
West Sussex County Council Covid-19 Briefing July 2020

1. Priority issues

(a) West Sussex approach to the reset

County Council Services

- 1** In a number of significant areas of our activity, West Sussex County Council remains in a very significant response phase to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are also working hard on resetting and rebooting the organisation, to ensure that we have clear, agreed and deliverable priorities.
- 2** The reset work will be:
 - Led by Cabinet, with appropriate engagement and governance
 - Focused on the future of West Sussex and West Sussex County Council's priority outcomes
 - Built on our assets and learning from the initial COVID-19 response
 - Grounded in and encompassing the improvement work needed and changed statutory provisions in Children's Services, Fire and Rescue, Adults' Services and Governance and also in our commitments to tackling Climate Change and supporting the economy
 - Shaped and managed through a single integrated corporate plan for all our business which ensures we are making the best use of resources, securing value for money and have a sustainable organisation
 - Based on creating and nurturing stronger partnerships locally and regionally whilst recognising each organisation will be responsible for its own approach
- 3** A detailed paper setting out the process for developing the Reset Business Plan and the underpinning Reboot work over the summer is to be discussed at today's meeting.

Economy Reset Plan

- 4** COVID-19 is having a significant impact right across the county's economy and the economy reset needs attention. Businesses are being hit hard, residents are losing their jobs and livelihoods, and the implications of the aviation industry crisis on Gatwick Diamond Economic Area are far-reaching and impact the local, regional and national economies.
- 5** Government will lead the way on the national recovery strategy and re-set of the economy, which will be phased over time, but delivery will primarily be at a local level. The County Council will seek to play its full part working with a broad range of partners, including the Coast to Capital LEP and the Districts and Boroughs. We will be guided by evidence to fully understand the impact of COVID-19 on the West Sussex economy, and to inform activities and interventions we take. We recognise the economy will not be the same as before, and that there will need to be place based (including town centres) and

sector approaches (e.g. aviation, tourism and hospitality) which at times will reach beyond the county.

- 6** The County Council will set out its proposed areas for focus in responding to COVID-19, including commitments from the current Economic Growth Plan 2018-23 and new areas for additional attention, such as the impact of the aviation crisis on Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond economy; skills and employment reflecting the significant impact COVID-19 is having on jobs, the self-employed and those seeking to enter the labour market in the county; maximising any opportunities to support businesses and the wider area through government initiatives; and accelerating the adoption and application of digital technology and skills. The Cabinet will be considering the Economic Reset Plan at its July meeting.

(b) Implementing the Government's Plan to Rebuild

Schools

- 7** Five separate guidance documents have been provided by the Department for Education in relation to the return to schools in September including: Early Years; Schools; Special Schools; Further Education; and parents.
- 8** The team are currently working through the documentation to pull together key points to raise with schools and those which suggest are 'must do', 'should do' and 'could do'. Further clarification documents relating to school meals, transport and curriculum are expected shortly.
- 9** We will be working with our schools to refine guidance for September on safe opening and are working with schools to plan for a phased transition and induction for pupils into their schools during the first week of term in order that pupils are supported into new routines and expectations with the time and support required to rebuild the confidence of children.
- 10** The transport team is currently exploring different ways of meeting schools' needs for home to school transport and will be also taking account of additional guidance we expect to be published by the Government shortly.

Testing and contact tracing: local outbreak management

Overview

- 11** As part of the NHS Test and Trace Service, which launched on 28 May 2020, each upper tier local authority (LA) is required to have a Local COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plan in place to allow improved speed of response. This builds on local knowledge, working with Public Health England (PHE) local Health Protection Team (HPT's).
- 12** The Director of Public Health (DPH) for every upper tier LA will drive this local plan through a COVID-19 Health Protection Board (C19 HPB), working in collaboration with Gold Command and a member led Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB), which will provide political ownership and public-facing engagement and communication for outbreak response.
- 13** Annex A shows the agreed governance structure for the West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan.

