

JOINT CABINET STATEMENT

Introduction

On 23rd March 2020, the UK Government announced a ‘lockdown’ in order to limit the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The lockdown has had a major impact on all aspects of city life and public services, and the Council has, in response, gone through a period of unprecedented change.

In response to the announcement of the lockdown the Council transitioned into an ‘Essential Services’ model that set out how services would operate. Over the past two months our services have had to respond and adapt to the crisis as events continued to unfold. Three core principles have, and will, guide the Council’s response:

- Ensuring the resilience of services critical to our Covid-19 response;
- Doing all we can to protect our most vulnerable citizens and our staff, and;
- Stopping the spread of the virus.

At all times, we have endeavoured to be as open as possible. We have sought to ensure that all members, partners and citizens have been updated on any services changes.

Meeting the challenge of Covid-19 has fundamentally relied on the dedication, passion and skills of Council staff and of our city’s public servants. The Cabinet would like to put on record our thanks for the incredible work that they are doing, and to let them know that the Council’s leadership will continue to do everything it takes to support them over the course of the crisis. The many comments from members – cross party – recognising the contribution of officers and the speed of response in dealing with challenges has also been most welcome.

The city’s response has also been characterised by an unprecedented level of partnership working, particularly with Cardiff and Vale UHB and with South Wales Police. The Cabinet is committed to ensuring that this partnership working continues to deepen as we enter the next phase of this crisis, and that we continue to have a ‘one city’ response from our public services.

Similarly, the Cabinet would like to thank all members for their community leadership and commitment to supporting the Council through this period, and to colleagues in the Trade Unions who have at all times taken a constructive approach to solving problems and delivering essential services in a way that protects our staff.

The Cabinet would also like to thank all the citizens and communities who have adhered to social distancing, stayed home and safe, and have played a vital role in tackling the spread of the virus. The Cabinet are sure that all members will have taken great pride in the response from our local communities, particularly in the work that has gone on across Cardiff to help and support vulnerable members of our communities.

It has been a real city-wide effort. We are immensely proud of the work that has been done to support communities and families over what has been, and will continue to be, a very difficult and painful time. We feel the loss of Cardiff citizens keenly, and we extend our deepest sympathy to families who have suffered bereavement during this crisis. A time will come when we can all come together as a city to grieve for and remember those whom we have lost.

It is clear that the city remains in the grip of the pandemic and the Council continues to operate on a crisis footing. The Cabinet would emphasise, therefore, that though the number of new infections and fatalities in Cardiff has been falling for many weeks, the crisis is far from over. Our message to Cardiff remains: stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

The Welsh Government will be reviewing their regulations in respect of the Covid-19 crisis on 28th May 2020. Whilst much remains uncertain, it is clear that the months ahead will not involve a simple reversion to life pre-Covid. How Council and public services will be delivered will need to adapt; how people live their lives, travel, work and enjoy themselves in their free time will also need to change.

The Cabinet will adopt a three-stage approach to leading Cardiff's response to the Covid-19 crisis:

- **Restart:** Restarting & adapting a wide range of council services in the context of extended stringent social distancing requirements
- **Recover:** A strategic response to support the city to emerge from the crisis
- **Renew:** Working closely with city partners, staff and citizens to set out the future we want for Cardiff post-crisis, and how together, we will make it happen.

For some weeks the Cabinet has been planning for a gradual restart and adaptation of Council services in readiness for lockdown measures being relaxed. At all times, our planning has been guided by the following principles:

1. Re-starting services in a way that ensures the safety of staff and citizens.
2. Prioritising supporting those most vulnerable to the impact of the virus.
3. Working with partners to restart the city economy and city life in a safe way.
4. Working at all times working to stop the spread of the virus.
5. Be open and engaged, and ready to change our approach as we learn more.

Despite the immediate challenges of restarting Council services in accordance with the national government guidelines and expert advice from Public Health Wales, the work relating to economic recovery has commenced. Discussion have already begun with public service providers to develop a strategic response to support the city to

emerge from the crisis. This engagement work will continue and, going forward, will involve all key partners – including the business community – in the days and weeks ahead.

The Impact of Covid-19 on Cardiff

The impact of Covid-19 continues to take a devastating toll. The Council, working closely with partners including Public Health Wales, have been closely tracking key data sets to ensure that the position in Cardiff is well understood. This has involved regularly reviewing data published by Public Health Wales and the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

The latest ONS figures indicate 265 Covid-19 deaths in Cardiff up to 1st May 2020, which includes deaths registered up to 9th May 2020. We know that behind each of these numbers is a terrible personal tragedy, and our thoughts are with everyone who has been affected.

It is notable that the testing regime in Cardiff has been the highest in Wales. As of 12th May 2020, 5,906 tests were undertaken in Cardiff, according to figures from Public Health Wales. Whilst it is recognised that a more comprehensive testing regime would be expected to reveal a greater number of confirmed cases, it is also notable that less than a third (31.3%) of tests have been positive.

Of the 265 deaths registered in Cardiff, 140 have occurred in hospitals and 100 in care homes. Analysis undertaken by Public Health Wales demonstrates that the mortality rate – directly or indirectly due to Covid-19 – is consistent with that of other Core Cities when ‘excess deaths’ are considered. This suggests that, in terms of additional deaths, Cardiff is not an outlier but does have a greater number of deaths attributing Covid-19 as a contributor. A greater proportion of death certificates in Cardiff mentioning Covid-19 may be due to guidance issued by the South Wales Coroner encouraging Cardiff-based clinicians to recognise Covid-19 on the death certificate, a practice not necessarily replicated elsewhere across the UK.

Many will be aware of the impact on vulnerable groups, with the situation in care homes the subject of national media attention. Within Cardiff, there are 75 care homes for older people and over 50 domiciliary care providers who have been providing essential care and support to the city’s most vulnerable residents during the Covid-19 crisis.

From the onset of the crisis, care homes and domiciliary care providers have played a very important role in supporting the NHS, enabling people who were medically fit to be discharged safely. This has helped ensure hospitals have sufficient capacity throughout the crisis. The significantly greater risks presented by Covid-19 to care home and domiciliary care residents was also identified and responded to early. Social services officers have been working in close partnership with public protection specialists within Shared Regulatory Services, the Council’s Health & Safety team, the NHS primary care division, public health specialists and the care providers themselves to support effective multi-agency management of any outbreaks in care homes. This work included a strong emphasis on preventative measures, as well as advice on high standards of infection control, access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing of staff and residents and support to workforce. The work has been very challenging

and continues to have the highest priority given the Council's absolute focus on safeguarding the city's most vulnerable residents.

A significant component of this work involved responding quickly to ensure that the whole social care workforce had the appropriate PPE to enable them to safely provide personal care services. As part of the wider package of support, Care First well-being support was made available to the whole social care sector workforce. This helped ensure that all social care workers had access to the right support for their well-being, health and safety. More broadly, provider financial sustainability has been supported by work undertaken to understand the cost pressures on providers as a consequence of the pandemic. In line with Welsh Government guidance on the £40m allocated across the whole of Wales to support adult social care during the pandemic, the Council has established financial arrangements allowing providers to support their workforce in the event of any reduction in demand for domiciliary care and care home services.

Councillors will also be aware of growing evidence suggesting Covid-19 infection is having a disproportionate impact on people with Black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. The Council recognise that this is a distressing time for many and the Welsh Government is undertaking urgent work to understand the factors involved. As the First Minister stated recently, there are many possible reasons for this disproportionality, such as higher rates of underlying health conditions, pre-existing inequalities, increased exposure to Covid-19 as the result of work they may do and other vulnerabilities. The Welsh Government has established a national advisory group to examine this issue, which the Council will support in full.

Finance

The Covid-19 virus and associated lockdown measures have had significant financial implications for the Council, both in terms of additional costs and loss of income.

