

Report No.
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London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: **EXECUTIVE**

Date: **19 May**

Decision Type: Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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Chief Officer: Ade Adetosoye OBE, Chief Executive

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

This report provides the Executive with an update on the London Borough of Bromley's response to the coronavirus pandemic. It provides a summary of the current situation in relation to COVID-19 cases in the borough, as well as our local and pan-London resilience structure.

It provides an overview of the Council-wide response to the pandemic, as well as the specific responses for each service area, and our initial plans for social and economic recovery. It also provides an overview of the Council's current financial position.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The Executive is recommended to:

- i) Note the report and the Council's overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic, working together with our residents, local businesses, partner organisations, the voluntary and community sector, to support the most vulnerable in our borough safely during this crisis.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: As set out in the report, the Council seeks to keep vulnerable adults and children safe from harm during the COVID-19 crisis, and will continue to support these residents through the roll-out of the Council's overarching recovery plan.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People Excellent Council Quality Environment Safe Bromley Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres Healthy Bromley Regeneration
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: The financial impact is not known at this stage and the government have provided part funding towards the additional net costs
 2. Ongoing costs: The impact of lockdown and the period of transition will have an impact on the costs in the current year and the 'new normal' may impact on future year costs
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Council-wide
 4. Total current budget for this head: Government funding to meet net additional service costs and income losses totalling £16.6m have been provided to date.
 5. Source of funding: Government have partly funded net costs of impact of COVID-19
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Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 1400
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Non-Statutory - Government Guidance:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: The report notes that the Council will continue to take appropriate procurement action in line with the Contract Procedure Rules and the Executive decision of 1 May 2020
 1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 This report provides details of the current number of COVID-19 cases in Bromley, and the pan-London and local resilience structure to tackle the COVID-19 crisis. The report goes on to provide an overview of the Council's response, beginning with the Council's Operation Shielding programme and volunteer mobilisation response, as well as key activities across each directorate. The report also includes an overview of the Council's current financial position and the initial local recovery planning approach.

3.2 LOCAL CONTEXT IN BROMLEY

COVID-19 cases in Bromley

3.2.1 In Bromley, there were 1,092 people confirmed as having the infection by 4 May, but this number is likely to be an underestimate. As of 24 April, an estimated 229 people have lost their lives from COVID-19 related deaths registered in Bromley. The total number of confirmed positive cases in Bromley has been in the top quartile of London boroughs with a rate equivalent to 329.8 cases per 100,000 resident population, which is higher than both the London and England median rates of 253.0 and 213.4 per 100,000 population respectively.

3.2.2 As of 24 April, the official numbers of deaths in care homes reported due to COVID-19 is 41. Local data supplied by care homes suggest this figure could be higher, although this needs to be validated through death certification.

3.3 RESILIENCE: LOCAL AND PAN-LONDON CONTEXT

Local response in Bromley

3.3.1 The local response in Bromley to COVID-19 has been mobilised through the hard work and commitment of elected members, residents, local businesses, partner organisations, local voluntary and community groups and officers across the Council, who have come together to support the most vulnerable and at risk people in our communities during these unprecedented times.

3.3.2 At a Council level, officers sought to improve their resilience through review and preparation of our business continuity arrangements. The Business Continuity plans for all service areas across the local authority were revised and updated over the last 6 months. This process saw each service area prepare for how it would manage during the loss of IT provision, loss of key staff, loss of accommodation and loss of key suppliers. All service areas were rated in terms of how quickly the service would need to be re-instated if the local authority experienced a serious disruption to service provision.

3.3.3 Plans were produced to enable the Chief Executive and his Directors to identify and re-establish key areas of service during a disruption. The work undertaken in this area by all concerned ensured a level of preparedness that enabled the local authority to quickly and confidently respond to the crisis as it unfolded. The Chief Executive in turn discussed and agreed the business continuity plan with the Leader of the Council.

3.3.4 In Bromley, the Council's governance arrangements for the COVID-19 strategic response programme have been as follows:

- The Leader of the Council is the strategic sponsor and lead for the Council's response
- The Chief Executive maintains operational leadership on a daily basis
- Executive Portfolio Holder for Care and Health maintains leadership at the political level with the Deputy Leader and the Executive acting as critical friends.

3.3.5 The weekly COVID-19 strategic group is chaired by the Chief Executive and is attended by all Directors, as well as a number of key senior officers. The purpose of this group is to set the strategic response to the crisis, to ensure continued service provision in all key areas across the Council and to oversee the delivery of the communications plan for members, staff and residents.

3.3.6 Key workstreams that report into the COVID-19 strategic group are as follows:

- **Operation Shielding and Volunteer Mobilisation:** led strategically by Kim Carey, Director of Adult Services and operationally by Sarah Foster, Assistant Director, Performance Management and Business Support with a remit to provide updates on the Council's operation to support medically vulnerable residents in the borough and the mobilisation of local volunteers to support both shielding residents and non-shielding vulnerable people.
- **Hospital discharge and demand management modelling:** led by Kim Carey, Director of Adult Services and Naheed Chaudhry, Assistant Director, Strategy, Performance and Corporate Transformation, with a remit to ensure the safe and timely discharge of residents into the appropriate care setting or to return home.
- **Business continuity and resilience:** led by David Tait, Emergency Planning and Corporate Resilience Lead
- **Procurement:** led by Laurence Downes, Assistant Director, Governance and Contracts
- **Finance and business support:** led by Pete Turner, Director of Finance and Claudine Douglas-Brown, Assistant Director for Exchequer Services
- **HR and Customer Services:** led by Charles Obazuaye, Director of HR and Customer Services
- **Facilities management/accommodation:** led by Andrew Champion, Facilities & Support Client Services Manager
- **IT and remote working:** led by Vinit Shukle, Assistant Director of IT Services
- **Governance:** led by Mark Bowen, Director of Corporate Services
- **Internal and external communications:** led by Susie Clark, Communications Executive and Andrew Rogers, Communications Executive

3.3.7 The COVID-19 strategic group has a detailed work programme and reviews a number of documents as below:

- **Decision log:** A decision log is maintained by the COVID-19 strategic group to keep a clear record of all high-level decisions made across each workstream during the COVID-19 crisis in order to inform recovery planning and preparation for any future surges.
- **Corporate risk assessment:** a corporate risk assessment was completed by David Tait, Emergency Planning and Corporate Resilience Lead, to determine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on service delivery. This risk is captured on the Council's corporate risk register and mitigating actions have been identified. Each department provides regular situation reports on service capacity to inform the management of this corporate risk.

3.3.8 A COVID-19 tactical group is chaired by Nada Lemic, the Director of Public Health, and meets three times a week. The tactical group supports the strategic group with infection control advice and communication messaging. The group also works with partners from Public Health England, Bromley CCG and local care homes in managing our joint response to the pandemic within the Borough.

- 3.3.9 The Council engages with senior leaders across health, police, education, fire and rescue services and the wider voluntary and community sector through weekly Borough Partnership Group resilience meetings chaired by the Chief Executive. This provides an opportunity for information sharing, mutual support, advice and guidance, as well as ensuring a well-coordinated local response.
- 3.3.10 The Chief Executive has a weekly call with the Chief Superintendent for Bromley, Croydon and Sutton to liaise specifically on police-related issues.
- 3.3.11 The Leader is the strategic sponsor (with input from the Chief Executive) and has weekly meetings with the Borough's local MPs to provide key updates on the Council's response and coordinate preparation for the borough's longer term recovery planning.

1. London resilience arrangements

- 3.3.12 At the pan-London level, London Resilience established a Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) chaired by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive of City of London, John Barradell. The SCG is a multi-agency group comprising of Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, London Ambulance Service, London Local Authorities, GLA, City of London Police, Public Health England, Transport for London, NHS England and the Military. The SCG receives information daily from all agencies and reports up to central Government. Coordination between the Council and the SCG comes through the London Local Authority Coordination Centre to whom the Council submit daily situation reports.
- 3.3.13 London Local Authorities are represented at the SCG by the London Local Authority Strategic Co-ordinator (LASC). This role has been performed by Martin Esson, Chief Executive for Waltham Forest. The LASC role maintains an overview of service provision across all 33 local authorities, with specific workstreams led by Chief Executives looking at key issues such as adult social care, Operation Shielding, PPE and mortality management. LASC is also supported by a number of professional networks comprising of groups of local authority Directors. Local authorities have also been working in clusters to provide each other with mutual support and staffing if required.
- 3.3.14 A daily situation reporting regime was established on 18 March which saw all local authorities reporting on service provision across a number of critical services. These reports were analysed by professional networks to better understand the issues local authorities were experiencing due to the pandemic. This information was fed into SCG by the LASC and the issues identified were managed through the specific work streams.
- 3.3.15 The SCG, LASC and Chief Executives across London are now preparing plans for the easing of lockdown and a move to the recovery phase.