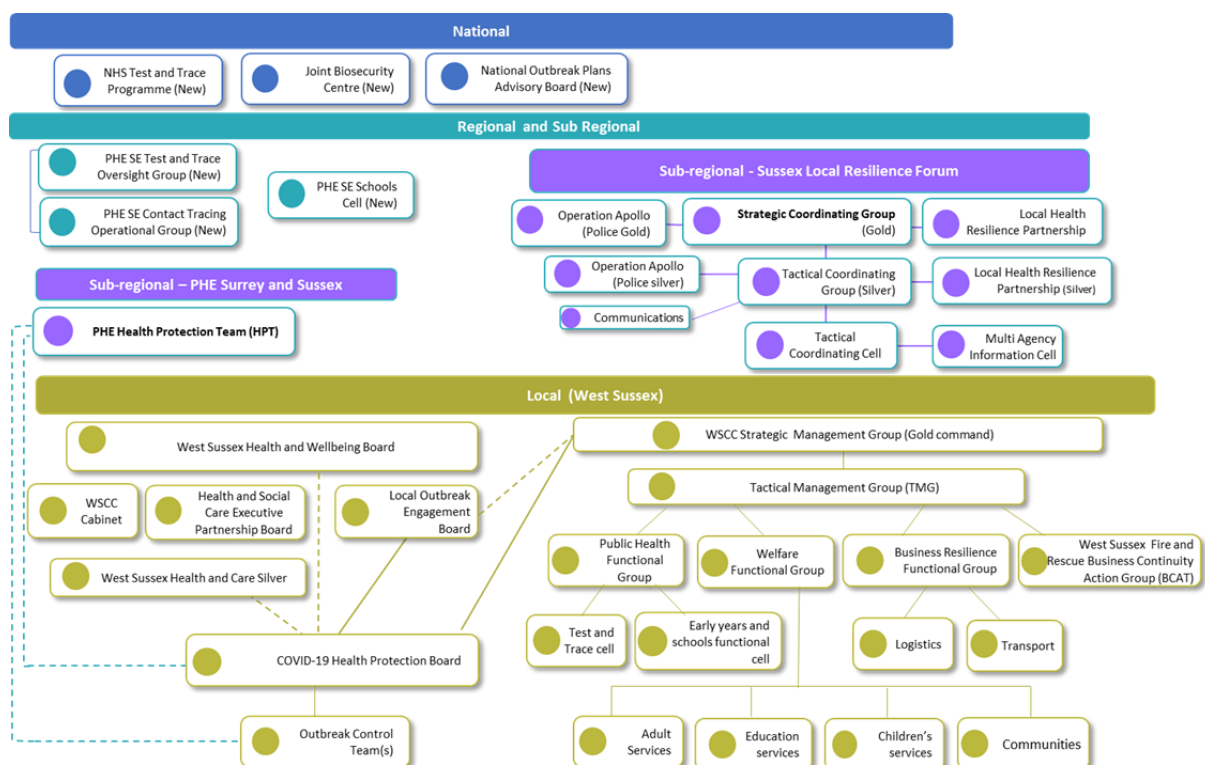
Key Headlines

- 14** West Sussex County Council has produced a [COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan](#), as required by the Government, which was published on 30 June 2020. This details how local, regional and national organisations and responses will work together as a system to prevent cases of the virus, where possible, in West Sussex and respond to any local outbreaks.
- 15** The County Council, like all upper-tier local authorities, was asked to produce a first version of a local outbreak control plan by the end of June 2020. The plan will evolve over time.
- 16** The plan covers seven key themes: managing outbreaks in West Sussex care homes and schools, identifying and managing high risk places, locations and communities, local testing capacity - testing in Sussex, contact tracing in complex settings, data integration, supporting vulnerable people, and governance.
- 17** A wide range of stakeholders have contributed and commented on this West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan and will continue to shape its development. This includes District and Borough councils across the county, Healthwatch West Sussex, Public Health England South East region and the NHS.
- 18** More detail on operational delivery elements will be added to the plan as further guidance is produced nationally, and as the national Joint Biosecurity Centre becomes fully operational.
- 19** The inaugural meeting of the West Sussex COVID-19 Health Protection Board (C19 HPB) chaired by the Director of Public Health, took place on 26 June 2020, with the next meeting arranged for 3 August 2020.
- 20** Membership of the group includes key directors and officers from the County Council, representatives from District and Borough councils across West Sussex (environmental health officer or communities), Public Health England, West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the NHS, Sussex Resilience Forum/Testing Cell, Sussex Police, and the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb).
- 21** The Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB) is currently being established as a sub-group of the main West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) and will be chaired by Amanda Jupp, reporting to the quarterly HWB meetings.
- 22** Proposed membership of the group includes Cabinet Members with portfolio responsibilities for community development, health and adults services, children and families, County Council directors with commissioning responsibility for Public Health, Adults Services, Children's Services, Head of Communications and Engagement, and representatives from West Sussex District and Borough councils, West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and Healthwatch West Sussex. We are aiming to hold the first meeting before the end of July 2020.

Local Lockdown

- 23** There is no local lockdown power given to local councils aside from individual establishments linked to specific outbreaks (where authority is with environmental health). Only the Government can impose geographical or wider localised lockdowns as it requires the re-imposition of regulations to those areas.
- 24** The County Council only has authority to close its own services.
- 25** The Health and Wellbeing Board is a partnership coordination board with no executive authority and the Local Outbreak Engagement Board (LOEB), as a sub board of the HWB was set up to support the test and trace planning. It is there to provide democratic oversight of the coordination of inter-agency work on carrying out government plans using local knowledge.

Figure 1: Annex A - Governance Structure for West Sussex COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control



2. Data and trends

Details of cases and deaths **are attached at Annex B.**

3. Service/Issues briefing (by exception)

Household Waste Recycling Sites (HWRS)

- 26** From 6 July 2020 a wider range of items will be accepted at Household Waste Recycling Sites in West Sussex.
- Soil and hardcore will be accepted at all sites except for Bognor, Midhurst and Westhampnett.