In respect of expenditure, during the first quarter of the 2020/21 financial year, the Council estimates additional costs of over £18m are likely in responding to the crisis. These costs include, but are not limited to:

- The procurement of PPE to support the ongoing delivery of Council services as well as the wider care sector
- The provision of emergency accommodation to support homeless people during the pandemic
- The continued provision of food / financial assistance to those entitled to free school meals, given the closure of schools
- The provision of support to domiciliary and residential care providers to reflect the additional costs of providing care during the pandemic, and to support their ongoing viability
- The provision of supplier relief, paid in accordance with Government guidelines, in order to ensure service continuity both during and after the current Covid-19 outbreak
- The costs incurred to deliver widespread operational changes necessary to ensure the safe delivery of services, for example, the disposal of waste and the delivery of bereavement services.

The £18m additional expenditure is an estimate that is being kept under constant review, and is being updated regularly as further pressures emerge. These include for example assessing the financial impact of a significant increase in the number of applications for Council Tax Support and current efforts to establish effective 'Contact Track and Trace' services locally as part of an all-Wales initiative.

In respect of income, during the first quarter of 2020/21, the Council estimates that it will lose income in excess of £11m as a direct result of Covid-19. Lost income during the lock-down includes the closure of the Council's cultural and sporting venues such as theatres, Cardiff Castle, Cardiff International White Water and City Hall functions. It also reflects a reduction in activity in other income generating areas including planning, parking, moving traffic offences, trade waste, registration and school catering. As with expenditure, this estimate will be monitored closely and updated as required. Over time the assessment of further income streams will need to be analysed with the most significant being the potential for any impact on the collection of Council Tax this year.

A key consideration linked to the expenditure and income pressures issues encountered during the crisis has been the potential for cash flow issues to occur for the Council. Local Government in Wales through the WLGA has worked collaboratively and positively with Welsh Government to facilitate accelerated payments of the Revenue Support Grant and other grant payments in April and May of this year. This has mitigated the risk of any issues for the Council and has supported not only the expenditure and income pressures but has also allowed the rapid and significant outlay in relation to the payment of business grants.

In terms of funding to support the crisis, it is anticipated that the additional expenditure outlined above will be claimed back from the Welsh Government through the Covid-19 Hardship Fund. This fund, currently totalling £110m, includes an initial tranche of £30m general support, £40m for Adult Social Care, £33m for Free School Meals and £7m for smaller ring-fenced commitments. It is likely that the current funding available will be insufficient to cover all expenditure requirements at an all Wales level and lobbying is continuing for further tranches of support, recognising there will be decisions by the UK government on future expenditure in response to this crisis which would impact on consequential funding for Wales. It is also important to note that, as yet, no decision has been made by the Welsh Government on whether income loss will be reimbursed although some announcement on this is due shortly following positive discussions between the Welsh Government and Local Authorities.

Finally, in terms of funding, the position is constantly evolving in response to Welsh and Central Government announcements and further clarity is required on other funding allocations that have been made, including the £95m Barnett consequential of £1.6bn additional funding for English Councils announced on 18th April 2020.

Expenditure claims for reimbursement from the Covid-19 Hardship Fund are submitted to Welsh Government on a monthly basis, with a view to recovering cash payments made in the previous month. To date, the Council has received £465,000 as a full reimbursement for the claim covering the latter weeks of March 2020. As this was a partial month's claim for the early weeks of the pandemic, it is anticipated that claims for subsequent months will be well in excess of this figure. There is an element of risk regarding the ongoing recovery of costs. In particular, whilst current funding

arrangements are confirmed to the end of June 2020, it looks increasingly likely that challenges will extend beyond that timeframe.

In terms of broader financial planning arrangements, there will be a need to consider and fully capture the implications of moving towards what is likely to be a “new normal” as lockdown restrictions are eased and the recovery phase begins. This is likely to include the impact of exit strategies for service changes put in place during the pandemic. It is also likely that some services may need to be reframed or adjusted in order to accommodate ongoing risk minimisation measures, including social distancing. There may be significant financial implications in this regard, with income streams in particular likely to take a considerable time to revert back to normal levels.

In light of these challenges, monitoring of the Council’s budgetary position in 2020/21 will be more critical than ever, and work has already commenced in this regard. As well as seeking to identify costs specific to the Covid-19 outbreak and the extent to which they may be recoverable, the more ‘business as usual’ position for services is being kept under close scrutiny, including the extent to which the delivery of 2020/21 savings has been affected. The crisis to date and its recovery phases ahead, necessitates that the 2020/21 Budget set in February 2020 will need to be kept under close review. It is the intention that an updated Medium Term Financial Plan will be taken to Council in the summer, hopefully in July 2020, which will be able to reflect the known and anticipated impact on the 2020/21 budget. As well as providing additional clarity with regard to the current financial year, this will enable work on budget setting for 2021/22 to progress.

Schools and Childcare

Pre-school Key Worker Childcare

New guidance issued by the Welsh Government has required that the grant provided to Local Authorities for the Childcare Offer for Wales is to be suspended for three months from 1st April 2020. The Childcare Offer for Wales is temporarily replaced by the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS). This change was put in place to allow the funding to be used to support critical key workers with their childcare costs (if they require childcare in order to continue working) and to support vulnerable children during the Covid-19 crisis.

A number of teams are working behind the scenes to make C-CAS happen, ensuring that these children and those providing the childcare are fully supported. Applications are being processed through the Family Gateway in partnership with the Education department. Staff in the Childcare Offer and Childcare Business Support teams are ensuring childcare providers are supported in their work by processing claims for payments and providing Personal Protective Equipment to childcare providers.

As of 1st May 2020, 79 applications for pre-school key worker childcare had been received. The number of eligible applications and placements confirmed is 77 (17 day-care settings and 60 childminders). 405 children have been benefiting from the scheme, with providers caring for in excess of 300 children each day.

School-based Childcare Hubs

24 hub schools are now open in Cardiff for the children of key workers. This has increased from 16 in March when schools were first closed. On average, childcare is provided for around 370 pupils each day, representing approximately 35% of the total number of children registered. The 24 school-based childcare hubs that are open are:

- **Primary Hubs** – Bryn Hafod; Pontprennau; Whitchurch Primary; Danescourt; Coed Glas; Moorland; Peter Lea; Marlborough; Hywel Dda; Windsor Clive; Rhydypenau; Lakeside; Ninian Park; Rumney
- **Welsh-medium Primary Hubs** – Glan Ceubal; Llanishen Fach; Melin Gruffydd; Ysgol y Wern, Ysgol Treganna
- **Secondary Hubs** – Cathays; Glan Taf
- **Special Hubs** – Ty Gwyn; Bryn y Deryn; Hollies

Vulnerable Learners

Many vulnerable learners are able to access their local mainstream hub, with appropriate support and planning, but a vulnerable learners hub has also been established at the Pupil Referral Unit, providing half-day sessions for up to 20 Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 learners who would be unable to access a childcare hub due to their social and emotional needs.

Specialist sessions for primary-aged children with social and emotional needs are under discussion. A small number of visually or hearing-impaired children have been identified as needing some access to a hub and this will be supported by specialist teachers. Two special school hubs are operating from Ty Gwyn and from Hollies, providing key worker childcare and places for some vulnerable learners.

Schools have compiled vulnerable learner registers, and are keeping in touch with families at least once a week, more if there are concerns, and working with other agencies as necessary.

Education, Children's Services and the Family Gateway have established a Vulnerable Learners Panel meeting daily to discuss children/ young people where there are significant concerns about safety and welfare. Schools can refer to the panel, or cases may be escalated by one of the partner agencies. For a small number, where safety and welfare concerns outweigh consideration of social distancing and potential spread of Covid-19, sessional attendance at a hub is offered.

Supporting Learning at Home

Schools have worked to enable pupils to continue learning at home, with support from the Council and Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. Prior to the shutdown of schools, the Council set up a series of online platforms via Hwb (Google sites, Classrooms and a WhatsApp group) to provide teachers with resources, demonstrate examples of good practice, encourage them to support each other, provide answers to pressing questions and give teachers and teaching assistants the opportunity to engage in professional learning opportunities.

Education staff are currently working with the Consortium and Welsh Government to help develop the Continuity of Learning Plan and associated websites on Hwb. The Welsh Government has also announced the Stay Safe Stay Learning policy, which includes guidance and resources for schools, parents and carers.