Communications strategy

- 3.3.16 The Council has implemented a robust internal and external communications and engagement strategy to ensure that key internal and external stakeholders are engaged and informed on our local response to COVID-19.
- 3.3.17 Internal communications activities have included:
- Online COVID-19 portal established on the intranet containing all staff updates for easy reference
 - Regular all staff emails during the week – sent from the Chief Executive to keep staff informed

- Comprehensive and regular updates – highlighting advice on remote working, rollout of training, mental health and wellbeing advice and support for staff, how managers can support their teams and staff, communication on infection control from Public Health
- Long-term focus of internal communications – ensuring that staff feel informed and engaged on the development of the Council’s response, have easy access to information
- COVID-19 updates included in the monthly Transforming Bromley Newsletter.
- Daily internal email briefings to Members, which have supported Members to inform residents
- Staff survey on COVID-19

3.3.18 External communications activities have included:

- COVID-19 portal¹ established on the website
- Regular service updates on service pages linked to the COVID-19 page for easy reference
- Volunteer sign up button and form established on website
- Assistance sign up button and form established on website
- Business support button and form established on website
- News releases as required to cover volunteering, service, service updates and other developments.
- Business e-bulletin
- Social media – Twitter and Facebook to reflect key messages
- E-newsletter – Update – sent to 70,000 plus residents with the ability to subscribe, which will be supplemented by a paper newsletter to ensure all residents have received key updates
- Email and SMS messages to vulnerable Shielding residents to make sure they are getting the help they need
- Weekly briefings to the borough’s local MPs
- Volunteer newsletter

3.4 COVID-19 ASSISTANCE AND VOLUNTEERING: OPERATION SHIELDING, VOLUNTEER MOBILISATION, VOLUNTEERING HUB, AND ASSISTANCE TO NON-SHIELDING RESIDENTS

- 3.4.1 The Council has established a temporary volunteering and assistance programme to support vulnerable residents in Bromley and ensure they remain healthy and feel safe during the COVID-19 crisis.
- 3.4.2 This programme is led strategically by Kim Carey, Director, Adult Social Care, with Sarah Foster, Assistant Director, Performance Management and Business Support, seconded as programme lead. There are currently over 80 posts within this temporary staff structure, comprised of LBB staff from each directorate. The team communicates daily and holds weekly programme board meetings.
- 3.4.3 A programme board Sharepoint site has been established for the retention of volunteer and assistance project management information, with controlled access to personal information.
- 3.4.4 A communications plan supports the Council’s volunteering and assistance programme through regular website updates, social media, letters and newsletters to registered

¹ www.bromley.gov.uk/covid-19

volunteers, public messages from the Leader and the Mayor's office, and news releases. The Council is also rolling out feedback forms to improve its support to both volunteers and residents receiving assistance from the Council.

Operation Shielding

- 3.4.5 'Operation Shielding'² is the Government's response to providing assistance to the most medically vulnerable residents in the borough to protect them from COVID-19.
- 3.4.6 The shielding list is based on NHS records or those that have self-referred online or over the telephone. Criteria for registration includes patients that have had organ transplants, cancer patients, severe respiratory conditions, rare diseases increasing infection risk, those receiving immunosuppression therapy or pregnant women with heart conditions. Details of how to register for urgent assistance have been provided to all known medically vulnerable residents in a Government letter.
- 3.4.7 The Government list has been shared with the LBB Operation Shielding team and indicates those patients that have an urgent need for assistance with food or medicines. The Government coordinates deliveries directly to those households, which commenced for Bromley residents on Saturday 28 March. Food packages are delivered weekly, initially by Government catering providers and then by major supermarkets.
- 3.4.8 The Council's Operation Shielding team is led by Georgina Sanger, Head of Service, Children's and Education Strategy. The Operation Shielding team contacts residents on the list to ensure they have received their deliveries and cross-checks this list of residents with those supplied by GPs, community health services and against the list of residents who have registered through the LBB wider assistance form or helpline.
- 3.4.9 The updated list of shielding residents is downloaded daily with strict controls on the access to this personal information. As at 6 May, there are 5349 residents registered on the shielding list, with 1899 residents requesting additional assistance. Any residents calling the assistance helpline or registering on the LBB website are checked to see if they should be registering on the Government's shielding list.

Food supply

- 3.4.10 As a backup to the Government-delivered Operation Shielding food packages, an emergency distribution hub for ambient meals and dry goods has been established by the Council at Bromley Civic Centre. The Government provided an initial supply of food to this hub for any emergency cases where Shielding residents do not receive their government-issued supplies directly. Volunteers have been recruited to assist with distribution, from a ready-made team at Mytime who are currently available due to leisure centre closures. Full training for health and safety and insurance purposes has been provided. The initial government stocks have been supplemented by a small quantity of food provisions by the Council, but most shielding residents have received their government deliveries as requested.

Volunteer strategy and support

- 3.4.11 The volunteering strategy and support team is led by Ola Akinlade, Strategic Commissioner, Education, Care and Health. To coordinate the significant number of Bromley residents who have volunteered to provide support during the COVID-19 crisis,

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

a volunteer strategy has been established to ensure that Bromley's vulnerable people receive the support they need through a well- coordinated volunteer mobilisation programme that adheres to robust safeguarding processes.

3.4.12 The key anticipated outcomes are:

1. Bromley Council are better equipped to respond to major incidents requiring volunteer support.
2. Reduced feelings of social isolation and loneliness amongst residents.
3. Residents feel that Bromley Council is looking after them.

3.4.13 Volunteers register using an online form on the LBB website³. As at 6 May, 4312 volunteers were registered. 977 residents were matched with 883 volunteers. As volunteers apply, their details are logged onto a volunteer register, including details of their DBS status, access to a vehicle, availability, D.O.B and any specialist skills.

Volunteer Hub

3.4.14 The Volunteer Hub is hosted by Community Links Bromley⁴ (CLB) - the integrated Council for Voluntary Service and Volunteer Centre covering the London Borough of Bromley. CLB are matching volunteers to those that require assistance, through established voluntary and community sector organisations, using staff with specialist skills that have extensive experience in this area.

3.4.15 The use of CLB as the volunteer hub ensures that existing processes around safeguarding are followed, including enhanced DBS checks and interviews of clients and prospective volunteers, which is of paramount importance, given the vulnerable client group.

3.4.16 The LBB volunteering team and CLB communicate daily, with wider partnership stakeholder meetings in place to share updates and actions.

Assistance to non-shielding residents

3.4.17 The Assistance team is co-ordinated by Laura Brown, a Senior Care Manager from Adult Social Care. The team takes calls from residents and logs these requests for assistance. Requests may also be submitted via an online form for those with internet access.

3.4.18 The hotline is currently answered during weekdays on a shift basis, with hours of operation being constantly reviewed, based on call volumes. Staff operating the hotline will enter residents' details onto the online form and a system has been established to undertake a download of this data each morning. Urgent requests are escalated directly to the volunteer hub for immediate matching with a volunteer, or are passed to the appropriate Council service where applicable (for example the social care early intervention team where social care support may be needed).

3.4.19 Assistance from volunteers covers a range of tasks, including shopping, dog walking, prescription collections or maybe just a regular friendly phone call. The team does take calls from residents with other more complex requests that cannot be resolved through the volunteer hub, such as emergency food assistance for non-shielding vulnerable residents, mental health support, advice regarding finance or business rates and more

³ https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/1113/volunteering/1410/volunteers_and_requests_for_assistance

⁴ <https://www.communitylinksbromley.org.uk/>

recently, COVID-19 testing enquiries. The team are trained to ensure that the caller is directed to the most appropriate service, as required.

Sustainability of the volunteering support programme

3.4.20 As part of Bromley Council's commitment to tackling loneliness and social isolation in the borough, the Programme will be looking closely at how the commitment from volunteers can be extended beyond COVID-19 to ensure that vulnerable people in the borough can continue to be supported where they remain unable to get out into the community or where they do not have an established support network that they can call upon. This will be explored with community partners as part of the Council's ongoing Recovery Plan.

3.5 DIRECTORATE UPDATES

3.5.1 During the COVID-19 crisis, each Council department has sought to maintain the high standard of service delivery and support to our residents and service users.

3.5.2 Each Directorate reports daily into the Emergency Planning and Corporate Resilience lead to provide a 'situation report', providing a Council-wide overview of service capacity. This helps to inform our recovery planning arrangements.

3.6 PEOPLE SERVICES

3.6.1 The People Directorate works directly with some of the most vulnerable children and adults in the borough, ensuring that all residents in the borough are kept safe from harm, able to achieve, thrive and fulfil their potential. During the COVID-19 crisis, we remain committed to supporting these residents, their carers and families.

3.7 PUBLIC HEALTH

3.7.1 Both the Director of Public Health and the Health Protection Lead are participating in strategic and operational groups providing clinical advice and expertise as required. The Director of Public Health chairs the group leading the council's response to the infectious disease emergency via the COVID-19 Tactical Group (the LBB Silver Response Group). The Director of Public Health is also the key link with Public Health England, NHSE and the Department of Health and Social Care since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic.

3.7.2 Health protection advice and relevant support in line with national and clinical guidelines are provided to Local Authority teams, key partners and community care providers including care homes.

3.7.3 There are three main areas of clinical/infection prevention support:

- Infection prevention advice, including support for individual cases, advice on PPE and testing
- Support to discharge of complex patients to care homes and infection prevention advice to homes.
- Communication and support to LBB managers and staff – examples including advising LBB staff unable to work from home, and guidance on how to obtain PPE urgently and appropriate PPE

3.7.4 A COVID-19 questions mailbox has been set up to respond to questions from professionals and residents. All clinical staff (both doctors and nurses) are being deployed to field the questions and to support the Health Protection Lead. This team supports the Council and our partners with public health advice about infection prevention and management seven days a week. This helps to minimise any confusion and uncertainty

amongst staff, partners and service providers about how to protect themselves and their clients. The Public Health team are also proactively contacting care homes and residential homes to ensure they feel supported.

- 3.7.5 A summary of the number and categories of queries that are coming into the COVID-19 questions mailbox show that since setting up the mailbox it has received 429 new lines of enquiry (175 in March and 254 in April up to 20th April). The most common enquiries relate to the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), care homes and discharges from hospital but it also receives enquiries from the CCG, the Princess Royal University Hospital, schools, pre-schools, domiciliary carers and Bromley residents.