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- Plasterboard can be deposited at Billingshurst, Burgess Hill, Crawley, Horsham, Littlehampton, Shoreham and Worthing.
 - While asbestos can be taken to Burgess Hill, Crawley and Worthing.
- 27** Vehicles with trailers will also be able to access the Crawley, Billingshurst, and Worthing sites on weekday afternoons only, from 1 pm to 6 pm, as of 6 July.
- 28** In order to minimise queues, people are asked not to arrive at the sites before they open, and to check opening times and days online before setting off.
- 29** To help ensure social distancing measures are maintained, unless strictly necessary for unloading large or heavy items, only one person should get out of the vehicle. Residents who require assistance, for example due to mobility issues, can request help by speaking to a member of staff.
- 30** Residents can check the opening times and days of local sites at www.westsussexrecycles.org and can apply for a van or pickup permit, at: www.westsussex.gov.uk/permitscheme.

Highways and Public Realm

- 31** We continue to operate a business-as-usual approach in highways as far as possible. Reactive works have been largely uninterrupted although there have been additional costs incurred as working practices changed to ensure safe distancing. Schemes (major and minor) are also continuing. It should be noted that a number of development sites were furloughed and this has delayed some related highway works. Most of these sites are now operational again.
- 32** Traffic volumes are currently approximately 25% lower than this time last year.
- 33** We have worked closely with the districts and boroughs to agree a set of proposals in response to a call for bids for the emergency active travel fund. We were successful in our bid and received the full £781,00 bid for. Works will commence very shortly on this programme of improvements for active travel. Alongside this a number of minor changes have been implemented in town centres to facilitate safe distancing.
- 34** The Government has introduced new legislation that passes responsibility for licensing tables and chairs on the highway to districts and boroughs. This change in approach will be implemented immediately.

Public Transport

- 35** We have been working hard with bus operators to ensure that service levels are not unduly affected during the crisis. Operators have seen significant reductions in patronage resulting in enormous pressure on their ability to deliver services within budgets. The County Council has been successful in securing additional funding to help support services but pressures remain. We will continue to monitor this issue and lobby for support for this element of transport.
- 36** There is still a considerable risk surrounding the home to school transport service. Whilst additional capacity has been secured for September it is unlikely that this will be sufficient if existing guidance is still in force.

Reopening offices, libraries, registration services

Offices

- 37** The County Council is working to adapt its offices for staff who have a business-critical need for them to attend the workplace. This is being undertaken in accordance with government guidelines which includes working from home if you can. Adaptations will include social distancing, one-way systems, increased cleaning and reduced toilet and kitchen facilities. Overall it will significantly reduce the number of available desks and the capacity of meeting rooms.
- 38** This work has included determining the number of staff who are deemed operationally essential and indications are that there will be no issues taking into account government guidelines.

Library Service

- 39** Across the Communities Directorate operational delivery of many services has been fundamentally redesigned to comply with new or temporary legislation to meet current statutory guidance. These requirements seek to reduce risk and vulnerability and assist in managing the health, safety and wellbeing of both staff and customers. These national changes have increased complexity to our scheduling and work allocation.
- 40** In preparation for a return to lending, customers were offered the opportunity to return items on loan without contact or entering buildings – using existing letterboxes and dedicated drop boxes. During the first two hours across the library network 10,000 items were returned. As per Public Health advice all returned stock is being quarantined for 72 hours
- 41** From 6 July with a Select and Collect option from the front doors of all 36 buildings, there will be two different services available:
- Customer Select – using the library catalogue for customers to reserve specific titles in the usual way online or by phoning their nearest large library. This includes existing reservations made before 23 March.
 - Staff Select – allowing customers who may not know exactly what they want to borrow to ask for a more general selection of books chosen by one of our expert staff. Customers can complete a simple online form, or phone their nearest large library.
- 42** Whichever selection option is chosen, contact will be made by phone or email when the items are available to be collected in a pre-packaged paper bag from the foyer.
- 43** Take up has been very high with 5,784 requests placed online between it going live on the system on 25 June and 1 July.
- 44** Browsing in the library is not yet available; however, restoring customer access to IT is a high priority whilst still enabling staff to complete their jobs in safety. Elements such as events and activities, reintroduction of the many partners services delivered from our buildings and use of our bookable rooms will be reintroduced later.

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- 45** Our strong virtual offer remains, and we will continue to both develop this and support our most vulnerable customers with doorstep deliveries as we have done throughout lockdown.