Admissions

- Primary Offers: The initial round of primary offers was published on time on 16th April 2020 and parents had until 30th April 2020 to accept or decline their offers.
 - **3,588** reception places were offered in community schools.
 - **95.5%** (3,427) children applying secured one of their preferences.
 - **89.7%** (3,218) children applying secured their first preference.
 - **4.5%** (161) children did not secure any of their preferred reception places.
 - **485** reception places now remain in community schools (85 Welsh-medium, 400 English-medium).
 - **100%** of applications received online.
 - **Six** community primary schools have catchment demand in excess of supply (four English-medium, two Welsh-medium).
- Nursery Offer: The initial round of nursery offers was published on time on 27th April 2020 for those children due to start in September 2020 who will be aged 4 during the school year. Of 1,811 applications, all but 9 children secured their first preference.

A second round of applications is currently being considered (from 12th May 2020), with results going out in late May/early June 2020.

Children's Services

Children's Services have had to rapidly adapt working practices to ensure that services to vulnerable children and families have continued to be delivered. To do this the team has focussed on those that need support the most, especially at this challenging time. This has demanded a greatly increased use of technology to talk to each other as well with service users, reducing the need to direct contact while social distancing is required. The approach has been well-received by the young people the service work with. A survey has been developed to learn from young people and their families about how the Covid-19 crisis has impacted on them, and what changes have worked well for them. The results will be used to inform our plans to restart, recover and renew our services going forward.

Cardiff Parenting

During the Covid-19 crisis, Cardiff Parenting 0-18 continue to accept new referrals through the Family Gateway and Flying Start Parenting from colleagues. The Parenting Teams are currently working with 289 families, who continue to receive their weekly contact by phone or video call to replace the home visit they would have otherwise received. The families also have access to the Cardiff Parenting and Flying Start Facebook pages which are updated regularly and contain useful ideas for activities at home, resources and relevant information for families. Flying Start Stay and Play sessions have been replaced by activities to try at home including story times and craft ideas with materials found in the home. Going forward, the teams are

preparing a weekly group-based video programme and resource packs to be delivered to families in conjunction with additional personalised support.

Cardiff Family Advice & Support

Cardiff Family Advice and Support remains open for business. The Family Gateway have taken over 1,000 calls and responded to more than 300 emails since lockdown and the Family Help Advisers are working with over 318 families whose cases have either come through the Gateway or through step down through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Support4Families teams in Children's Services.

Teams are using a host of communication channels to provide families with the information, advice and assistance that they need. They are working with other partners such as RISE, South Wales Police and the Barnardo's Well-Being Service where referrals to other services are appropriate.

Early Help Police Community Support Officers are helping to undertake welfare checks to vulnerable families, where these are needed. They have also supported the delivery of PPE to childcare providers and have agreed to support the delivery of resource packs to families, where these are required.

Support4Families

Support4Families continue to provide support on a virtual basis. Visits are only taking place when it is deemed that a family may require a statutory intervention and the family are referred to Intake & Assessment at that point.

Safeguarding Guidance

The Council has developed guidance to share within Children's Services and with partners to ensure partners are aware of how we are operating during the Covid-19 crisis. The guidance provides advice for colleagues and is subject to ongoing review and change as we move through the Covid-19 crisis. We understand that at this time a number of factors which may impact on parenting may increase concerns for professionals and members of the public. As the lead safeguarding agency, the Council needs to ensure that all services and multi-agency working continue to protect children and young people across Cardiff.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Intake & Assessment

Referrals continue to be received by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (2,048 since lockdown) and methods for professionals and members of the public to contact MASH remain unchanged. Daily domestic violence discussions continue to be held with partners to assess risk, gain updates and escalate any cases to strategy discussion, if necessary. Strategy discussions / meetings with partners are held virtually and child protection investigations and well-being assessments continue to be undertaken by Intake & Assessment.

Locality Teams

All children known to Children's Services have been risk assessed and the risk ratings continue to be reviewed regularly with oversight by managers. A duty system is in place to ensure that we are in touch with all families and home visits are undertaken remotely where it is practicable to do so. In light of the availability of PPE, we have started reintroducing face-to-face visits – all children who are on the Child Protection Register have been seen and plans are in place for all children who are placed with parents on a Care Order to receive a face-to-face visit within the next two weeks. Following this, these children will continue to receive a face-to-face visit at a minimum of once every 5 weeks. Plans to extend this to children with a care and support plan, children who are looked after in placements other than fostering or residential and care leavers are under development. Operational Manager authorisation is currently required for all face-to-face visits.

Safeguarding

Initial and Review child protection case conferences are taking place virtually, as are children looked after reviews. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) speak to children before their reviews to ascertain their views and wishes. IROs speak to all parties to enable them to track and monitor plans. IROs continue to liaise with National Youth Advocacy Service to ensure appropriate advocacy arrangements are in place before each review.

Adolescent Service

The Adolescent Service continues to facilitate and chair exploitation strategy meetings for high risk young people as required. Staff continue to provide support to young people and their families on a virtual basis, including young people who are in prison. The Adolescent Resource Centre undertake visits when agreed by the Operational Manager for high risk cases of placement breakdown and where there are significant concerns about safety.

Pre- Proceedings / Court Proceedings

The Public Law Outline panel continues to consider cases where children are deemed to be at significant risk of harm. Applications for Court continue to be made and hearings are being held virtually wherever possible. It has been acknowledged by the local judiciary that it will not be possible to stick to timescales in all cases. Genuine reasons for delay in court work will be accepted and decisions will be made on a case by case basis following legal advice.

Children looked after and placements

Supervised contact between children looked after and their families continues to be provided on a virtual basis. Decision making in relation to placements is being undertaken by the Children's Management Team as a group so all Operational Managers have oversight of placement arrangements and arising issues. Social workers for children in in house fostering placements are working closely with Fostering social workers to support children in placements, particularly for placements

that are at risk of breaking down. Fostering social workers are making regular contact with in house foster carers to ensure they are receiving the support that they require. We are in regular contact with providers who are currently reporting that they are managing the crisis well.

The Fostering Service front door has moved to the Into Work Service who now receive all telephone calls and online contacts and complete the initial screening before referring to the Fostering Service for initial assessment. Skills to Foster training is being provided online and all contact is currently virtual. No approvals have been delayed due to the Covid-19 crisis as all prospective foster carers either received a face to face visit before the crisis commenced, or have not yet required one.

Crosslands residential home remains open and operating on a staffing level of 83%. 10 members of staff have been repurposed to Crosslands. Ty Storrie (respite provision) is currently offering alternative provision in response to the Covid-19 crisis and are operating on 75% staffing levels. 14 members of staff have been repurposed to Ty Storrie.

Work is ongoing to map out demand for placements to ensure sufficiency of local provision, in line with the Commissioning Strategy that was approved before the Covid-19 crisis hit. 4 additional local beds are being secured and we are currently matching young people to this accommodation to enable them to return from high cost out of area placements. Work is ongoing to secure additional residential beds and to understand the demand for, and availability of, provision via the young person's Housing Gateway.

Workforce

The focus on recruitment has continued during the Covid-19 crisis and social workers continue to be appointed and take up post. The final appointment to new senior management posts has been made and the appointee will be in post by the end of the month. A Care and Support team, staffed with temporary support workers has been established to manage cases rated "green" and oversight of the children with disabilities has been retained within Children's Services for the duration of the crisis. Additional measures, such as mindfulness sessions have been put in place to support the health and well-being of staff who have experienced an immediate and significant change to their working conditions (i.e. working from home for most of the time). There is regular communication with frontline staff and visibility of decision making and accessibility of Operational Managers to teams has improved. A survey has been developed to learn from their experience during the Covid-19 crisis and the results will be used to inform our plans to restart, recover and renew our services going forward. A review of the skill mix of the service has been commenced and will take account of experience from our response to the Covid-19 crisis.

Supporting Businesses

Business Grants

The Council's Finance team in conjunction with the Economic Development team have processed approximately 4,170 applications for business grants announced by the UK Government to support businesses during the Covid-19 crisis. Using a new computer system built by the ICT department in a matter of days, payments totalling £56.8M have been made up to 6th May 2020. To provide extra support to local businesses, business rate payments have also been deferred.