3.8 ADULT SERVICES

- 3.8.1 Adult services have held strategic COVID-19 calls three times a week since 20 March. Heads of Service have put in place directions for staff and extraordinary communication forums to support colleagues and pass on relevant information about changing processes and guidance. The recently established Adult Services Practice Advisory Group, chaired by the Principal Social Worker, is currently meeting weekly for 30 minutes to maintain dialogue with representatives of frontline staff across the Directorate.
- 3.8.2 The Directorate's social care teams have been reorganised in order to respond to COVID-19. The Coronavirus Act 2020 included Care Act Easement guidance, which recognises that adult social care and the care provider market are facing unprecedented pressure and supports local authorities to streamline assessment arrangements and prioritise care. These have not been implemented in Bromley where the existing higher standards have been retained throughout the current crisis.
- 3.8.3 Safeguarding adults remains a priority for adult services. All safeguarding referrals are being responded to, however face-to-face visits are minimised unless they are essential. The volume of referrals remains steady with a similar number of referrals reported in April 2020 to those received in April 2019.
- 3.8.4 The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard requirements remain in force during COVID-19. As far as possible, direct visits are avoided and the work is undertaken remotely. The demand remains steady and the response from the service remains effective. The DoLS team are working in line with updated guidance published on 9 April.
- 3.8.5 All staff, wherever their role allows, are working remotely. Following some initial challenges most staff are now able to work effectively from home.
- 3.8.6 LBB provider services in the form of Carelink, Reablement and Shared Lives remain operational and local managers have been able to maintain these services in very challenging circumstances.
- 3.8.7 A range of provider support arrangements have been put in place since mid-March. Providers have a dedicated support e-mail address; received access to provider forums held remotely and received communications about how to request support to maintain business viability and in relation to contract price uplifts. Colleagues in the Safeguarding and Quality team have been re-deployed to play a key role in communicating with and gathering data that records the capacity in and challenges faced by local care providers.
- 3.8.8 The Council has started paying providers a gross fee pending the conclusion of the COVID-19 crisis. Bromley conducts a financial assessment in the usual way and then

invoices the clients/ family directly for their package. This supports providers with cash flow and removes the administrative burden of collecting client contributions which is now undertaken by the Council. Providers have also been awarded an additional temporary 5% uplift funded by a Government grant for the period May to June in recognition of additional costs in support of COVID-19.

- 3.8.9 On 19 March 2020, the Government published new Hospital Discharge Service requirements for the COVID-19 period. The guidance sets out requirements for the NHS and Local Authorities and introduced a standardised discharge model. The discharge to assess model uses four clear pathways for discharging patients;
- Pathway 0: home with no support (impacting local voluntary sector response)
 - Pathway 1: home with support (adult social care/ health)
 - Pathway 2: community bed
 - Pathway 3: care home or nursing home
- 3.8.10 Bromley Adult Social Care has been working closely with NHS colleagues, acute, community (BHC) and the CCG to implement the new requirements. A Bromley 'single point of access' (SPA) hosted by Bromley Healthcare acts as a single referral route to receive all health and social care referrals for residents leaving hospital. This service is enabled by social workers and occupational therapists acting together as key partners in the service.
- 3.8.11 Colleagues from Adult Social Care were asked early on in the pandemic to join a Webinar hosted by SCIE (The Social Care Institute for Excellence) in which we shared our early learning in Bromley. The Webinar was joined by 400 people from a range of service areas across the country and the team fielded questions alongside the Chair of SCIE Paul Burstow. The questions were wide ranging and gave Bromley a high profile nationally for the excellent work we are doing.
- 3.8.12 The established discharge to assess (D2A) model has been built upon in order to provide the required pathways for safe and rapid hospital discharges. The SPA leads on the discharge using LBB Central Placement Team and procurement to provide a short term service to ensure health and care and support needs of the individual are appropriately met and they are safe.
- 3.8.13 A 'welfare call' is made by a Bromley Healthcare occupational therapist within 24 hours of discharge to establish further information about the health and social care needs of the adult.
- 3.8.14 Where required a social care assessment is completed within 3 days of discharge to determine ongoing social care needs. Once completed, the individual's needs are addressed and relevant care and support or sign posting is completed. The individual is then discharged from the D2A pathway and the funding stream is transferred from the CCG to social care where appropriate.
- 3.8.15 Ongoing health and social care needs are provided for using business as usual processes from the point of discharge from the D2A pathway. In most cases the adult will be discharged within two weeks but if the person is recovering from COVID-19 and remains unable to manage their care and support needs they may remain on the pathway with health funding for their support and care.
- 3.8.16 Those who are deemed eligible for Continuing Healthcare on discharge will remain on that pathway until after the pandemic is over. All individuals are subject to monitoring and reviews to ensure they are appropriately supported.

3.8.17 Care for people discharged from hospital is being fully funded by the NHS, so is not subject to means-tested charges.

Demand/capacity modelling and actuals

3.8.18 There has been a significant focus on demand/capacity modelling at a national and regional level. Bromley's Strategy, Performance and Corporate Transformation division has been working with NHSE/I and South East London CCG to anticipate hospital admissions, subsequent discharges timeframes and the knock on demands pressures for social care services. We are actively utilising two models 'The planning model Scenario Plan B' which has been used pan London to understand the gap between top down demand predictions and capacity resources and the 'Italian demand curve' model which used actual pan London COVID-19 patient admission data and applied a similar demand curve to that experienced by Italy. By doing this we have been able to anticipate discharges by pathway, by day, in Bromley for COVID and non-COVID residents.

3.8.19 Overall demand pressures in care homes and for domiciliary care has been anticipated and managed well. As at 4 May 2020 the Directorate has managed to find placements for people being discharged from hospital and requiring social care support from existing provider resources

3.8.20 During the month of April Bromley managed just under 800 discharges of which 33% were COVID-19 positive. Although this data is still subject to review and change, indicatively Members might like to note the following discharge pathways

- 73% Pathway 0: home with no support (impacting local voluntary sector response)
- 19% Pathway 1: home with support (adult social care/ health)
- 5% Pathway 2: community bed
- 3% Pathway 3: care home or nursing home

3.8.21 The average age for those discharged with home support needs (pathway 1) was 78 years, they had stayed in hospital for 13 days. For those discharged to care homes (pathway 3) the average age was 77. They stayed in hospital for up to 41 days.

3.8.22 To manage this flow of demand, we have been working with social care providers in Bromley to understand their capacity to support our needs. Working collaboratively with London ADASS we have utilised the Market Insight Provider Portal to monitor on a daily based indicative demand pressures in residential and nursing beds, home care, learning disability and mental health capacity. This has enabled us to identify vacancies that can be used for hospital discharge purposes. The Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2015 to have market oversight, ensure market capacity and seek to prevent provider and market failure. These duties have been reinforced under the recently issued Department for Health and Social Care Social Care Action Plan.

3.8.23 We have also been able to monitor how well each home care provider and care home provider has been managing their residents, this has included a daily report on numbers of residents with symptoms, residents with confirmed cases, deaths of residents, numbers of staff unable to work and PPE provision. Data between from the beginning of the pandemic (circa 17 March) to date:

- 30 of our 36 registered care homes in Bromley have reported that they have had COVID-positive cases during the pandemic.

- 3.8.24 While contingency plans have been put in place for extra capacity, these have not yet been necessary to implement. Meeting demand for support and care has been facilitated by effective joint working between the Central Placement and Commissioning Teams and the NHS.
- 3.8.25 It is expected that the NHS will fund additional costs incurred which relate to new or extended health and social care services, to support safe discharges from hospital or to prevent hospital admissions, in line with the guidance. Systems have been put in place to track expenditure and ensure appropriate costs are reimbursed by the CCG. The Head of Finance for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, is liaising with colleagues in the Directorate and in the CCG to monitor spend and seek agreement on reimbursement in line with NHS and NHS Improvement guidance issued on 8th April. A range of staffing costs relating to establishing 7 day working and costs related to PPE (see below) are also being recorded in line with guidance issue for recording COVID-19 related expenditure.
- 3.8.26 Access to the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is vital in reducing the transmission of COVID-19. The Council began offering PPE to providers in the Borough on 25 March. All providers of care homes, domiciliary care, extra care housing and learning disability and mental health services are offered access to emergency supplies if their own supplies are running low. LBB provider services, social work and housing staff have also received supplies to support them to provide their services safely. As at 4 May, over 200,000 items of PPE equipment have been issued to providers who have visited our central depot to pick up supplies on over 300 occasions.
- 3.8.27 The procurement and distribution of PPE across the Council is managed by Adult Services with support from colleagues in emergency planning, procurement and the Transport Operations Team at the Central Depot. Supplies are available to providers 7 days a week. The Council works closely with colleagues in the CCG to co-ordinate supplies and the CCG also use Central Depot as a delivery location for supplies for community health and primary care services. PPE arrangements are delivered in partnership with Public Health who lead on practice advice.
- 3.8.28 The Department of Health is currently working on an e-procurement portal, entitled "Clipper", for all local authorities and care providers. Whilst this arrangement is being set up, Bromley is working with other London boroughs to access a pan-London procurement solution and to place a pan-London order, which should secure greater and quicker access to a delivery of PPE. Bromley has now made its first order through this route.
- 3.8.29 The London Resilience Forum set up a stockpile of PPE on 6 April and the Council has accessed these supplies to build stock to meet demand from social care providers. Bromley augments this supply with PPE from commercial suppliers given their allocation criteria to only meet emergency supplies for three days. Expenditure on PPE (£110,000 as at 4 May with an order to the value of £80,000 placed with the pan London procurement solution) is signed off by the Director of Adult Services and recorded as Covid-19 expenditure by the Head of Finance Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, Resources.