Birth and Death Registration

- 46** Prior to COVID-19 a Registrar would work from a venue and undertake consecutive appointments for either a birth or a death with customers using the same booking system. This model is no longer viable.
- 47** The Corona Virus Act fundamentally changed the operational delivery of death registrations by allowing the digital submission of the Medical Certificate Cause of Death (MCCD) from the Doctor and then completing the process via telephone appointment.
- 48** Registration Service staff working in office locations have registered 2,904 deaths from 25 March to the end of June. The electronic movement of documents by Doctors and Funeral Directors has bedded in well with appointment availability remaining good.
- 49** People registering have found the process seamless and are extremely grateful and relieved to be able to register by telephone. We continue to receive compliments about the Registrars empathy and professionalism. The death certificates are being issued quickly from our centralised certificate office.
- 50** Birth registration was paused nationally during lockdown, to provide capacity for death registrations. There is an estimated backlog of 2,000 birth registrations due to the pandemic. Statutory regulations have been amended to enable the initial information to be gathered by telephone, but the checking and signing still has to be completed face to face.
- 51** Appointments for birth registrations have been available online from 25 June with the first registration completed on 26 June. The focus initially is on those born in February, March and April who have waited the longest. The first three days saw 167 appointments completed, an average of 55 per day, compared to 35 per day in June last year.
- 52** Alterations to offices, desks and operations have enabled services to safely proceed at our usual registration venues in Crawley, Haywards Heath and Worthing. There are strict social distancing measures and a revised customer access protocol tailored for each location. Registrations in Chichester are usually conducted in the Record Office however, it was not practical due to the existing Death Registration activity which has been undertaken from this location through the lockdown.
- 53** Working with Facilities Management we have 'tested' and then launched Birth Registrations at Willow Park. This venue offers parking access to support a unique layout but is more usually the Library Service stock management hub. which was used for the distribution of essential food parcels. Customer feedback has been very positive, and we anticipate that venue will be maintained to reduce the backlog.

Ceremonies

- 54** All ceremonies and notices for weddings and civil partnerships have been suspended since lockdown.
- 55** Three existing notice offices where social distancing can be safely maintained have seen alterations to operational practice and some additional protective measures implemented. Following government authorisation, appointments resumed in Horsham, Crawley and at Edes House, Chichester on 15 June. Since this date we have taken 220 single notices, for 110 couples with a wedding or civil partnership ceremony booked in the next few months. We had taken 1900 single notices (950 couples) by this point last year.
- 56** Many couples with ceremonies booked for 2020 have altered their arrangements, often postponing many times over recent months due to national uncertainty around when lockdown restrictions would be lifted. This enduring scenario has seen a large proportion of ceremonies scheduled for July, August and September also cancelling or postponing as travel arrangements and hospitality options remain unclear. Based on last year's figures between 23 March and 4 July we would have anticipated undertaking approximately 1,100 weddings and civil partnerships.
- 57** Weddings and civil partnerships will resume on 4 July in West Sussex for couples that wish to go ahead on basis of new government guidance and adhering to premises risk assessment measures. Ceremonies from this date will only involve the statutory attendees; the couple, two witnesses and two Registrars.
- 58** Work is underway to assess the capacity of each West Sussex County Council licensed room to establish safe maximum number of attendees within the parameters of the current government guidance which is cautious. There is a complex balance of adhering to the strict guidance, considering the spatial capacity of each room, and the flow within the wider building to safeguard the couple, guests and staff.
- 59** Explaining the stipulations in the government guidance to prospective couples has been essential as ceremonies will be perfunctory in nature and therefore impact on the occasion and the extent of social interaction.
- 60** As at 1 July we have 17 weddings confirmed for our ceremony rooms and two at two licensed premises between 4 and 10 July.
- 61** Following comprehensive risk assessments the team have been able to carry out two 'death bed' weddings, for both registration staff were able to perform the task outside: from the garden with the couple in a conservatory and witnesses also outside, which reduced any risk, and in the garden at a hospice.

Care homes

- 62** This note sets out the support to the care home sector in West Sussex. It explains the make-up of that care sector, the responsibilities of statutory bodies, namely local authority, NHS, health and government agencies, and the actions taken as part of the response to COVID-19.
- 63** The report shows that the care sector is varied; the local authority, the health system and government agencies all have separate responsibilities in relation to

supporting the sector and they are working in a co-ordinated way. All organisations have enhanced their support in relation to COVID-19. The death rate in care homes is commensurate with that in our comparator authorities. The situation is ever changing, and our response must be flexible.

Detail

- 64** There are a variety of different care settings and beds in West Sussex:

Setting	Number of homes/services/providers
Care Homes for Older People	235 care homes
Domiciliary Care	163 providers
Extra Care	13 commissioned schemes 569 flats
Learning Disabilities and Mental Health	277 services 95 County Council in-house beds

- 65** The total number of beds for Older People in the county is 8,608. Of these:

- Just over one third are commissioned by the County Council.
- The remaining two thirds are commissioned through other local authorities, health or directly funded by residents (over 50% by self-funders).

- 66** Public Health England (PHE) have confirmed there are 147 (cumulative total) outbreaks of suspected or confirmed COVID-19 in care homes as at 25 June 2020 within the county. Please note that only outbreaks reported to PHE are included in this data. These homes are receiving specialist advice from the local PHE team as well as from local authority staff.

- 67** Local data on care homes reports admissions are currently restricted (on 1 July 2020) in:

- 15 care homes for older people,
- 13 extra care schemes,
- 26 care homes for mental health/learning disability,
- 2 domiciliary care providers, and
- 2 supported living settings.