Economic Development

Councillors will appreciate that the experience of the past eight weeks is unprecedented, certainly in peacetime, and the impact on the national economy, let alone the Cardiff economy, is extremely challenging. In response to this national crisis, the Council's Economic Development team has been in touch with some 7,000 local businesses and has responded to over 3,000 individual enquiries since the emergency began. The team have worked closely with the range of business networks and representative groups such as the CBI, Federation of Small Businesses, Institute of Directors and FOR Cardiff. Together the Economic Development team have shaped the city's response to the crisis and will continue to do so.

The Council's Estates division has deferred collection of business rents for the first quarter of 2020/21 from tenants in Council-owned properties and will continue to keep the matter under review until information is provided regarding what Welsh Government compensation will be available.

The Economic Development team has also assisted in delivering a range of other Council initiatives designed to support local people from sourcing much-needed hand sanitiser to raising over £100,000 to support the various food schemes designed to ensure that food parcels get to those who need them. The Cabinet are enormously impressed and extremely grateful for the generous way that Cardiff-based businesses have responded to our appeal for financial and practical support at this critical time. They have made a vital contribution to the Council's response.

Looking forward, the city's economy will continue to face significant challenges because of this crisis. The Office of Budget Responsibility suggests that the UK economy will see a fall in economic output of around a third of GDP during the current quarter, with Cardiff experiencing a similar fall. It is likely that outside Cardiff, Wales will fare considerably worse. Many businesses have seen their income reduce to zero and whilst many have received financial support via the various Government schemes, we are aware that some have not been able to access those support schemes and the Cabinet Member for Investment and Development will continue to lobby for and help those businesses who need further support.

During these unprecedented times, it has become extremely clear that a local economic development capability with a business support function is vital to ensure an effective response. Local knowledge of the business environment is essential in such times of crisis. We also know that we are far from the end of the crisis, and that

in coming months there will be even more reliance on the work of the Council to support our local businesses. The immediate revival of the Cardiff economy will be crucial to the recovery of the wider South Wales economy, such that it will be critical for the Council to maintain a clear focus on the measures required to ensure that recovery occurs as soon as possible.

The Economic Development team continues to receive investment enquiries and they continue to work closely with those undertaking major projects in the city and those working with the Council to take forward other components of the Administration's Capital Ambition programme. It is clear that those businesses, along with other businesses across Cardiff, are changing the way they work to meet the challenges. It is essential that together our city's businesses can respond to this crisis, and emerge stronger on the other side.

Advice and Enquiries

Adviceline

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, Hubs are closed to the public on a drop-in basis and operate by appointment only. Exceptions are made for emergency matters such as the collection of key fobs, alley gate keys and foodbank parcels. Customers are now signposted to the Adviceline for enquires on benefits, housing, food, 'shielding' and money advice. To deal with this demand, the Adviceline has increased the incoming lines from 4 to 33 and staff have been re-deployed from many other service areas across Housing & Communities. This has resulted in over 250 calls being answered a day, an increase of over 1,000%. The team are able to resolve many of the enquiries over the phone, resulting in a low number of face-to-face appointments being required.

An intensive advertising campaign was launched to promote the Adviceline. This included social media, letters to Council tenants, emails to partners and stakeholder groups and advertising on Smooth and Heart radio stations. This was to ensure that the word was spread as quickly as possible of the help on offer. Customers are also supported and encouraged to complete claims online for benefits, Free School Meals, Council Tax Reduction, housing and schools admissions.

Staff from across the department have been re-trained in the areas that are likely to have the greatest demand for support. For example, Library staff have been trained on Council enquiries, Hub staff have been trained on benefit assessment and Money Advice staff have been trained on different aspects of Council and housing enquiries.

The Advice teams are working with different services to ensure each customer receives an all-round exceptional service by signposting and referring to Age Connect, Floating Support, Independent Living Services and the Volunteer Cardiff website. Staff are encouraged and reminded to practice social distancing at all times when in the Hubs. There has been a real supportive attitude across the service, with everyone pulling together to help each other, regardless of the team they normally work in.

Connect 2 Cardiff

Connect 2 Cardiff (C2C) has continued to offer a full service during lockdown and has even extended the operational hours on digital channels to 8pm with provisions in place for potential weekend work if needed. There are now 33 contact centre staff fully set up and working from home on a daily basis, with calls being answered remotely for the first time since C2C's conception.

Since 23rd March 2020, staff have handled over 31,554 calls, which includes 4,125 calls for Council housing repairs; 4,464 queries relating to public health and 551 calls relating to Council Tax financial hardship as a result of Covid-19. Over 11,000 digital contacts have been handled successfully since 23rd March 2020, with an increase of 52% on the live chat channel.

Food Distribution

Free School Meals

As the effects of the Covid-19 crisis have evolved following the Welsh Government's closure of schools from 23rd March 2020, so has the provision of Free School Meals. A great deal of effort went into the distribution of grab bags for eligible children and young people across the city during the first two weeks of lockdown. Following that, a voucher scheme was put in place for a period of four weeks for those eligible for Free School Meals.

Arrangements are now in place to transfer the necessary funds directly into the accounts of parents and carers via ParentPay. This will provide parents and carers with more flexibility on where they can shop and officers have worked with ParentPay to ensure that all schools in Cardiff are now signed up to the system.

For those families who are not able to access ParentPay, the voucher scheme will continue to be offered and additional support is in place for vulnerable families. The Council will also be cross-checking the list of eligible families against ParentPay and voucher usage to ensure that parents and carers are taking up the help that is available to them.

Meals on Wheels

The Covid-19 crisis has resulted in significant growth of the Meals on Wheels Service, together with an increased recognition of the value of this service to the health and well-being of vulnerable people. The service now delivers over 2,400 meals every week to 481 customers, of which 77% receive meals on a weekend.

Meals on Wheels drivers are also conducting welfare checks for Social Services on those people on the shielding list (80-90 checks a week). In addition, Meals on Wheels are providing meals and sandwiches for two hotels across the city providing accommodation for the homeless in partnership with Youth Foods and provided 4,974 meals in April 2020.

Youth Foods

Councillors will be pleased to learn of the remarkable efforts of Youth Foods in providing food for the most vulnerable people in Cardiff during the recent lockdown. This joint initiative with the GMB union, which is based at County Hall, has seen in excess of 11,500 hot meals and 12,000 sandwich and cake packs being prepared by the team including young apprentice chefs. As mentioned above, delivery to the elderly and the homeless in temporary accommodation was undertaken by our Meals on Wheels Team.

The Youth Foods initiative was set up to provide important vocational training opportunities for young people who are not currently in education, employment or training - ultimately young people who are at risk of being left behind. The current service provided is a clear demonstration of the contribution that young people can make to society at this very challenging time. The Cabinet want to place on record our gratitude for their efforts and to say how proud we are of what they achieved at a critical time.

Advice

By far, the most enquires received on the Adviceline have been around the need for food during these difficult times. Robust and timely processes were quickly established to ensure that no matter what the circumstance, residents of the city were able to access food.

Working in partnership with the Cardiff Foodbank, Food Cardiff and Public Health Wales, a quick solution was available to all that needed help. This included setting up a significant food operation based in Dominions Way library stacks. Staff and volunteers came together to support those who were self-isolating and needed parcels delivered to their door.

To date, the teams have distributed nearly 4,000 parcels of which 3,500 have been delivered to the front doors of those that have self-isolated. This effort has seen all sectors working together to support the community, from the Council, third sector, businesses (who have donated food and money to the cause) volunteers, Public Health Wales and community groups.

Health & Safety

Responding to the pandemic has placed significant demands on the Council's Health and Safety function, which has been central to the organisation's strategic and operational response. A primary focus has been the provision of proactive support for staff – particularly frontline staff in key sectors – who may be at risk of heightened exposure to Covid-19. From the onset the Council's Health and Safety team have promptly issued comprehensive guidance to support staff and service users, which is consistent with national guidance and is responsive to emerging issues. This has included developing and issuing guidance in relation to cleaning and personal hygiene, physical distancing and the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This guidance has been widely communicated and includes material such as instruction videos essential for the safe delivery of critical services during the lockdown period.