3.9 CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 3.9.1 Children's services is operating a business as usual service with all children allocated to a social worker receiving regular contact, albeit in most cases virtually, to ensure that families are supported and children safeguarded in these difficult times. Our current

workforce functionality is above 80%. Safeguarding of vulnerable children remains our top priority and we continue to work closely with schools and partners for the safety of our children.

- 3.9.2 The 6 Children and Family Centres are closed, with the exception of pre-booked appointments with Health Visitors for families with premature babies or babies who are failing to thrive. All 6 centres are supporting families through a helpline through each centre and are responding to telephone and email enquiries, providing advice and guidance on parenting, housing and signposting to a range of other services.
- 3.9.3 The service has maintained its front door: the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub), the Emergency Duty Team (for Children and Adult Social Care) and the referral and assessment service are operating business as usual with the same thresholds for accessing services.
- 3.9.4 Safeguarding and care planning services are still in place and operating business as usual. Visits are being conducted via digital platforms. Any concerns where a home visit is required require individual risk assessments, senior management approval and appropriate personal protective equipment and due care to staff carrying out those visits.
- 3.9.5 The Children with Disabilities Team is working closely with SEN colleagues to determine those children with complex needs who were accessing specialist education. Through daily KIT meetings with education colleagues, we ensure that children with complex needs are either able to access provision or appropriate support packages.
- 3.9.6 All children in care are contacted by their social workers and virtual visits are carried out to ensure that their care plans are working where possible. Contact with families where children are looked after is now taking place virtually, ensuring that both birth parents and children have opportunities to talk to one other.
- 3.9.7 All children looked after are reviewed twice weekly by the Virtual School team to ensure that they are accessing school places. If a child looked after is in receipt of a home tutor via the Virtual School, this offer has continued. The twice weekly review of schoolwork is to ensure that both children and their carers are supported and that their respective health and wellbeing is considered. The Virtual School makes regular calls to all carers and residential children's homes to offer support and assess risk to placement, as well as providing links to online resources and purchasing equipment and materials where they are available. Tuition is being provided for our children in care via online classroom or conference facilities.
- 3.9.8 Our foster carers receive weekly communication from our children's services and have a buddy system together with support from therapists who sit within children's social care.
- 3.9.9 The YOS continues to review all children, but will ultimately prioritise those who imminently pose a risk to themselves or others. Workers are regularly contacting children and families and using platforms to enable virtual face-to-face meetings. The YOS office remains open with a smaller team of colleagues to respond to any urgent queries. Our children in custody will be contacted frequently by telephone only as this is currently the only means of contact.
- 3.9.10 We have now launched the Bromley Safer Schools App, which provides advice, guidance and CPD accredited training with a view to ensure children and young people are safer in the online world. It is free of charge to download and is available for

Designated Safeguarding Leads, teachers and staff, parents and carers as well as social workers and those in community safeguarding roles.

3.10 **EDUCATION SERVICES**

- 3.10.1 The Government announced on 18 March that all schools, early years settings and colleges should close with effect from the end of the school day on Friday 20 March until further notice.
- 3.10.2 The vast majority of Bromley schools are operating in accordance with the Government guidelines to make available education provision for children who have a named social worker and for the children of key workers. If a parent/carer is a key worker critical to COVID-19 efforts or a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan and cannot be cared for safely at home, or a child is allocated to a social worker and cannot receive a place through their normal school or setting, they can apply by completing the education provision form⁵.
- 3.10.3 The numbers of children attending Bromley schools has continued to increase with more than 800 pupils now attending each day. This includes increased numbers of children of key workers and vulnerable children. This is in part due to social workers encouraging families to send vulnerable children to school unless agreed it is safer for them to be at home. The Directorate continues to focus on the monitoring and support of vulnerable children and young people that are not currently attending schools. We continue to remain in daily contact with schools and to offer support and guidance.
- 3.10.4 Schools have continued to ensure that families where children are on free school meals have access to food or vouchers, either through the Government scheme or locally sourced arrangements.
- 3.10.5 The number of Early Years settings and providers has continued to increase with nearly 150 settings now open for eligible children, including the Council's two maintained nurseries. Bromley Early Years Team continues to prioritise vulnerable children and work closely with providers, settings and childminders.
- 3.10.6 We recognise that children and young people who have special educational needs and disability (SEND), and their parents and carers, are facing numerous challenges as a result of COVID-19. Our SEN service is continuing to process requests for Education, Health and Care Assessments as normal.
- 3.10.7 The Government has acknowledged the significant pressures for Councils in delivering SEN provision and has modified section 42 of the Children and Families Act for the period from 1 May to 31 May, modifying the duty on local authorities to secure special educational provision and on health commissioning bodies to arrange health provision in accordance with EHC plans to ensure that we are applying 'reasonable endeavours' in discharging our duty. The implications of this modification will be covered in the Council's local offer guidance.
- 3.10.8 Bromley special schools and additionally resourced provisions continue to provide access to care, where collaborative risk assessment indicates children and young people cannot be safely cared for at home. Those children open to children's services continue to have their statutory needs met in accordance with regulations and our practice standards. We will continue to support our children, young people and their families.

⁵ <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/EducationProvisionRequestForm>

- 3.10.9 We are currently working with the DfE on the scheme to provide devices and 4G internet where there is no access to a suitable digital device for:
- Care leavers
 - Children with a social worker (including pre-school children)
 - Children in Year 10, ahead of GCSEs next year
- 3.10.10 The DfE has indicated that the majority of the devices will be provided from June. We will work creatively with schools and partners to provide access to learning opportunities until the devices are received.
- 3.10.11 With many institutions closed or working to reduced timetables, there are evident pressures for many of the Council's children's services providers. However the majority of the issues regarding funding have been removed by various government directives. Government have instructed that all schools, (mainstream, special, PRU and independent) will continue to be funded as usual. This is also true for Early Years settings. Government continues to fund schools and local authorities with the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) which covers these costs and therefore would have a zero effect on the Council's finances. Service leads are in contact with providers and scheduled meetings with providers will continue virtually.

3.11 PLACE DIRECTORATE

The Place Directorate has been at the frontline of the response to COVID-19, maintaining the Council's waste collection services, parks and open spaces, as well as providing vital support to residents through its public protection services. A number of officers from the Place Directorate have also been redeployed to support Operation Shielding and the Council's volunteer mobilisation response.

3.12 ENVIRONMENT SERVICES

- 3.12.1 Changes to the Council's frontline environment service contracts for waste management, street cleaning, parks and grounds maintenance, and arboricultural services were identified early prior to the partial lockdown which became full lockdown from 24 March. The Council's service providers responded by re-engineering their business continuity plans quickly and with agreement at Director level, plans were devised to deliver critical priority service areas which were communicated through various media sources and actioned quickly as the service providers staff began self-isolating for COVID-19 related reasons.

Waste management

- 3.12.2 The Council's waste management service has continued to operate throughout the period, with recycling collection services reduced between 24 March and 24 April 2020, with the temporary closure of the household reuse and recycling centres following Government advice. The frequencies of food and residual waste collection remained unchanged as part of Veolia's business continuity plan agreement.
- 3.12.3 A phased approach to reinstating waste collection services commenced during April as the service provider had staffing levels drop to 60% at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, then steadily increase allowing for the initial collection of mixed recycling materials, followed by green garden waste and then paper/card collection. A communications plan was initiated through various forms of media promoting the reinstatement of normal service delivery which was supported by additional collections

at weekends. By the end of April, all routine waste collection services had been reinstated.

- 3.12.4 The Council's on street recycling banks remained available to residents throughout the period and received additional clearance on a daily basis across all 42 sites. The Household Reuse and Recycling Centres were only available for the receipt of trade waste during April but were re-opened on 4th May to residents based upon a pre-booking system and other physical measures to ensure social distancing could be provided. Bromley was the first local authority in London to re-open its recycling centres. In order to make more provision for residents to dispose of their garden waste the provision of three satellite green garden waste sites was also made available at weekends throughout May.

Street cleaning

- 3.12.5 The functions of the street cleaning service remained unchanged throughout the period delivering all core service requirements, including the additional servicing of the borough's on-street recycling banks which had an increase in use due to the reduction in waste recycling collections and the temporary closure of the household reuse and recycling centres. Other street environment services including fly tipping, graffiti removal and the clearance of abandoned/nuisance vehicles from public spaces were co-ordinated for attention.

Parks management and grounds maintenance

- 3.12.6 As part of the parks management and grounds maintenance service providers (idverde) Business Continuity Plan, a mitigation plan was put into place from 24 March including the retention of core activities to maintain the safety and condition of parks to enable users of parks and green spaces to follow Government advice for taking daily exercise and making use of local authority maintained public green spaces. This was also supported by the parks security service provided by Veolia (subcontractor for Ward Security), including using extra signage throughout the borough's 163 parks and green spaces, highlighting the importance of social distancing.
- 3.12.7 The borough's parks and green spaces have remained open throughout the period with signage displaying Government advice with all playgrounds, outdoor gyms and enclosed play areas temporarily closed. The good weather during April and early May placed significant pressure on the safe management of parks and open spaces, in particular at Crystal Palace Park and other popular parks and nature reserves as they received high volumes of visits by members of the public and by visitors travelling from outside of the borough to make use of Bromley's destinations of interest. There have been a few occasions where the assistance of the Metropolitan Police has been called upon where gatherings and failure to observe social distancing has not been obeyed.
- 3.12.8 The parks and grounds maintenance service also deals with the management of the borough's burial service and whilst contingency plans are reviewed on a daily basis there has been no increase to the number of burial requests during April, however a small number of COVID-19 deaths are being arranged for burials in early May.
- 3.12.9 Following the early storms of 2020, the authority is mindful that by having the largest number of tree stock of any London borough, it has a duty to ensure that its trees are kept in a well-maintained and safe condition. Throughout the period of April and May safety condition surveys have continued to prioritise park trees for inspection and subsequent maintenance by the service provider (Glendale).