- 68** The impact of COVID-19 continues to be seen in care homes for older people with over double the number of vacancies now compared with the same period in June 2019. Currently (1 July 2020) 723 vacancies have been reported.

Support for Care Homes

- 69** The primary focus of this briefing is on support for care homes, but similar support is also available to all care settings.

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- 70** Under the Care Act, local authorities have a number of responsibilities to make sure people who live in care homes:
- Receive services that prevent their care needs from becoming more serious or delay the impact of their needs.
 - Can get the information and advice they need to make good decisions about care and support.
 - Have a range of provision of high quality, appropriate services to choose from.
- 71** In order to deliver this the County Council operates a framework which sets out quality expectations and monitoring requirements. The County Council has a statutory duty to ensure the sustainability of the market as a whole. Additional oversight of care homes is through the County Council as the lead contractor with statutory responsibility, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) as the regulator and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as the user of the services for the care of people who are eligible for Continuing Health Care or Funded Nursing Care.
- 72** The roles and responsibilities of each party have continued during the COVID-19 incident, but at unprecedented levels and pace. This places even greater importance on the partnership between local systems – CCGs and local authorities in particular, and with regional and national relationships with the CQC.
- 73** At a local level and nationally, the following support is available to care homes:

Organisation	Support
West Sussex County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provider Zone and Provider Advice & Information Team – a dedicated micro-site, e-mail address and telephone number for any provider in West Sussex looking for information, advice and support in relation to Covid-19 as well as business as usual.• Daily provider newsletter, which updates care providers through consolidating guidance, sharing details on initiatives, updates on local test sites, training etc and local and national news related to care services.• Contracts & Commissioning Teams – proactive and regular contact with providers large and small in learning disability and mental health and older people.• Quality assurance and contractual oversight.• Reactive contact with providers facing particular challenges identified by the Contracts Team, GPs, community nursing, the CCG, another health provider or relatives.• Health protection – the County Council commissions infection control champions, along with a comprehensive infection control training and development support and guidance to make sure care homes are supported to work

Organisation	Support
	<p>to quality standards and have access to the PHE and NHS support they need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to care homes where there are risks to financial viability and/or risk of provider failure due to safeguarding or quality concerns. • Co-ordination and oversight of all provider concerns through the multi-agency quality and safeguarding group. • Investigations of safeguarding concerns raised through the multi-agency safeguarding hub. • Out of hours duty cover to respond to any urgent situations. • Robust and efficient emergency planning processes.
NHS (local)/ CCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring reviews (albeit virtual) of directly funded customers. • Ensuring access to primary care for nursing home residents (including out of hours). • Provision of targeted clinical support to care home. • End of life care pathways. • Infection control (jointly with Public Health). • Co-ordination of testing activity. • GP support to care homes.
National/NHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CQC regulatory function. • Provision of national guidance and information.

74 The following support has also been added in response to COVID-19:

Organisation	Support
West Sussex County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured collation of daily SITREP information on outbreaks and service restrictions including market capacity. • Market information to identify where homes are in difficulties and where we have remaining capacity. • Ensured access to up to date guidance and advice via regular communication with providers including regarding testing and access to PPE. • Awarded an additional 10% payment for three months to care providers recognising the pressures on them.

Organisation	Support
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarded an additional 20% payment to domiciliary care providers to ensure they can maintain and enhance their provision. • Held virtual Provider Forums. • Provided responses to providers following hundreds of contacts per day on a range of issues. • Held urgent multi-agency meetings to respond to specific concerns raised about individual care settings and reacted with direct support, e.g. ordering in meals on wheels, undertaking emergency drops of PPE supplies. • Considered alternative accommodation with care for people leaving hospital who are COVID-19 positive to reduce the risk of them returning to care homes. • Enhanced the domiciliary care rounds numbers so, wherever possible, people can go home.
NHS (local)/ CCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced locally commissioned GP services to provide additional support to care homes. • Stepped up an enhanced infection prevention and control offer. • Built on the medicine management offer to ensure care homes are supported to access medicines via community pharmacies. • Testing in hospitals.
National/NHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordination and supply of PPE. • PPE guidance. • National testing strategy and delivery. • Hospital discharge guidance. • Social Care action plan. • Adult Social Care Infection Control and Workforce Resilience Fund, which includes an infection control fund for care homes to reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and support wider workforce resilience. West Sussex has been allocated £13.3m in total, which will be paid in two equal instalments in May and July. 75% of this will be paid directly to care homes at a rate of £975 per bed. The remaining 25% will be allocated based on local need across the market.

75 Whilst different agencies have different responsibilities and accountabilities, partnership working has been essential to ensure support is offered to care homes in a co-ordinated and systematic way.