Supporting the safe operation of Childcare Hub's has also been a priority, with guidance, onsite support and the supply of hygiene equipment and PPE all crucial to the success of the service. Broader infection control measures are ongoing across the Council, with significant support provided to residential settings. This work will be extended across all Council premises as and when the stringent lockdown measures are eased. Recognising that a large number of Council staff have had to rapidly transition to home working, a Home Working Project is also currently underway. With announcements by the Prime Minister and the First Minister indicating that those who can work from home should continue to do so, the Health and Safety team are actively working to ensure the well-being of staff and place homeworking arrangements on a more sustainable footing. This approach provides further support to those staff who must continue to work from home for the foreseeable future whilst supporting the Council to adhere with social distancing requirements.

Another key component of the work has been supporting mental health and well-being of staff and elected members. Those who are isolating due to any known vulnerability have received keeping in touch welfare calls from Occupational Health, linking them to other services/resources where required. Additional counselling and CBT services have been contracted to further support staff who have been affected, either directly or indirectly, by the virus. As the crisis continues, the Council is now in the 8th week of issuing weekly resources and webinars to support mental health and well-being, which compliments the well-being group support established for front line staff. Recognising the impact Covid-19 has had on the Social Care sector in particular, the Council has extended its Employee Support Programme to 4,000 private care provider staff contracted by the Council, to ensure they receive the essential counselling and well-being support they will need at this most difficult time.

Personal Protective Equipment

The national challenges associated with the supply and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is widely recognised. The Council's ongoing work with partners has, however, ensured that PPE has been getting to the staff that need it, despite the national challenges.

Guidance was received from Public Health Wales setting out PPE requirements within care homes and care settings, including within citizen's homes across the city. The Council has moved swiftly to ensure that logistical challenges with sourcing and distribution were met. Officers from across the Council have worked closely with Welsh Government and also collaboratively with local suppliers and their supply chains to ensure that our PPE requirements as a city and council could be fulfilled within very short timescales, whilst also ensuring that value for money is achieved.

The Council's proactive approach to the procurement of PPE has helped ensure that the demand has been met, securing the health and safety of the council and wider care sector workforce. As part of this approach a governance structure was put in place, with daily meetings to ensure that issues were considered as they emerged and decisions could be made in a timely manner. Whilst challenging, appropriate processes were rapidly established to ensure that care providers have the PPE they needed to look after the vulnerable people of Cardiff.

As the arrangements for collecting and distributing PPE evolved, it has been possible to transition from a collection service to direct delivery to care homes, ensuring that essential frontline workers do not have to step away from their duties. To date 1,150,000 pieces of PPE has been provided to key workers within Cardiff. Every effort will continue to be made to equip frontline workers as they carry out the vital work of looking after our older and vulnerable people during these unprecedented times.

Moving forward, it is recognised that the demand for PPE will significantly increase as and when the lockdown eases, particularly in circumstances where social distancing will be difficult to enforce. Work is therefore ongoing to ensure that all Council services, particularly key areas of delivery such as schools and early years, receive the required support.

Homelessness & Council Housing

Homelessness

Services have responded rapidly to ensure that those living in emergency accommodation and those who were living on the street were cared for during the pandemic and could self-isolate effectively. Two hotels have been opened with support and security staff on site 24/7. Isolation units have been set up at the shipping container sites, with support on site to help homeless people who are symptomatic. Food is also being provided across hotel and hostel accommodation to help clients stay indoors.

Substance misuse services have rapidly developed to meet the needs of clients during the pandemic. Many clients are more receptive to services than ever before, as the lack of begging opportunities means that they cannot afford to buy drugs. The multidisciplinary partnership has responded well to this, bringing services into the hotels and hostels and developing the use of the new and improved drug substitute, Buprenorphine.

Staff from across Housing and the wider council have been redeployed into the hostel service to deliver this change. Officers from tenancy management, finance, caretaking and legal services have volunteered to staff the hostels and deliver this change.

The use of hotels has not been without its challenges, both for the officers operating them and the local communities; however, they have demonstrated the success that can be achieved in tackling homelessness if the right accommodation and support is available.

More than 140 clients have been housed and only five very entrenched rough sleepers remain on the streets, only a few months ago the number of rough sleepers was in the 80s. This is a huge achievement and one that must be sustained into the future. Longer term planning is now underway to sustain and build on this success.

Council Housing Development

The Covid-19 crisis has impacted the progress of delivering new Council homes, with the buy backs scheme and the Courtenay Road scheme in Splott most impacted. The

buy backs scheme effectively stopped once the lockdown was implemented and the crisis is still affecting the Council's ability to complete on purchases that have been agreed as onward chains have stalled.

The Courtenay Road scheme consists of 30 Council flats and was due at the end of March 2020; however, the contractor ceased all site operations due to issues with the subcontracted workforce and the supply of materials as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. This scheme will complete shortly with plans for the contractor to remobilise. Despite these issues, the overall cumulative target of 400 completed homes was short by only 84 properties resulting in cumulative completions of 316 by 31st March 2020.

Adult Services

Shielded People

To date, nearly 10,000 people have been written to in Cardiff by the Chief Medical Officer, advising them that they need to 'shield' for 12 weeks. This number increases regularly as GPs refer their patients onto the list and Welsh Government include different illnesses that need to be added too.

The Adviceline has provided advice and support to this cohort, who are some of the most vulnerable people in the city. A robust system has been set up to ensure that those who need the Welsh Government parcels are able to access them easily and quickly. Safety net measures have also been put into place to ensure that for those who need food urgently, or who have specific dietary requirements or need help to take the food into their home, the Food Team based in Dominions Way can create a bespoke response.

To date, the Adviceline and Social Services have had contact with just under 8,500 of those who are shielded. Letters have been sent from the Council's Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to those who have not had contact so far.

Finally, a team of staff have been deployed to knock on people's front doors, who are shielded to ensure they are safe and to make sure they have everything they need. The team are determined to have contact with everyone who has been identified as needing to shield.

First Point of Contact Hospital

Our First Point of Contact Hospital Team, locally known as the Pink Army, is working side-by-side at the Dragon's Heart Hospital within Principality Stadium with the Transfer of Care Team. Demonstrating their versatility, the team will provide this support in addition to maintaining the service to Health colleagues and patients at the University Hospital of Wales. The team are a single point of contact working with clinicians, patients and families to expedite safe timely discharge, provide tailored information, advice and assistance, reduce the risk of readmission and promote independent living. To date, 119 patients have been reviewed in partnership with the Transfer of Care Team to determine the most appropriate discharge pathway. Through this work, 84 patients have been supported to remain independent when discharged from hospital and 12 patients have been supported at the Dragon's Heart Hospital.

First Point of Contact Community

All First Point of Contact Community staff have been homeworking for over a month. The transition is now working the same as it would have in the office, but with reduced service. Given the logistical changes, the focus is people currently in crisis, people who could get into crisis, safeguarding and carer support as well as providing information and advice for people who can stay safe in their home setting, such as information on picking up prescriptions, shopping etc.

Since 30th March 2020, when homeworking was mobilised, the team has dealt with 1,411 inbound calls, with a 99% answer rate. They have made 597 referrals for support, with 92% dealt within the team and 8% of calls being progressed to Social Services for a full assessment. Strong links are also maintained with the Council's Adviceline with regard to shielding and access to food parcels.

Independent Living Services

Independent Living Services (ILS) are providing a critical service to vulnerable older people during the current crisis. This has required a change in direction to support citizens of Cardiff, both logistically through prioritising critical services, but still maintaining the core objective of supporting people to live independently at home. Each part of ILS has played a crucial role in this by adapting their service to meet the current needs of citizens.

All of the ILS Visiting team is working from home. The team is continuing to complete financial assessments for Domiciliary and Residential care, which is now done over the phone as much as they are able. They are also undertaking welfare calls to clients to ensure that they are managing and to provide information, advice and assistance, as well as going out to pick up shopping or prescriptions for citizens over 65 and vulnerable people who have no other support. The team has undertaken 210 visits to recently discharged patients providing personal support and 26 collections of emergency prescriptions. Several members of the team are also supporting vulnerable people by assisting Council food distribution schemes and some staff have been deployed to the Community Resource Team/ Telecare, Meals on Wheels and the hospital.