Markets

- 3.12.10 In mid-March, we experienced a high number of trader cancellations for the forthcoming week. Footfall and trade had been depressed the week previously as shoppers began to stay at home. Conversations with the traders noted those who had not yet cancelled were planning to, meaning the market essentially self-closed. During this time we also liaised with neighbouring councils as to their plans. Their plans varied depending on the make-up of traders and whether the markets were directly run, but all considered reduced rents, cancellations or social distancing measures.
- 3.12.11 Our Market Supervisor and Licensing Officer have sought to keep in contact with the traders and we have provided information and links to government small business and self-employed advice and support.
- 3.12.12 The Market Team are currently working with Bromley BID and the Regeneration service to co-ordinate a plan for how Bromley High Street might operate in a recovery phase, such as a one-way pedestrian system, greater spacing between market stalls and social distancing signage for when the lockdown eases.

Abandoned Vehicles

- 3.12.13 On 26 March, our AV sub-contractor who removes and stores vehicles informed us that, in order to align with government guidance, they were reducing service to emergency collection only. On 30 March, the DVLA informed the Council that they were ceasing with immediate effect any enforcement of untaxed vehicles. This would also be the case for any Councils using DVLA devolved powers, such as the London Borough of Bromley.
- 3.12.14 We are also conscious that it is likely during lockdown that vehicles may be left in places longer than normal or not be able to be attended by their keeper. Only urgent or emergency cases such as burn outs are being actioned at this time. Customers reporting non-urgent issues are being advised we are not dealing with non-urgent reports. Return to normal will be dependent on DVLA advice, our sub-contractor's capacity and the Enforcement Team's resources.

Parking

- 3.12.15 In light of the COVID-19 emergency, enforcement of parking restrictions was changed, with a reduced number of Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) concentrating on priority areas, including loading bays and disabled parking bays. The CEOs, who have been identified as key workers, are also enforcing parking contraventions such as at pedestrian crossings, footway or pavement parking, obstructive parking and double yellow lines. In this way, those needing to park more easily, such as Blue Badge holders and emergency workers, can continue to do so. Enforcement in railway station Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) has been scaled back as has enforcement in all residential areas including those within town centre CPZs. Residents are being encouraged to show tolerance in respect to where people park, as carers and key workers need to park and visit residents, and more residents are working from home. Verbal abuse against CEOs is unfortunately not uncommon, but has increased at this time, even though there are far fewer CEOs on the street.
- 3.12.16 A system has been set up to provide key worker permits. Emergency services workers, NHS workers, carers and volunteers helping with the COVID-19 crisis can apply for free temporary parking across Bromley on single yellow lines, in permit bays, pay-to-park bays on street, council operated car parks, and short-stay parking bays without the

worry of being issued with a Penalty Charge Notice. Approximately 2,500 key worker permits have been issued by Bromley.

- 3.12.17 The Council and its parking enforcement contractor, APCOA, have agreed that for the benefit of the local community, some CEOs can be moved away from their enforcement duties to community improvement initiatives. The first such initiative to involve CEOs is work with the Council's waste management team during the reopening of household re-use and recycling centres in the borough. CEOs follow strict social distancing and safe working guidelines devised by the waste management team to ensure that the facilities are run in a safe manner for all users.
- 3.12.18 In light of reduced traffic levels and closed schools, a decision was made at the start of lockdown that all enforcement by CCTV would cease, so currently there is no enforcement in the Borough of bus lanes or school-keep-clear markings. Consideration will be given to when this enforcement should be reinstated.
- 3.12.19 Parking levels in Council car parks and on street have fallen to about 5% of normal levels and this has been steady over recent weeks. Measures are being developed to help with social distancing in car parks as their use increases.

Traffic Schemes

- 3.12.20 Implementation of agreed traffic schemes, road safety improvements and measures such as cycle training are all delayed or suspended at present. The reintroduction of work on these measures is dependent upon evolving social distancing guidance and also the availability of contractors' staff and the materials to build schemes. As these schemes are funded by TfL grants, there is also an issue in regard to the lack of certainty of that funding still being available in 2020/21 – more information on this will be made available to boroughs over the coming weeks.

Highways

- 3.12.21 All officers within the Highways Division have been successfully working from home since the start of the lockdown, with our Highway Inspectors and Contract Monitoring Officers working on site in the borough each day to complete highway safety inspections and deal with customer enquiries.
- 3.12.22 Our contractor has managed to work within current PHE guidance to complete all highway reactive and safety works as required. This has involved their workforce travelling in separate vehicles, which has resulted in additional costs for LBB. With the reduced number of vehicles on the roads the opportunity has been taken to complete maintenance repairs in areas that would otherwise have caused congestion.
- 3.12.23 The implementation of all planned highway maintenance and traffic improvement schemes has been suspended, with contractor's staff and workers being furloughed. As the situation eases these projects are due to be started again by the end of May.
- 3.12.24 Street lighting maintenance works have continued, subject to the availability of materials. Improvement works, including the LED conversation project, are currently suspended due to the closure of supplier's factories.
- 3.12.25 The network management team manage occupancy of the highway for all road works through a permit scheme. At the start of the 'lockdown' period most utility companies reduced their activity to emergency works only, such as gas or water leaks, but the number of permits issued during the last few weeks has gradually increased as utility companies recommence their planned works programme.

3.12.26 Our transport operation team have maintained a skeleton staff in the central depot to manage the site and deal with any urgent transport issues. As PPE is being distributed to care homes etc. across the borough the team have been able to assist with preparing and delivering packages.

Public protection

3.12.27 Following the introduction of social distancing in March 2020, all services and business continuity plans within Public Protection were reviewed and delivery plans were agreed whereby all services would remain operational, albeit on an amended basis. However, all licensing requests are being processed, and service requests are still investigated at arms-length, and cases are still being progressed.

3.12.28 The Government recognised that Environmental Health and Trading Standards teams already had strong relationships with local business and business representatives, and that the officers understood how to work with this sector to ensure that they operated responsibly to protect the public and the NHS. As a result, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 formally placed Public Protection Officers as the lead enforcers in supporting efforts to fight COVID-19 through enforcing business closures.

3.12.29 Since 16 March 2020, Public Protection have:

- Checked 5154 businesses for compliance
- Given 516 informal warnings/words of advice
- Closed 8 premises
- Developed and implemented an enforcement framework
- Provided advice to 600 food premises on how to operate safely as a takeaway
- Assisted Liberata in taking calls for Public Protection
- Provided the Police with a COVID-19 resource
- Undertaken weekly joint COVID-19 Patrols with the Police, ensuring every ward in the borough is covered
- Provided scam advice to 500 residents
- Held Joint Action Group meetings to cover ASB issues including bonfires
- Proactively contacted the Muslim and Jewish Faith Communities to discuss burial needs
- Produced a joint enforcement approach for the Borough Command Unit (BCU) and Heads of Community Safety.

3.12.30 Public Protection are also involved in the death management process: the Assistant Director, Joanne Stowell, and Emergency Planning and Corporate Resilience Lead, David Tait, attend the South London Coronal Area (Bromley, Bexley, Sutton, Croydon) Excess Deaths Steering Group on a weekly basis. This Steering Group assesses the impact and consequences of the pandemic to deliver essential services relating to the death management process, and to implement subsequent contingency options with the London Excess Deaths Management Group approval where necessary.

3.12.31 With regards to emergency planning and resilience, Bromley is the lead Borough for the London South Sub Regional Group, which also includes Bexley, Croydon, Greenwich and Lewisham. Within this forum, a protocol for mutual aid between the member boroughs has been established. The Head of Community Safety and the Assistant Director also attend a weekly meeting with the BCU Leadership and the Heads of Community Safety for Croydon and Sutton to ensure that the policing and enforcement approaches taken are appropriate within the local context.

- 3.12.32 Since the start of the pandemic, the Emergency Planning team have been performing the role of Resilience Advisers; supporting the Chief Executive, Strategic Co-ordination Group and COVID-19 Tactical group in relation to our collective response. The team have managed the Borough Emergency Control Centre, maintaining the link between the Council and London Resilience and has been in operation every day now for over 6 weeks at the time of reporting. The team also represent the Local Authority at the South Coronial Excess Deaths Management Group, maintaining an overview of the death management process in Bromley, working with partners from The Princess Royal Hospital, The Coroner's office and local funeral directors. We have also maintained our 24/7 response capability to provide support to the blue light services at the scene of emergency incidents. One recent incident, a 6 flat fire in Risedale Rd SE20 saw the team deploy to assist the 20 residents who were made homeless due to the fire.
- 3.12.33 Officers from Public Protection will assist with contact tracing COVID 19 positive patients and will support London Resilience as they set up a group on the Test, Track and Trace Strategy. The Chief Executives of Newham and Harrow will be leading, with 2 Directors of Public Health from Lewisham and Hammersmith and Fulham will also be on it, alongside an Environmental Health Director from Waltham Forest and the Assistant Director of Public Protection.

