues to be developed and now covers ten sites.
- 3.99 Over 11,000 items of **equipment** have been provided to support staff working from home, with a new spike in demand seen following the return to advice to work from home where possible. The Microsoft Teams pilot continues reducing pressure on Skype services and supporting better collaboration through video meetings. This is ahead of a wider Council move to Teams and other Microsoft 365 products which will take place in the coming months.
- 3.100 A hybrid IT solution is in the process of being developed for **Councillors**, to allow participants to either join meetings remotely or via Committee Room 6/7 in Merrion House. Testing of Hybrid Committee meetings has been scaled back due to Government advice to work from home, however the development of protocols are being progressed.
- 3.101 **Community Committees** will commence formal remote meetings in the next cycle of meetings from late October or early November, and all other committees

are operating a routine meeting timetable. Member surgeries remain remote, with guidance available to Members.

3.102 In consultation with trade unions, much of the planned **service resumption** has now been completed, with services operating in Covid-secure ways. Risk assessments for services that have resumed activity are currently in the process of being reviewed and updated.

3.103 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. There continues to be considerable pressure on teams in the council to progress Covid-19 work, alongside the major savings programme and delivering business as usual work.

### 3.104 **Media and communications**

3.105 Communications work continues to use all available methods, including the weekly GovDelivery bulletin to 114,500 residents, along with digital, social and marketing campaigns, to provide information on changes to council services, how to access support, and health messaging, including the **Hands Face Space** message to promote hand hygiene, the wearing of face coverings and social distancing. We continue to support local health partners to share the message that **Your NHS is Here For You** to encourage patients to access health services for critical care and life-threatening illness. We are supporting members with continued member updates, frequently asked questions, and by updating the website in line with government guidance and with our approach to "user centred" design. We are also keeping partners, staff, and trade unions updated with key developments as we look to engage everyone in the communications challenge to enable **more people to do more of the right thing, more of the time, because they choose to.**

3.106 In addition to these broad messages, the latest **data and intelligence** from public health sources, The Health Protection Board, Outbreak Control Board and others is being used to target communications towards the demographic groups and geographical areas where data suggests the largest increase in cases. This includes door-knocking and door drop letters in local areas, social media advertising, media releases, partner and stakeholder engagement and engagement with community leaders. Particularly since the return of university students, **targeted** materials and messages have been directed to young people across the city, including relevant social media advertising, partner and stakeholder engagement and use of influencers. The Communications teams in the Council and the city's **universities** are working together to coordinate key messages. A live digital campaign appealing to younger people to help keep infections down received 7,814 engagements, reaching 144,174 people and gaining 401,812 impressions, and was accompanied by a billboard poster in Hyde Park.

3.107 Media work activity has intensified considerably and September saw the largest volume of **media enquiries** since the pandemic began, more than double those received in August and with just over 60% attributable to Covid-19. With new government restrictions in Leeds and the return to schools and universities this is

expected to remain high. Proactive **press releases** also 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. Considerable additional attention has been paid to 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. A particular focus has been to support the bar and restaurant trade with information about with their new responsibilities around the Rule of Six and the 10pm curfew. Direct communications with young people continued throughout the return to schools and universities and with statistics indicating continued high rates of transmission amongst young adults. This work is being joined up across partner organisations in education, health, police, the third sector and other city sectors.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 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. 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, press releases and press conferences, 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 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, lifestyle changes and reduced traffic flows as a result of the pandemic have 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. More detail is provided in the Infrastructure & Supplies section of this report. A separate item on the Executive Board agenda provides an update on the city's air quality and the review with central Government on the Leeds Clean Air Zone.

## **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. 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 Public Health, Environmental Health, Infection Prevention Control, the voluntary sector, communications, etc. Since the last report to Executive Board, the Council has received additional Government funding for Infection Control and is due to receive £485,826 to support enforcement activity in relation to new Covid-19 regulations. On 12<sup>th</sup> October an additional £1 billion was announced for local authorities; further information and allocations are awaited. 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 challenges presented by Covid-19 as we enter a new period of the pandemic, with a national return to restrictions on people and businesses, and the need to develop ways to live with the virus in the medium term to allow elements of normal life to continue. There is considerable concern about the impact of ongoing restrictions on people's health and wellbeing, financial security, and the local economy, which has been highlighted to Government alongside other local authorities. Local authorities face significant pressure over the coming months as increased rates of transmission of Covid-19 combine with financial pressure, the need to deliver services safely and in line with the latest guidance, and other concurrent pressures as we enter winter and approach the end of the EU exit transition period. Council officers and services along with all our partners continue to work hard to rapidly respond to changing circumstances, including interpreting and implementing new guidance and regulations. In line with our city ambitions, key priorities in responding to the next stage of the pandemic will be to keep residents safe, particularly the most vulnerable, while working to safeguard the broader health and wellbeing of the city and continue to support the local economy as far as possible.

## **12. Recommendations**

Executive Board is requested to:

- Note the updated context, progress and issues as we move into a period of increased national government restrictions to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, which is anticipated to last for at least six months, combined with the outcome of discussions about the new Covid-19 Alert system which could bring further government restrictions.
- Note the emerging issues for consideration during the next phase of response and recovery including winter pressures on the health and care system, flood risk and extreme weather, local government finance and capacity concerns and EU Exit.
- Recognise the need for a city-wide approach to controlling transmission, given high rates of prevalence across all the city's wards, plus enhanced actions and engagement in those areas with the highest rates.
- Note the new responsibilities of local authorities to implement self-isolation support payments and new powers of the police to enforce Covid-19 regulations.
- Use this paper as context for the more detailed financial health monitoring paper on the financial implications of coronavirus, and for the economic recovery framework paper that is also on the Executive Board agenda.

## **13. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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) Dashboard- 5 October 2020

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