Joint Equipment Store

In consultation with its partner organisations, the Joint Equipment Store has implemented an activity reduction plan to ensure their most urgent services are protected. This includes:

- The delivery of continence products across Cardiff and the Vale for existing customers, hospital wards and urgent new patients required for discharge or palliative care.
- Same/ next day delivery service to support hospital discharge, avoid admissions and carer breakdown.
- Standard equipment deliveries are only being completed if they are required to directly support discharge or stop an imminent admission.

Social distancing measures and protective equipment are used as per Welsh Government guidelines. In some instances, the Joint Equipment Store is unable to overcome some physical distancing problems, such as when drivers have to travel together in a vehicle and set up equipment that requires two people. However, the work of the Joint Equipment Store is clearly set out in the Welsh Government guidance “where reasonable measures are not possible”. To mitigate this, protective equipment is worn at all times.

Since 30th March 2020, the Joint Equipment Store has completed 3,800 deliveries of continence products. 1,173 standard deliveries have been undertaken within five working days, as well as 50 deliveries being made on the same/ next working day. This includes eight enabling discharge; 28 to facilitate discharge of patients who wish to pass away at home with loved ones; and 14 to avoid hospital admission. The same/ next day service has delivered more equipment in one month than it had in four months during 2019/20. Ten additional drivers from across the Council have been trained and are on standby should the need arise for them to be deployed.

Occupational Therapy

The Occupational Therapy (OT) team have been set up to work agilely, but are maintaining a skeleton staff within Willcox House of two Contact Officers and a duty Occupational Therapist providing appropriate triage. This set-up is managed on a rota basis. Work has been prioritised to assess and provide services for urgent referrals to support critical services. This includes urgent manual handling assessments, breakdown of care, facilitating discharge from hospital, end-of-life arrangements and high-end safeguarding. This will ensure resources are focussed where they are needed, so other services such as the Joint Equipment Store are not unnecessarily pressurised.

A considerable amount of support is being given to care agencies in order to prevent hospital admissions and care breakdown, some of which the team is able to complete over the telephone and some we have to attend at the person’s home. A dedicated Occupational Therapist is reviewing the suitability of clients to be discharged from nursing/ residential homes to their own home. Potential residents will be allocated to an Occupational Therapist who will visit and consider solutions to get the resident back to their own home. This is as an urgent piece of work to improve patient flow in hospital and re-unite families.

Since the beginning of lockdown, the OT team has received 151 referrals, which is a 50% reduction on the usual number of referrals. Around one-third of these were for their critical service and resulted in the prevention of a hospital admission or breakdown in care, supported hospital discharge or avoided the need for more care. There were also 36 referrals from care agencies to support manual handling issues. Although demand is currently lower than normal, the OT team anticipate that demand will grow as people will have become de-conditioned due to a lack of mobility, thereby impacting on their longer term welfare.

Disabled Facilities

The Disabled Facilities Grants team is currently prioritising repairs to defective adaptations, ensuring people remain at home and care remains in place, as well as

emergency adaptations, in order to support hospital discharge; reduce breakdown of care and prevent admissions. To complete essential works, full procedures have been created requiring client consent to do works, strict social distancing measures, full cleaning on entry & exit of properties and use of appropriate PPE. Since lockdown began, the team have delivered 20 urgent adaptations, with one to allow hospital discharge and 19 to avoid hospital admission due to breakdown of care.

Day Opportunities

The Day Opportunities team has completely stopped their regular work. Due to current measures, they are unable to take clients out into the community. Therefore, Day Opportunities staff have been deployed to other services including Telecare, First Point of Contact and the Community Resource Team. Other Day Opportunities staff who are working from home are contacting people they have worked with and providing a welfare check, where concerns are dealt with appropriately through our assessment process and support provided where required. To date, 1,000 shielding calls have been made, as well as 325 Welfare calls to those who are socially isolated.

Since a lot of Cardiff's community groups have had to temporarily close their doors, the Community Co-ordinator has been keeping in touch with attendees for a chat to see how they are doing; signposting them to relevant services, such as shopping, and helping keep people active providing links to online exercises for older people. We are also maintaining a directory of all services aimed at older people across Cardiff, available to anyone. The database includes local shopping and prescription services to assist people who do not have the support to collect these for themselves.

Telecare

In March 2020, Telecare mobile wardens attended 673 call outs, of which 334 related to falls. This resulted in £43,950 cost avoidance for the Welsh Ambulance Service. The service has continued to operate throughout the Covid-19 crisis with plentiful provision of appropriate, high-quality PPE for staff. Several volunteers have been welcomed and trained, and two of these volunteers are now fully trained mobile wardens. Cardiff Telecare is also the first in Wales to offer a self-service (plug and play) installation option to its customers who are able to install their own Lifeline unit, improving accessibility and choice when accessing the service.

Volunteering

During the Covid-19 crisis and under the umbrella 'Together for Cardiff', volunteering has taken a shift in emphasis to enable over 1,000 people to register as volunteer food parcel delivery drivers. They have helped ensure that those who are unable to access food supplies are given a vital food parcel. To date over 3,500 parcels have been delivered.

The Volunteer Cardiff website has become a vital source of information and support as it has brought all mutual aid groups and other local organisations such as Cardiff Third Sector Council together in one place to help promote their services at this time. This interest is shown by the fact that the website has received over 40,000 views in one month.

To complement and further support the rapid increase of volunteering across the city, the Council has worked with partners to develop a network of trusted community groups or Anchor Organisations. This network will enable communication, key messages, and resources such as e-learning to be disseminated to newly-established volunteer groups. This network will also act as a framework for key partner strategies such as the food response coordinated by Food Cardiff. Volunteer groups will be able to feedback intelligence and emerging issues.

Thus far, six organisations including Action in Caerau & Ely (ACE), South Riverside Community Development Centre (SRCDC), Grangetown Community Action, Boomerang, Flourish (Cardiff Community Housing Association) and Community Wellbeing (United Welsh Housing Association) have trialled the Anchor Organisation approach in over 11 wards across Cardiff and are meeting weekly to discuss good practice and progress. The Anchor Organisation network will continue to expand and aim to use operational data and volunteer intelligence to prioritise the areas most in need.

Producing PPE

Llanover Hall (Learning for Life) staff have stepped up to use Llanover Hall Arts Centre as a hub for making scrubs for the NHS. Community Education Officers will be co-ordinating the delivery and collection of materials for tunics which volunteers will be sewing up to make tunics for the NHS. After a call-out for volunteers with more than 100 positive responses from tutors, learners and other members of the public, a core team of 17 volunteers has been gathered who have overlocking machines to make the garments. The Llanover Hall Charitable Trust is donating a new overlocking machine to the centre so two machines will be in operation in the centre. The aim is to produce around 600 tunics each week. The first batch of material will be sorted into packs ready for production. All social distancing requirements are being adhered to. Thanks to Learning for Life sewing tutors, who are helping out with technical details and instructions as well as volunteering themselves to produce tunics. The materials for this initiative are being provided by a Welsh Government-funded company and we are working in association with a Cardiff school teacher who put out the call initially for helpers.

Parks

Cardiff Council, along with other Core Cities, has taken the decision to keep its parks and green spaces open for use and, during the lockdown period, the importance of these spaces has become increasingly clear, with the mental and physical well-being benefits being immeasurable. In particular, these spaces provide a place of sanctuary for residents living in flats and other properties who are without outdoor space. It has, however, been necessary on safety grounds to implement closures of outdoor sport and recreational facilities, including our play areas, multi-use games areas, tennis courts and outdoor fitness equipment, and daily inspections are undertaken to ensure that security measures are in place.

Our Park Ranger service, and indeed our wider Parks team, have been working with others to ensure that our parks are safe to use. They have been working seven days per week undertaking independent and joint patrols with South Wales Police and targeting areas of high use.