3.13 HOUSING, PLANNING AND REGENERATION

Housing services

- 3.13.1 Bromley's key housing services are being delivered and 80% plus of the staff are available to deliver services largely working from home. Three members of staff are currently in the office at any given time on a rota basis.
- 3.13.2 The Housing reception is closed with most the department's work with customers being successfully completed by phone with good feedback received. In an absolute emergency, where a vulnerable person needs to be seen as they have no other method of contact, an emergency appointment can be made. Meetings takes place in a screened room which is deep cleaned afterwards.
- 3.13.3 The vast majority of residents are contacting us online and on the phone, but to support the very few who still turn up in person at the Civic Centre, we have installed a doorbell which links to the Lodge. The Amey team can talk to the caller to ascertain whether they can get in touch in another way and if not, they can escalate to the relevant service so that further action scan be decided.
- 3.13.4 We are currently operating on-line applications for housing and the provision of housing advice and homeless prevention services through a dedicated housing options helpline.
- 3.13.5 Our Housing Team is seeing an increase in domestic abuse with around a third of those presenting as homeless citing this. Organisations locally are not necessarily reporting a rise in cases; we think this may be because there is a perception that it is more difficult during lockdown to report and walk away. Also, there has been heavy promotion of the national line which may be taking calls rather than local providers.
- 3.13.6 Assisting rough sleepers is a national requirement. A virtual group has been formed to assist people who are rough sleeping so we can help get people off of the streets as quickly as possible as Covid-19 puts our already vulnerable rough sleepers further at risk. We have accommodated 20 rough sleepers so far. We are working at a pan

London and local level to ensure all rough sleepers accommodated have the offer of a longer term rehousing plan.

- 3.13.7 The team have also been working closely to facilitate hospital discharges including securing accommodation for those who do not have accommodation or arranging for repairs or other works required to enable a person to return home.
- 3.13.8 The Housing support team have review their caseloads to ensure continuing support is provided either through telephone and on-line contact or personal visits where required.
- 3.13.9 45 accommodation placements over the last month represents double of what we would normally expect at this time. Supply of accommodation is a challenge. Except for emergencies, lettings into housing association accommodation stock has significantly reduced given void works, connections, viewing and moving issues. The team are working well with housing associations such as Clarion and private landlords who are generally understanding of any difficulties in setting up initial payments. This is bolstered in negotiation with commercial hotels that have made rooms available exclusively to us.
- 3.13.11 Work has also been undertaken to review all placements into multi-facility units to ensure that those identified with a risk category are moved into self-contained accommodation and to increase measures to minimise use of communal areas.

Planning services

- 3.13.12 The Development Management team has continued to deal with planning applications with some changes to operational processes to facilitate almost exclusively electronic casework. The first virtual planning committee is expected to meet within the next few weeks. There has been a fall in the number of applications submitted and resultant income and it remains to be seen whether this will be a longer term trend. The Planning Enforcement team has been prioritising work on the most harmful breaches.
- 3.13.13 The Infrastructure Delivery Team has continued to collect the London Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and work is still progressing on the Borough CIL, with the recent appointment of an Infrastructure Delivery Team Leader to oversee CIL and s106.
- 3.13.14 The Building Control team has not yet seen a significant reduction in activity and the team has adapted to the crisis with electronic working and minimising site visits.
- 3.13.15 Overall the Planning and Building Control service is gearing up to support residents and businesses as we move out of the crisis.

Regeneration services

- 3.13.16 All capital programmes within the regeneration team now have COVID-19 on their project management risk, actions, issues and decisions (RAID) log. The team are in regular contact with contractors about any developing issues that may impact delivery. Many regeneration capital programmes have been able to continue, with some limitations on site works in line with government guidance. This is largely due to where regeneration programmes were in the programme cycle. Defects for capital schemes are generally not being dealt with by contractors at this time, in part because of lack of access to materials. Contractors continuing to work have been required to undertake

a risk assessment and demonstrate safe working practice in line with industry and government guidance.

- 3.13.17 Public engagement and consultation has been severely restricted for some programmes, which is expected to cause a 3-4 month delay in terms of the planning process.
- 3.13.18 All libraries have closed. However our partner GLL has developed a 'library without walls' initiative and has successfully developed a new online offer for library users and wider audiences. This new approach will enhance the historic library offer once libraries reopen, and is an example of COVID-19 forcing new ways of working which will continue to have a positive impact post the pandemic.
- 3.13.20 Alongside the work of the Council's local business assistance team, a local economy task force has also been set up bringing together the BIDs and other partners. The focus is on monitoring the 'health' of town centres and producing a Local Economy Recovery and Resilience Plan. A key priority will be to support businesses to maintain as much economic activity as possible. It is recognised that the changes expected in town centres over the next decade have been accelerated by the pandemic, and this will be reflected in the division's capital programming and the changes to the draft Regeneration Strategy.
- 3.13.21 The community resource shops at Cotmandene and Mottingham have temporarily closed. A phone service for customers has been made available, with vulnerable users signposted to the Council wide schemes in place, e.g. Operation Shielding.

3.14 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT

- 3.14.1 The Chief Executive's department has provided strategic advice, guidance and support to the Council's frontline services, ensuring that the Council's workforce are able to work effectively from home, supporting contract managers in working with the Council's suppliers, and providing clear governance and decision making guidance to Members during the COVID-19 crisis.

HR Services

- 3.14.2 Given the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic and the clear HR and employment law implications, it became very apparent from the onset that the Council needed:
1. Staff confidence and cooperation
 2. Compassionate leadership and empathy
 3. Training and organisation development support
 4. Adequate mental health awareness and support
- 3.14.3 The Human Resources division is providing a business as usual service despite the challenges during this time. Through its participation in the COVID-19 Strategic Group and COVID-19 Tactical Group, HR has been able to influence and advise on the staffing implications of key decisions and support timely and appropriate staff communications. Such key decisions include the use and carry over of annual leave, PPE and the wider health and safety issues arising from the implications of the Coronavirus Act 2020, the lockdown and the 'new ways of working'. Managers, through the Corporate Leadership Team, were empowered by HR support and guidance to retain staff confidence and trust during a challenging time.

- 3.14.4 Due to the Workplace Modernisation transformation programme, the Council was already well resourced to deliver smarter working opportunities, including home working. Initially, we were able to offer 50% home working, but this quickly increased to 90% in response to the lockdown requirements. On average, around 1400 staff have been able to log on to Bromley system on a daily basis, thanks to the leadership from the Assistant Director for IT Services and our IT provider, BT.
- 3.14.5 Feedback from staff representatives on the Council's leadership and support to its workforce, including the Departmental Representatives and our trade union local and regional officers, have been very positive and encouraging. Staff are briefed on a regular basis by the Chief Executive and Directors are also keep their staff informed using different means including newsletters, email briefings and virtual 1-1 staff surgeries.
- 3.14.6 Recruitment, including selection interviews, is still taking place through the use of video conferencing where appropriate. The current situation has had no adverse impact on our recruitment or turnover. The recruitment team has also been able to support the recruitment of volunteers for the Council's volunteering programmes, including Operation Shielding. Around 1000 volunteers were processed for DBS vetting and clearance by HR through an online vetting process in partnership with a commercial arm of Kent County Council.
- 3.14.7 Recruitment for both agency and permanent staff in key service areas such as children's services is delivered by HR. The team are also leading on a number of other recruitment initiatives to recruit social care volunteers and permanent staff during COVID-19, including the Proud to Care London scheme in partnership with councils across London. We have partnered with Social Work England to help support its national Social Work Together campaign. The campaign encourages former social workers to return to social work. Our local Wake Up 2 Care scheme has been redesigned and relaunched with a new recruitment initiative aiming to attract voluntary care workers, experienced care workers and care workers who are new to the profession.
- 3.14.8 The culture of every organisation is being tested in this current unprecedented situation. Through its Workforce Development Team, HR has put in place a number of virtual training support packages for managers and staff including the offer of coaching and mentoring, as part of the Workplace Modernisation transformation programme.
- An introductory webinar on managing teams remotely during COVID-19 has had encouraging take-up
 - Similar virtual training support is being offered to staff such as 'Home Working in Extraordinary Circumstances' which has been offered as both an e-learning module and a webinar.
 - Group resilience coaching sessions have also been offered to frontline staff, including Operation Shielding volunteers.
 - Specific and bespoke virtual training has been developed and delivered to our social care workforce, including external agency partners, to raise awareness on current high profile topics, including domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, drug and alcohol abuse, bereavement and loss, and social isolation.
- 3.14.9 The partnership between HR and Liberata Payroll has also worked well in the current situation. The integrated HR & Payroll systems coupled with the deployment of home working solution by both parties means that staff payment and associated issues, including the implementation of the 2020/2021 pay award, was successfully implemented for the April pay day.

- 3.14.10 The HR consultancy team continues to provide strategic support to managers and staff on a wide range of issues including sickness absence, disciplinary and grievance matters. Where appropriate, sickness management and grievances are being managed virtually using telephone or video conferencing, with the agreement of the staff concerned and their representatives. Staff and their representatives have been reassured that COVID-19 related absences or self-isolation will not count for any purposes, including sickness pay or trigger sickness absence issues. However, the information is required mainly for health and safety purposes including ensuring that affected staff can be adequately supported by the Council.
- 3.14.11 Given the health and safety concerns related to COVID-19, HR is working closely with London Health and Safety Network and has provided regular updates, information and guidance to staff and managers on issues such as like risk assessments, working from home, and mental health and wellbeing. The Council has also been able to work well with our 30 Mental Health First Aiders to provide advice and support to staff on mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19. HR is currently planning a virtual Mental Health Week in May, in consultation with the Mental Health First Aiders. The Council's Employee Assistance programme (EAP) is also available through a range of virtual support and HR will continue to promote it to staff.