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- 76** There are positive local relationships across key leads within the County Council and the CCG and all parties are represented, including a West Sussex Care Homes Group which feeds into a Sussex-wide group. All parties are also represented within the incident command structure alongside key providers.
- 77** The Director for Public Health is now responsible for prioritising testing for care homes, this will be supported in the twice weekly meeting with CCG, Public Health and Adults' Services (operations and commissioning representatives). The prime function of this meeting is to prioritise those homes in needs of support due to COVID-19, so an appropriate response can be provided by the health and social care system.
- 78** On 14 May 2020 the Minister of State for Care, Helen Whatley [MP wrote to all council leaders](#) regarding support for care homes and a £600m national infection control fund. The County Council's response was submitted on 29 May 2020
- [WSCC care home resilience plans](#)
 - [Status of implementation of access to support](#)
- 79** Allocation of the money to local authorities was determined by the number of CQC registered beds across all client groups. The expectation is that 75% of the allocation be passported to care homes directly and the remaining 25% be determined by local need in improving infection control measures. To be eligible for the money, care homes must be registered on the NHS capacity tracker and show that they have completed the tracker at least once and commit to completing it on a consistent basis.
- 80** The Government has attached specific conditions to spending the money. Providers will only be able to use the funding to cover costs from the date of receipt onwards and not as a means of funding any relevant expenditure that they've incurred previously during the pandemic. In addition, it cannot be spent on PPE or deep cleaning costs, both of which remain a major issue of concern for many providers.
- 81** West Sussex has been allocated £13.3m in total, which will be paid in two equal instalments in May and July. 75% of this will be paid directly to care homes at a rate of £975 per bed.
- 82** Following a [decision taken by the Director of Law and Assurance](#), between 12 and 15 June the County Council issued S31 grant agreements to providers of the 357 care homes registered in West Sussex in order to distribute the infection control grant as outlined by the Government. To expedite the grant payments, it was agreed that payments could be made on return of an e-mail confirming the agreement had been received, the conditions were understood and that the signed agreement would be returned. Payments totalling £4,670,250 have been prepared and 239 payments totalling £3.421m have been released. These payments have been released to providers who have confirmed the grant agreement would be returned.
- 83** The County Council completed a return to the Government on 26 June 2020 reporting the infection control measures against which providers are committing to spend, this was based on completed returns from providers. The return shared the following breakdown:

	How many providers have used funding for this purpose so far?	What proportion of the local authority's allocation has been spent on this measure? Total must equal 100%
Measures to isolate residents within their own care homes	73%	21%
Actions to restrict staff movement within care homes	88%	34%
Paying staff full wages while isolating following a positive test	67%	17%
Other (please indicate below)	77%	28% (breakdown below)
Please list other infection control measures your allocation of the Infection Control Fund has been used for. You might find it useful to refer to the measures outlined in the care home support package.		8% transport costs 9% accommodation costs 11% changes to physical environment of homes, training, additional uniforms and cleaning measures

- 84** Final decisions are due to be made on the allocation of the remaining 25% based on a methodology ensuring equitable distribution to meet the needs of customers with a range of support needs. It is anticipated that this will be focused on bed-based accommodation outside care homes, domiciliary care and PPE.
- 85** Virtual Provider Forums took place on 2 April and 14 May and were jointly hosted by the County Council and health partners. Many providers took part in the forums and others submitted questions, concerns and suggestions in advance. Follow-up information responding to the issues and questions raised were collated into a report and to all providers.
- 86** On 15 May a virtual provider meeting was hosted by the Sussex Care Associations, West Sussex Partners in Care and East Sussex Care Association, attended by the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, Executive Director Adults and Health, Head of Commissioning and Commissioning Lead for Quality & Supplier Management. Providers from across Sussex attended, as well as officers from each of the three local authorities, the Care Quality Commission, CCG representations and an MP. Questions included issues and concerns in the care market, including testing, funding and PPE.

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- 87** A meeting was held on 2 July with representatives from across the social care market on developing partnership and strategic working in order to meet current and future challenges post COVID-19.
- 88** At the beginning of July 2020, the County Council will run a report to pick up any customers that were in receipt of services on 31 March 2020 but were not included in the earlier 10% payment.

Hospital capacity

- 89** There is adequate acute hospital and community bed capacity in West Sussex, with a reduction in the admission rate of COVID-19 patients in recent weeks. However, hospitals have had a considerable upturn in non-COVID related admissions and attendances, particularly in terms of A&E at the weekend as a consequence, in part, of the hot weather. Hospitals are also taking on more planned work which has led to an upturn in referrals for supported discharges. The numbers being supported by the combined placement and support team (an integrated health and social care team, hosted by the County Council) to go home with care and support have increased significantly over the last few weeks and there are now low numbers of people who are medically fit and awaiting discharge across the acute estate.
- 90** Hospital discharge hubs continue to operate, supported by an 8 am to 8 pm 7-day joint placement team. Focus also remains on mental health discharges, as requested by local NHS partners. The County Council continues to work with the CCG to secure appropriate levels of domiciliary care, care home and nursing home beds, and voluntary services to support effective discharge and ongoing support to people in the community be that in a care setting or at home. Work is also underway to explore how to put the discharge hubs and placement team and other key initiatives on a longer-term footing.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- 91** We continue to be able to source sufficient PPE to meet the needs of the County Council's staff as determined by the last government guidance. The County Council's requirements are being reviewed to ensure any subsequent implications from easing lockdown arrangements are realised. We continue to place orders regularly for supplies.
- 92** We continue to receive national stock for distribution to other organisations in need via the Sussex Resilience Forum. We have a dedicated page on our website detailing eligible organisations for the national stock with an on-line form to enable contact with us when they are in need of stock and cannot access through other routes. We have been able to meet third party requests from national supplies.
- 93** To date we have only distributed a minimal amount of stock to third parties therefore we have no need to review our current policy of not charging for distribution of our stocks to third parties. We will keep the policy under regular review.
- 94** We are reviewing our stock holdings to ensure that we have sufficient capacity to deal with a second wave should it arise.