The Cabinet are very aware from the feedback that has been received from a variety of sources that the decision to keep parks open is one that has been very much welcomed and are also pleased to report that our park users have responded positively, with the majority conforming to social distancing requirements. The Parks team has also listened to concerns from park users and have responded accordingly. This was the case at Roath Park where, last month, a one-way system was introduced around the lake area which is designed to improve social distancing and reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19.

The Parks team is also making a wider contribution to the collective Council effort, as well as supporting vulnerable people across the city. A number of Parks staff have been being redeployed into roles in Bereavement & Registration Services, Housing and Social Care.

Recovery plans are now starting to be implemented and it will be a very different summer to normal with reduced staff capacity, new operational arrangements as a consequence of the pandemic and increased demands and work volumes. The look and feel of the city's parks and green spaces will take time to return to what can be considered as normal as the Council continues to contribute to the wider community need.

Waste Management & Recycling

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, the Council's regular collection of waste and recycling materials in separate streams had to be changed to help manage the impact of Covid-19 and ensure the wellbeing of both residents and the workforce.

To simplify and ensure waste operations can continue with a reduced workforce, it was not possible to sort recyclable waste. As such, it has gone to the energy from waste plant along with the residual waste. This is the safest way to dispose of waste that may be carrying Covid-19.

From the start of June 2020, the waste collection service will return to collect separate waste streams, with the exception of garden waste. The introduction of social distancing controls and measures such as screens will support re-opening the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) following the re-introduction of collections of separate waste/ recycling streams.

Bulky waste collections and green garden waste collections have been stopped until the emergency is over. Stopping these services has helped the Council to deploy the workforce to keeping our streets clean; however, one-off garden waste collections have been taking place across the city on Saturdays throughout May. The additional collections were arranged to help residents dispose of some of their grass cuttings and garden waste, which have built up since the service was halted because of the Covid-19 crisis.

Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) were closed at the end of March due to social distancing and essential travel restrictions. However, following the Welsh Government's announcement on Friday 8th May, the Council is developing plans to re-open HWRCs from early June, including the introduction of a booking system to support demand and support social distancing controls.

Bereavement & Registration Services

The Covid-19 crisis has seen increased demand for Bereavement and Registration Services as the services have dealt with the increased number of deaths alongside legislative change.

Following legislative changes to deal with the excess death rate, the Register Office has been able to take telephone registrations for deaths, but all birth registrations and marriage ceremonies and notices have been suspended. Numerous staff from across the Council have been redeployed into the service to assist in a variety of roles. For example, many employees from St David's Hall and City Hall are supporting colleagues at Thornhill Crematorium. All of the redeployed staff deserve recognition for the positive contribution they are making both behind the scenes and on the front line.

Bereavement Services increased their cremation service capacity to 20 per day with 45-minute funeral services times being offered six days a week. On 6th May the capacity was further increased to cope with demand to 30 per day by reducing service times to 30 minutes and cremating over the 24-hour period. These measures have ensured that the bereaved have not had to wait unduly long for a funeral service for their loved one. Burial services continue to meet any demands on the service. From 26th May, the 45-minute funeral service times for cremation services will be reinstated offering up to 20 cremation services per day.

Complying with, and enforcing, Government guidelines has necessitated the closure and reopening of cemetery sites, as well as restricting the numbers allowed to attend funerals.

Transport and Public Spaces

The unprecedented measures introduced to limit the spread of Covid-19 have had profound impacts on our city. Most striking perhaps is the significant decrease in traffic on Cardiff's streets. In recent weeks, the number of people walking and cycling around their neighbourhoods for essential travel and daily exercise has also been very noticeable. It has become clear that social distancing will need to continue for some time. There is a pressing need to ensure that levels of motorised traffic do not grow unmanageably when travel increases again, as has happened in other cities following a period of lockdown.

The need to maintain social distancing while undertaking essential journeys also means that there is an urgent need for action to give people safe space to walk and cycle and to address traffic speeds. Addressing these needs is the focus of the Transport Recovery Plan now being rapidly developed by the Council:

1. Measures to tackle speeding vehicles through a communications campaign and the introduction of 20mph limits in the vicinity of district centres;
2. Installing temporary segregated cycle routes along the alignment of planned strategic cycle ways;
3. Temporary measures to facilitate active travel and social distancing in district and local centres, including the city centre;

4. Temporary road closures and modal filters in residential areas to manage traffic and improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists;
5. Measures outside schools to facilitate active travel and social distancing when schools return, and;
6. Temporary bus gates and other measures to enhance bus movements.

The Welsh Government is making funding available for sustainable transport measures in response to Covid-19. The Council will be submitting initial funding proposals for the measures outlined above on 21st May 2020. Further details of measures will be published along with a report due to be considered by the Cabinet in the near future.

Public Spaces

As part of the Transport Recovery Plan, the Council is bringing forward a number of pilot schemes designed to keep the public safe and able to socially distance in public spaces. The first neighbourhood shopping area which will be adapted for safety reasons is Wellfield Road in Plasnewydd. Plans have been drawn up to remove car parking on either side of the road to ensure that the pavement can be safely extended into the highway for the public to use.

As part of the Council's response to the Covid-19 crisis, other ideas being put forward include creating temporary cycleways, removing street furniture, carrying out a speed awareness campaign and re-designing public space around neighbourhood shopping centres.

Road traffic schemes are also being looked at in the city including accelerating some previously agreed Clean Air proposals in the city centre on Castle Street. The traffic lane next to the Castle will be removed so that the walkway can be extended into the road for both pedestrians and cyclists to use. Transport improvement schemes in Central Square and Wood Street including the development of a new cycleway will also be brought forward.

Further schemes are also being devised to ensure that people can safely use sustainable transport to get around the city during the recovery period and further details will be given on these schemes in the weeks ahead.

Clean Air Plan

The lockdown in response to Covid-19 has led to reduced road traffic and significant improvement in air quality in Cardiff. Measured daily NO₂ levels have followed a downward trend during this period. The Council's city centre schemes remain our priority as they have been shown to deliver the greatest overall air quality benefit to the city, and it is more important than ever that these public health improvements are progressed.

Immediately prior to the lockdown on 23rd March 2020, in conjunction with the Welsh Government, the Council submitted a state aid notification to the European Commission in relation to our proposed £2.25m bus retrofit scheme. The Council is still awaiting a decision from the commission on this scheme and will need to assess

the impact of Covid-19 on the bus industry and how the retrofit scheme can progress upon recovery.

Some additional assessments are also being undertaken to look at how we can further use the £1.8m taxi grant from the Welsh Government in order to promote the uptake of cleaner taxis operating in our city. Again, the impact to the taxi trade from Covid-19 has been substantial and the Council will need to be mindful of how it can support the trade as the city emerges from this crisis.

Planning

With effect from 27th March 2020, temporary changes were made to the delivery of some of the functions of the Development Management Service in response to the evolving situation. These changes effectively froze the registration/validation and consultation upon new applications and also stopped the issuing of decisions (although Officers progressed work in assessing proposals already submitted).

Planning Committee meetings have also been cancelled until further notice. However, these temporary arrangements were reviewed at the end of April 2020 and functions will be gradually brought back into operation through a three-phased approach with consultations and the issuing of decisions re-commencing on all types of applications from 18th May 2020. These changes have been in line with other Welsh and Core City Local Authorities.

The approach recognises the important role which the Planning Service can play in helping the city recover from the current challenges by, for example, bringing forward new affordable housing, schools and business premises. This is aligned with other Local Planning Authorities who are now also introducing enhanced arrangements after a period where there were limitations on the ability to provide a 'business as usual' service. The phased approach also reflects the need to maintain momentum on schemes which already have approvals in place and gradually introduces wider consultation and decision-making. The final phase will respond to recent Welsh Government Regulations with regard to the operation of Planning Committees in the current context with virtual arrangements being considered. To accord with the constitution of the Council, no applications will be determined through delegations if the decision should be taken by Committee.

With regard to planning policy, officers are currently continuing to undertake important background work as part of the ongoing Plan Review process but at this juncture no formal Council resolution has been passed to proceed with a replacement Local Development Plan. Stakeholders will be kept informed of any future plan-making arrangements in due course.