Customer Services

- 3.14.12 The Council's receptions remained open until the Government's advice precluded this and they subsequently closed on 23 March, and have remained closed until further notice.
- 3.14.13 The Corporate Contact Centre's non-essential service lines were suspended on 24 March. The revenues and benefits, education helpline, registrars and general switchboard numbers were kept open. All other services lines within the contact centre control were signposted to established on-line services.
- 3.14.14 The Council's web services performance has remained unaffected, as the Council already utilised an established agile working platform. Additionally, Liberata extended web service cover to 24/7 for emergency updates.
- 3.14.15 All registrations services except death registrations were suspended on 27 March. Emergency COVID-19 legislation was passed to allow death registrations to be conducted by phone from 30 March. Since that point all Registration staff have been deployed on processing death registrations and fulfilling certificate orders through the corporate website. Around half the staff are working remotely, as some critical operations are office based.
- 3.14.16 In April, Bromley registered 530 deaths, compared to 216 in April 2019. Additional resources were deployed from the casual bank of registration staff normally used for weekend ceremonies. Remote working for death registration has been successfully trialled as a contingency for any staff that need to self-isolate.
- 3.14.17 Currently there is a list of approximately 600 births to be registered when services are permitted to resume. Consideration is being given to a temporary location where this can be safely done, as quickly and efficiently as possible. Social distancing is extremely difficult in the Register Office, especially routes in and out of the building. There is no indication at this stage whether new legislation will be passed to allow birth registrations by phone.

- 3.14.18 In relation to marriage and civil partnerships, 140 couples have been contacted who had ceremonies booked at the Civic Centre between 30 March and 21 June. Couples have been offered the option for a refund of fees or to postpone and reschedule once we know when ceremonies are permitted to resume. 38 have so far opted for refunds, representing an overall loss of around £14,000. All venue based ceremonies are currently being held pending rescheduling, as it is for the venue to decide whether to refund their customers. There is no indication at this stage to indicate whether marriage and civil partnership authorities will be blanket extended nationally beyond the normal 12 months, to allow adequate time for re-scheduling ceremonies, and avoiding couples having to give 'fresh notice'.
- 3.14.20 Regarding citizenship ceremonies, 125 new citizens have had their ceremonies postponed, plus there are normally around 50 new citizens per month requesting to join out group ceremonies. The Home Office have extended the deadline from 3 to 6 months for new citizens to complete the process.

IT services

- 3.14.21 There has been significant demand and pressure on our IT services to provide IT kit and system as we moved to a Council-wide remote working arrangement with over 1400 people logging on remotely each day. IT continues to work on resolving key issues and complete patching work on the system wherever necessary. We rolled out 200 additional laptops at short notice and supported an average of 200 additional calls per day through the BT helpdesk.
- 3.14.22 Telephony guidance has been issued to enable virtual meetings using conference facilities. An external secure video and telephony system (WebEx) was set up to accommodate large meetings. Officers continue to work towards developing more tools for staff and Councillors to work more collaboratively, such as Microsoft Teams.
- 3.14.23 To ensure Bromley staff can seamlessly work from home, IT Infrastructure capacity was increased at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also installed key software and hardware updates to increase resilience without disruption to service. The volunteering and shielding telephone system were deployed to ensure our vulnerable residents can contact the Council for support. An officer has been allocated to the volunteering team to promptly support their IT systems and any IT issues that may arise.
- 3.14.24 Officers had to pause the IT rollout to comply with social distancing and ensure that staff do not travel for non-essential work. Officers then were able to divert the resources and focus on home working capacity.
- 3.14.25 The IT team and BT, our partner, have played a key role in setting up virtual meetings and supporting larger collaborative events and aiding in live streaming of the Council meetings.

Finance services

- 3.14.26 In recognition of the current challenges, the statutory deadline for the publication of local authority 2019/20 accounts has been delayed. Draft accounts must now be approved by 31 August (previously 31 May) with final audited accounts published by 30 November (previously 31 July).

- 3.14.27 The 2020/21 Council Tax report identified a balanced budget in 2020/21 with an estimated budget gap of £16.9m per annum by 2023/24. The 2020/21 budget includes transformation and mitigations savings of £9.2m in 2020/21, rising to £23m per annum from 2023/24.
- 3.14.28 If these savings are not fully delivered the budget gap increases by a corresponding amount and alternative savings would have to be delivered, in addition to savings yet to be identified to balance the budget for 2021/22 and future years.
- 3.14.29 The current COVID-19 crisis is expected to have a negative impact on the delivery of these savings and an update will be provided in the 2020/21 financial monitoring report in July 2020. There will be a challenge in future years once the 'new normal' is known, which could have an impact on Council's services and an impact on future income.
- 3.14.30 In line with Government guidance, the Council is providing significant support to local businesses during the COVID-19 lockdown through the distribution of the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund. The Council's finance services aim to ensure the following grants are paid to eligible businesses as quickly as possible:
- £10,000 to all retail/leisure/hospitality type properties in receipt of Retail Discount, with a rateable value up to £15,000;
 - £10,000 to businesses who currently claim Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief with a rateable value below £15,000;
 - £25,000 to all retail/leisure/hospitality type properties which would have qualified for Retail Discount with a rateable value between £15,001 and £51,000.
- 3.14.31 The key outcomes from the programme are:
1. Eligible businesses access the grants from Central Government quickly
 2. The risk of fraud and error is reduced
 3. Our partners are enabled to work effectively with us to support the wider business community
- 3.14.32 The Council wrote to all eligible businesses in March 2020 via email or post advising of the grant funding. Businesses are being asked to complete a web form with supporting evidence. The Council's website has been fully updated to support local businesses⁶. Guidance notes and FAQs for local businesses have also been published on the website.
- 3.14.33 We have seconded an additional 12 staff to work directly with Liberata and form a dedicated Business Support Team to ensure the timely payment of business grants. A COVID-19 business assistance helpline is open Monday to Friday from 7:30am until 5:30pm on 020 8313 4897 to help businesses with the application processes.
- 3.14.34 To date, 74% of the £49.4 million that is due to be paid to businesses and 2484 requests for payment have been approved. All grant requests received up to and including 5 May have been reviewed and have been approved for payment where the business is eligible and has provided the correct information. New grant requests are currently being processed in less than 5 working days. We continue to liaise with eligible businesses who have not yet applied for funding. On 30 April a further email was sent to eligible businesses that had yet to apply for a grant. SMS messages and letters were sent out on 4 May.

⁶ <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/COVID-19BusinessSupport>

- 3.14.35 The Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) have been provided with data on businesses in their area that are likely to be eligible for a grant but have not yet requested one. The BIDs and Liberata will follow up with the businesses by telephone to try and find out the reason they have not submitted a request and answer any questions they may have regarding the grant scheme.
- 3.14.36 Bromley Council were approached by Direct Line Group, who have a head office site in Bromley town centre, as they were keen to support the local community with emergency funding for charities and community organisations supporting during the COVID-19 crisis. The Council's Executive Member for Adult Care Services and Health recommended Community Links Bromley (CLB) as our organisation of choice to distribute the Direct Line funding to worthy local causes. A donation of £170,000 has been issued to CLB and individual grants of up to £10,000 are being made through the Direct Line Community Fund.
- 3.14.37 A funding panel comprised of CLB trustees and a Council representative sits weekly to assess applications against a range of criteria, in order to ensure our most vulnerable residents continue to be supported. The Council are incredibly grateful to the Direct Line Group for providing additional funding to the sector at this difficult and extraordinary time. This significant investment will provide a lifeline for many small local charities.
- 3.14.38 The government have announced 100% business rate discount for all occupied retail, hospitality and leisure businesses for 2020/21 tax year. The Council will automatically apply the business rate relief schemes to all eligible businesses.
- 3.14.39 If a business does not qualify for any Retail Discount and has been negatively impacted by the coronavirus outbreak and unable to pay its business rates instalments, the business can contact the Council by completing the Revenues and Benefits contact form⁷. We will consider each ratepayer's circumstances and how they have been affected by the Coronavirus when discussing payment arrangements.
- 3.14.40 The Council is also promoting its additional support to businesses through its weekly Bromley business e-bulletin newsletter. This includes activities such as the 'Business Against Scams' initiative led by Bromley Trading Standards, which provides training, advice and guidance for businesses and employees to avoid business-related fraud, and promotes London and national support schemes for small businesses.
- 3.14.41 The Pension Fund has seen a significant impact on its valuation and a heightened level of volatility. Fortunately, the recent triennial valuation identified that the Council's pension was fully funded (110%) and therefore can cope with the recent shocks in the financial markets without needing to seek adjustments in employer contribution rates. Investments in the pension investments are undertaken to be managed on a long term basis (15 to 25 years) and therefore the investment strategy does not need to change.

Internal Audit, Counter Fraud, Risk Management & Insurance

- 3.14.42 Internal Audit has enabled the Council to deliver front line services by redirecting resources to anti-fraud work and supporting services in implementing new controls, processes and governance across the Council during the COVID-19 crisis. This has resulted in the postponement of most routine audits and will impact on the delivery of the Council's Audit Plan. However, the service will continue to meet statutory obligations

⁷ <https://forms.liberata.com/revenues-and-benefits/contact-us/bromley>

including reviewing the Council's governance arrangements through the Annual Governance Statement. Grant certification work with statutory deadlines will be met.