Children's Services (Early Help, Safeguarding and Commissioning)

Recent changes to government guidance and regulation

- 95** Changes to guidance on the use of PPE, and a move toward increasing the number of contacts staff have with vulnerable children and young people, is creating anxiety on the ground. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) continue to work with staff and managers to address this.
- 96** Changes to Statutory Instrument (2020, No.445) – eases duties imposed by ten sets of regulations relating to the care and protection of vulnerable children and young people. After careful consideration and mindful of the need to prepare for a return to business as usual, SLT have agreed not to adopt these permissions, to ensure that the highest standards of care and protection remain consistently in place.

Education Attendance – Vulnerable children

- 97** The numbers of vulnerable children attending schools has increased and is currently 4,290 across our schools. This represents 17% of our total attendance of 25,057 on 2 July.
- 98** Attendance fluctuates daily; however, it is now steady at 22.5%. Social workers and teachers are in communication with families about school attendance where risk has been identified.

Safeguarding vulnerable children, young people and families

- 99** Referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub have shown a sharp decrease. Prior to lockdown an average of 235 contacts a day were recorded; during the first week of lockdown this reduced to an average of 92 contacts a day (60% reduction). In the week ending 17 April contacts increased to an average of 160 per day (32% reduction). Together with colleagues across the Safeguarding Partnership we are anticipating and planning for a surge in referrals as restrictions are lifted. In the week ending 15 May, there have been an average of 148 contacts a day, which is a 37% reduction from those prior to lockdown. In the week ending 26 June, there have been an average of 156 open contacts a day, which is a 34% reduction from those prior to lockdown.
- 100** In the week up to 15 April, 104 visits were completed face to face, and 393 virtually. We have now seen an increase in face to face visits to children, with the week up to 13 May, 305 visits were completed face to face (65% increase) and 357 virtually (9% reduction). In the week ending 24 June, 520 visits were completed face to face (80% increase) and 253 virtually (36% reduction).
- 101** There has been a 24% increase in domestic abuse reporting/ activity from the same period last year. As a result of the RRWG on this issue, enhancements have been made to services, supports and provisions to ensure capacity to meet this growth.

Shielded cohort/Community Hub

- 102** As of 1 July, there were 35,122 clinically extremely vulnerable people in West Sussex with underlying severe health conditions who must be protected from coronavirus and have been advised to follow shielding guidance.

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- 103** It is acknowledged that for some people shielding, adapting to the relaxation of shielding will take some time, hence the announcement made on 22 June indicates that there will be two stages to implementation: first from 6 July, and then again from 1 August.

Changes

- 104** From 6 July: the guidance for the clinically extremely vulnerable will be relaxed to allow shielded individuals to meet up to five people from other households outdoors, socially distanced, and to form support bubbles if they live alone or are a lone adult with a dependent under 18.
- 105** During July the support provided by the Government for those shielding will continue.
- 106** From 1 August: the clinically extremely vulnerable can stop shielding but if they do go outside, they should continue to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household (unless they are in a support bubble) and robustly practising good, frequent hand washing.
- 107** The relaxation of the guidance will mean people who are clinically extremely vulnerable will be advised they can go to work or to the shops, as long as they are able to maintain social distancing.

Contact with shielding individuals

- 108** The Government intends to contact individuals receiving the free food box by phone during July while also including a letter in their regular delivery. They will be signposted to contact their local authority if they are concerned about support after 1 August. This will be a generic message and not provided with specific West Sussex contact details.
- 109** Since its launch at the end of March 14,500 contacts have been received by the Community Hub. In addition to managing incoming calls and digital requests for support the Community Hub has well established outbound call approaches. These structures are being utilised to proactively contact individuals to ascertain whether they will require the continuation of any aspect of their current support beyond the end of July. We are seeking to identify those most vulnerable who will require additional assistance (e.g. unable to use digital, continued ill health) and will work on an individual basis to ensure that they have appropriate ongoing support to reduce the potential impact on Health Services or Adult Social Care.
- 110** During the last 2 weeks in June a free government food parcel was delivered to approximately 4,000 individuals across West Sussex, which includes some who are in receipt of a social care service. These individuals have previously been offered information, advice and guidance as to how to access the online/telephone delivery services available from supermarkets.
- 111** We will now re-contact this cohort to explore the impact of shielding being paused at the end of July. Conversations will seek to explore in more detail the extent to which their circumstances will endure beyond the end of July. This might involve understanding their pre-COVID-19 routines in respect of shopping and access to essential supplies (e.g. use of public transport, requirement for public toilet access, mobility aids, location of closest supermarket) and exploring

any concerns about re-engaging in face-to-face contact within the community following such an extensive period of shielding.