These arrangements will be kept under review and further updates will be provided should changes to the three-phase approach be considered necessary.

Supporting Residents during the Covid-19 Crisis

The Diff Diaries

On 24th April 2020, the Diff Diaries project was launched to encourage children and young people in Cardiff to share their experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic. This partnership initiative, driven by Cardiff's Child Friendly City and Cardiff Commitment teams, is providing children and young people with the opportunity to document their activity, thoughts and feelings during the global crisis by submitting video recordings, photo collages or written diary entries. The project is open to 7-16 year olds. Entries must be uploaded via the Hwb platform. The project will come to an end one month after all schools re-open for statutory education.

Adult Learning Online

In response to the Covid-19 crisis, Adult Learning are working to adapt to social distancing measures to continue to provide our service to the community. The team is currently working on a restricted curriculum, focussing on both essential and digital literacy alongside our employability courses. They have been working to trail online delivery with both existing and new students of all levels. Using either Zoom meeting software or Skype video calling, they have managed to re-engage groups of students from Ty Canna, Cardiff People First and Women's Connect Cardiff in courses such as Breathing Space, Get to Know your Smartphone and Tablet, and the BT Skills for Tomorrow programme.

Additionally, Adult Learning continue to offer digital support services online and via telephone. Digital Surgery, which addresses digital device issues, gives advice on scams, provides training and supports people using new applications or software among other things, has had a steady take-up across Cardiff over the past few weeks. Working with Digital Communities Wales the team is identifying and supporting vulnerable and isolated individuals in the community, providing guidance for digital literacy training and finding solutions for lack of digital equipment or internet connection in the household.

Moving forward the team plan to initiate an 'all-digital' approach to online delivery. Using Google Classroom they are confident that they can provide a fantastic service. To roll out this approach, they are moving existing courses and programmes that are currently being run onto Google Classroom and monitoring student experience. Once this has been successful, they will then look to expand to other courses across all curriculums to ensure that they can meet expectation of learners.

Digital inclusion, whilst introducing new delivery, is a barrier that Adult Learning are keen to overcome, therefore they are now working towards providing a laptop/ tablet loan scheme to learners who wish to engage with the online delivery method. Students will need to be enrolled with the library in order to access the loan scheme, and initially sign a user agreement and privacy acknowledgement to ensure that they are aware of current GDPR/Prevent Duty laws. Once this has been completed, the student will be able to loan a device from the Hub service/Adult Learning service and join their virtual classroom environment. Each student will fill out a questionnaire to assess personal device needs and competency to ensure that measures are put in place to

support the individual digitally aside from Google Classroom training and to ensure that access to data is supplied if WiFi is not available.

All equipment will be pre-loaded with essential applications and shortcuts, so students will be able to re-direct to classrooms easily. If a student encounters issues with their device or would like training, the Digital Support team/Digital Surgery service will

provide distanced support to the user via video chat or telephone call.

Adult Learning Disability Inclusion in Community Education (DICE) tutors are also delivering new courses to socially-isolated adults with mental health issues using the Zoom app. The courses are learner-led which encourages adults to participate in a variety of topics to improve mental well-being and physical health. Zoom sessions have included mindfulness, healthy cooking, music, art, creative writing and pottery. 14 learners who have enrolled on the course have seen a significant improvement in their well-being and have commented that these sessions are vital to combat feelings of loneliness and depression. For many these courses are the only opportunity they have all week to collaborate with others in an enjoyable and supportive setting.

Learning for Life in Lockdown

During lockdown, the Learning for Life team has been in regular contact with tutors to ensure their health and well-being and try to support them as well as generating ideas going forward on how best to carry on to keep the service visible. Gardening sessions have continued using Skype, resulting in one learner providing plants outside her home for passers-by to take. Free YouTube tutorials have been created, including one for a children's anime course planned for September. A WhatsApp group has also been set up for a youth class – children have recorded audio files reading their stories and poems as well as pictures and videos of characters they have created.

Community Safety

During this time, the Council has played a key role in keeping communities safe and protecting the most vulnerable citizens. The Community Safety team has enhanced their partnership working with Police, Health and other key partners; they have been extra vigilant in helping some of the most "at risk" groups such as the homeless and those in danger of domestic violence and abuse; and they have continued to strengthen relationships across safeguarding arrangements to protect and support children and adults at risk.

Cardiff Dogs Home

Safe systems to assess dogs, match them with a foster family and transport them to the family have enabled Cardiff Dogs Home to continue placing dogs in foster care during lockdown. There are currently nine dogs in the kennels. The fostering scheme has ensured that the number of staff required to work at the facility is kept to a minimum. Safe systems have been put in place to ensure the service has continued to discharge the Council's statutory responsibilities regarding stray dogs. 65 stray dogs have come into the centre since lockdown – 48 have been returned safely to their owners. Going forward the service has drawn up a recovery plan and remains mindful

of enforcing social distancing as well as any other legislative changes which will prove challenging within these frontline services.

Culture, Venues, Tourism & Events

Culture and Leisure Venues

As a result of government advice, the Council took the difficult decision to close all of its venues and attractions due to the Covid-19 crisis. This included Cardiff Castle, the Museum of Cardiff, the Norwegian Church, City Hall, Mansion House, St David's Hall and the New Theatre. The capital's extensive event programme has also been impacted with events either being postponed until later in the year or, as in the case of the Guinness Pro14 Finals and Nitro World Games, being cancelled altogether.

The Events team has been involved in supporting the many logistical challenges faced across the city, including the installation of the one-way pedestrian system around Roath Park. Other staff have assisted in the creation of the temporary mortuary facility in Cardiff Bay and supported the development and operation of the Dragon's Heart hospital at the Principality Stadium.

Where officers are working from home, considerable effort is being made to continue to engage with patrons, clients and partners to ensure that services are in the best position possible to open their doors once it is considered safe to do so.

The Museum of Cardiff is posting a virtual tour of their collection – one object from the collection every day – on their Twitter and Facebook social media channels. Every Wednesday they ask virtual visitors to the museum to send their memories, ideas or pictures. The team has also launched a new section on their website 'My Museum' with downloadable resources for families, parents and carers and those who are looking after older people – whether they are together or having to socially distance. The website, created by the museum's Projects Officer and supported by teachers from Fitzalan High and Ninian Park Primary Schools, has activity sheets for early years and primary school aged children that can be downloaded. United Welsh Housing Association also printed them off to send to families in their houses. In addition, an advice sheet has been developed for people who want to keep in touch with older relatives or for staff to use as activities in care homes. This provides a guide on interviewing people about their memories and lives and how to record them as 'oral histories' that can be reviewed when life returns to normal.

As a discretionary function that is reliant on income and social interaction, the road ahead certainly looks challenging, not only for the Council, but for their many cultural partners; however, with the commitment, professionalism, determination, creativity and innovation that has been witnessed over recent weeks, the Council will seek to embrace the opportunities presented by the current period of social distancing and isolation and, through continued partnership, will help forge a bright and sustainable future for the arts, cultural and creative sectors in Cardiff.

Sport & Leisure

All facilities, such as GLL-managed leisure centres, Channel View Leisure Centre, Canton Community Centre, Cardiff International White Water, and Cardiff Riding School, have been closed with a staffing rota in place to carry out essential building and security checks. This aspect of Council services is primarily income-reliant and officers and partners are working closely together to put in place plans that can support and ensure the continuity of services once lockdown restrictions are eased.

In terms of alternative provision during this challenging period, the Council's leisure partner GLL is offering online health and fitness classes to its members. The GP referral team, despite not being able to carry out normal programmes at facility gyms, are also providing essential online classes for the patients referred to the team with high levels of obesity, risk of coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Feedback received from clients has been excellent.

Cardiff Riding School continues to maintain a skeleton workforce on a shift rota to ensure the horses continue to be cared for, fed, cleaned and exercised in readiness for the start-up of lessons and classes post-lockdown.

The Children's Play team has also been operating the food larder initiative from Splott Play Centre in partnership with the National Lottery and local superstores. Staff have been delivering thousands of shopping bags of food and essential items to the families known to be most at risk through poverty or requiring additional support.