- 3.14.43 Auditors are separately carrying out checks to identify any instances of fraud and irregularity in the claims for business support grant payments and to follow up where needed. It is also liaising with government and sector counter fraud organisations to share intelligence reports, counter fraud tools and best practice in response to risks arising from those using the pandemic to commit fraud.
- 3.14.44 The service has also supported our insurance service where from 1 April 2020, the Council commenced a new insurance shared claims handling services agreement with the London Borough of Sutton.
- 3.14.45 Risk management continues to operate as normal with significant focus given to risks and controls rising from COVID-19. Counter fraud work continues although all face-to-face interviews under caution have been postponed. Currently the court is only accepting new prosecutions where there is a statutory requirement to do so. This enables the Council to submit cases to the court where the time limit is due to expire. In all other cases, the Courts requested not to submit further matters for a set period. All cases currently in the system are being held in abeyance until the set period has expired and will then be considered and allocated dates as appropriate.

Corporate procurement and support to Council suppliers

- 3.14.46 On 24 March 2020, a letter was distributed to all Council contractors setting out the key principles for support to our providers (Appendix 1). The letter was consistent with Cabinet Office guidance which was issued at the same time and outlined the following principles:
- Continuity payments to at risk providers (where there may have been a reduction or cessation in service due to the current Public Health measures);
 - Cash flow support such as easing normal invoice procedures or moving to block payments based on historical average spend;
 - Additional funding to reflect increased costs where applicable;
 - No duplication of funding received through government support mechanisms;
 - Moving to open book accounting to allow a suitable reconciliation process in due course.
- 3.14.47 Contract owners across the Council have responded to requests from providers for support and have made arrangements appropriate to their service and the particulars of each contract. Where support has been agreed, this will be underpinned by a suitable variation to the contract, using the Cabinet Office model terms and conditions as appropriate.
- 3.14.48 Primarily, support has been provided through varying (or suspending) contract specification requirements, in particular Key Performance Indicator measures or performance related elements; or through amending payment and invoicing terms to support cash flow.
- 3.14.49 Other key areas of support include:
- Moving to payment on invoice and payment in advance for Adult Social Care providers;
 - A temporary rate increase of 5% for Adult Social Care settings;
 - Continuity payments for Transport providers

3.14.50 In addition to the above, the Council has recognised that the capacity of both Council staff and the provider market to commence normal procurement processes, such as retendering a contract, will be affected for the time being. On 1 May, the Leader agreed to delegate authority to Chief Officers for a six month period to take suitable procurement action, such as extending contracts beyond term where appropriate, to manage this. The Procurement Board has evaluated every contract held by the Council to determine where action will be required and will be working with Contract Owners and Chief Officers in May to agree and implement all required procurement actions.

3.15 **GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS AND DECISION MAKING**

- 3.15.1 Before the lockdown was formally declared, the Council took action to prepare its governance and decision making arrangements. On 19 March 2020 the Urgency Committee and the Executive agreed a series of recommendations covering decision making arrangements until the end of the 2019/20 Council year. These included suspending meetings, authorising the Assistant Director, Planning and Building Control, to make all planning decisions which could not be deferred, subject to the agreement of a majority of the Members who would have made the decision, and authorising the Leader or the relevant Portfolio Holder to take executive decisions which could not be deferred, subject to virtual or written scrutiny.
- 3.15.2 The Executive also authorised the Chief Executive to undertake expenditure which, in his opinion, is urgently required to protect the Council, its Members, staff and residents to a maximum of £100k, subject to the agreement of the Leader.
- 3.15.3 Until now, the rules about local authority meetings contained in the Local Government Act 1972 and successive legislation have required that for Councillors must be physically present in the room in order to count as being present at a meeting. Virtual meetings have not been permitted to take actual decisions. The impact of the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020, which came into force on 26 March, is to make it very doubtful that any formal 'face-to-face' council meetings can take place in person during the current restrictions.
- 3.15.4 However, Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 provides for local authority decision making to continue and, in particular for persons to attend, speak at, vote in, or otherwise participate in, local authority meetings without all or any of the persons being together in the same place.
- 3.15.5 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) (Regulations 2020 No. 392) (the Regulations), provide greater details for the specific arrangements of virtual meetings – these Regulations came into effect on 4 April 2020 and apply for local authority meetings until 7 May 2021.
- 3.15.6 Many Councils have therefore begun to experiment with virtual meetings where all Members join via a video-conferencing system. For Members to be able to make decisions in these meetings, the Council is required to make available a virtual public gallery by streaming or by webcasting the virtual meeting on a publicly available website.
- 3.15.7 Bromley has adopted WebEx as its virtual meeting platform. Working with the IT Division, Democratic Services has set up a series of virtual meetings held in private which have helped both Members and officers to become familiar with the system. In particular, virtual Plans Sub-Committee meetings have been held to enable Sub-Committee members to inform the Assistant Director, Planning and Building Control, of their views before exercising delegated authority to determine planning applications.

3.15.8 The Council's first official virtual meeting was the Urgency Committee on 6 May. At this meeting, the Committee agreed a series of protocols to assist with holding virtual meetings - some overall rules, etiquette and guidance, and rules for executive, planning and licensing meetings and decision-making. The annual Council meeting is planned to go ahead as a virtual meeting on 13 May.

3.16 FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 IN 2020/21

3.16.1 A significant challenge to the current year's financial position relates to the impact of COVID-19 and the extent to which the Government funds the net cost to the Council.

3.16.2 Examples of the financial impact include:

- (a) Additional costs relating to direct support, enhancements to contract prices during this interim period (where necessary), additional staffing support, provision of new services, mortuary costs etc.;
- (b) Planned budget savings which cannot be delivered during this period;
- (c) Loss of income which includes, for example, car parking and enforcement, business rates, council tax collection, rent income from investment properties and treasury management.

3.16.3 Although it is not possible to accurately estimate the financial impact, an initial estimate of the total net cost including income losses is expected to significantly exceed the current level of Government funding provided of £16.6m. The main element of financial loss relates to income reductions ranging from car parking to collection of council tax and business rates.

Government funding

3.16.4 The Government has provided two tranches of grant funding to meet social care and other net costs which total £16.6m to date. Without any further funding there would be significant costs that would need to be met by the Council and alternative funding would need to be identified.

3.16.5 Although the Government have indicated that the grants received to date are down payments, it remains unclear whether the balance of net costs will be met by further Government funding – it is not clear whether the government will fully compensate councils for any income losses or non-delivery of planned budget savings.

3.17 COVID-19 RECOVERY PLANNING

3.17.1 Through the COVID-19 Strategic Group, the Chief Executive and his senior leadership team are preparing for the next phase of COVID-19 recovery planning, both in line with Government guidance and in partnership with London local authorities. This will ensure that the Council is able to safely and responsibly re-establish services across the Council, prepare appropriately for any future surges, and facilitate the wider social and economic recovery of the borough.

Local approach

3.17.2 Each department is preparing a recovery plan for their individual service areas, determining the key short, medium and long terms actions that will need to be taken in order to ensure a successful phased transition from emergency service provision to a

restored and enhanced Council offer. An overarching Council recovery plan will be established and monitored regularly.

- 3.17.3 To support contact tracing and prevent the spread of the virus, a Bromley programme board will be established at a senior level with the oversight of the Director of Public Health to co-ordinate and manage the local response and an operational group will deliver the day-to-day work.
- 3.17.4 A mobile coronavirus testing facility operated by the Army has been established in the Norman Park car park (accessible via Hayes Lane) since the beginning of May. Permission to use the car park as needed has been given by the Council in support of the Government's testing programme. The park remains open for the use of local residents.
- 3.17.5 In line with Government guidance and social distancing requirements, the Council has also established a working group with officers from HR, Facilities Management and IT services to establish key principles and to oversee the way forward to a phased return for the workforce to the Civic Centre and the Council's satellite offices.
- 3.17.6 The Council will have a staff centred approach, where home working is encouraged, until foreseeably at least the end of the year, underpinned by the following principles:
- Adherence to Government/NHS guidance on return to work and self-isolation
 - Staff working from home
 - Social distancing at work
 - Risk assessments
 - Cleaning and hygiene

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

In line with the Council's Corporate Plan, the Council is committed to safeguarding vulnerable adults and children in the borough. Through the work of the COVID-19 strategic and tactical groups, as well as our partnership working through the Council's Borough Partnership Forum, the Council seeks to keep vulnerable adults and children safe from harm during the COVID-19 crisis, and will continue to support these residents through the roll-out of the Council's overarching recovery plan.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council's Corporate Plan, Building a Better Bromley, sets out the Council's overall policy framework. The revised Corporate Plan, due to be delivered in 2020/21, will take account of the broader policy implications of the COVID-19 crisis, as we move forward into the delivery of the Council's recovery plan and support the borough's wider social and economic recovery.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the report, the financial implications of COVID-19 for the Council can only be estimated at this stage. Further updates will be provided in the 2020/21 financial monitoring report in July 2020.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the report, the Council has a staff-centred approach, whereby home working is encouraged and any phased return to work will be underpinned by strict adherence to Government and NHS guidance, applying the principles of social distancing, risk

assessments, regular cleaning of the office environment and promoting good hygiene and infection control practices.

8. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the report, the Council will continue to work closely with its providers in line with Cabinet Office guidance and will liaise closely with contract owners and Chief Officers for individual contracts where the COVID-19 crisis has procurement implications.

Appropriate procurement action will continue to be taken in line with the Contract Procedure Rules and the Executive decision of 1 May 2020.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Legal implications
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	