- 112** The Library Service have undertaken over 20,000 'Keeping in Touch' calls to those who had registered on the www.gov.uk platform but either did not ever require or are no longer receiving the government food parcel. There is a cohort of just over 5,000 who currently being held by the Library Service and continue to have weekly contact. This contact will continue during July and proposals are being developed in respect of future engagement and opportunity to connect individuals to community-based support as services begin to restart local activity (e.g. library social interaction groups, lunch clubs etc).
- 113** The Community Hub will continue to provide the central point of coordination for information, advice and guidance for residents during the foreseeable future. The Community Response Team will be available to meet urgent requests for food, medicine and welfare checks during the transition phase as restrictions on shielding are relaxed.
- 114** The development of a Local Outbreak Plan will necessitate the Community Hub offer to support those shielding in response to Test and Trace and we are working with health partners to support those needing to shield pre or post hospital admission for surgery.
- 115** Longer term proposals regarding the future scope of the Community Hub as part of the wider prevention model to reduce demand by maintaining independence at home are being considered in conjunction with health and social care and our District and Borough partners.
- 116** Residents can continue to contact the Community Hub to discuss their needs between 8 am to 8 pm 7 days per week either by phone on 0330 222 7980 or at www.westsussex.gov.uk/covid19communityhub.

Emergency Response (Sussex Resilience Forum, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service)

- 117** We continue to build on our plans to return to full training delivery. Our responding crew numbers and appliances numbers remain unaffected with sickness remaining below 4% throughout the crisis due to robust COVID-19 plans and procedures put in place by the service to protect staff.
- 118** West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service is playing a crucial role in response to COVID-19. This includes playing a leading role in the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) in coordinating and delivering emergency food and PPE supplies across Sussex. The response role led by the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) (Co-Chaired by DCFO Neil Stocker) has now been stood down and the Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) (Co-Chaired by Lee Harris) has now been stood up. If a response phase is again required, the SCG will be stood up working in conjunction with the RCG.
- 119** We continue to assist the Community Hubs with fire crews, delivering medication and urgent food parcels. To date we have carried out 220 welfare visits to shielded members of our community, making onward referrals when necessary. Also, we have collected and delivered 130 medical supplies and have 358 more to complete over the next few weeks.

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- 120** We are working with teams around the County Council to share appropriate data to ensure we have an accurate picture of vulnerable residents, in order to support and direct resources to the county's most vulnerable.
- 121** Following a formal request for support, West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has been supporting South Coast Ambulance Service (SECAmb) in a number of ways including collecting personal protective equipment (PPE) and other essential clinical supplies, mechanical engineering support, and a number of crew members have been trained by SECAmb in preparation to support the mixed crewing of ambulances. The level of support provided will be kept under constant review to ensure there is no detriment to the provision of fire and rescue core activities within the county.
- 122** The Fire Service's community bus has been used by the Queen Victoria Hospital at East Grinstead for enable their pre-entry screening checks to be conducted outside of the building.

Financial Position

- 123** The latest estimate of the financial impact of the COVID-19 emergency upon West Sussex County Council was submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 19 June. In the past month, since the previous estimate was submitted, there have been a number of significant changes, both in terms of the continuing reduction in the overall number of new infections and deaths arising from the pandemic, alongside the easing of some of the social distancing restrictions.
- 124** There have also been some additional funding streams being provided by the Government, most significantly in relation to Infection Control and the local support provided to the national Test, Track and Trace system. In light of these changes, the estimated financial impact has started to reflect these changing circumstances and the expected impact of the future proposed recovery phase in response to the national emergency, for example the anticipated return to schools for pupils in September.
- 125** Our current financial modelling indicates that the estimated costs arising from the pandemic will be in the region of £70m in 2020/21, this would represent excess expenditure of £33.6m above the funding provided by the Government of £36.4m. In the absence of additional funding from the Government, this would have to be funded by either serious service reductions or through use of reserves. The unplanned use of reserves will reduce the financial resilience of the County Council. Potentially, if the economic downturn is significant, it is likely the income take from council tax will be significantly lower than currently projected figure, resulting in our pressures increasing to c£85m. The announcement on 2 July of additional government funding, to support the response to pressures arising from COVID-19, and the proposal to spread the potential impact of any Collection Fund deficit over a three year period are to be welcomed however, this will not change the overall financial outlook for the County Council.
- 126** The likely cost to the County Council falls into the following areas:
- Direct costs from COVID-19 activities – Increased Adults' Social Care costs including; accelerated hospital discharge, increased demand for residential care, supporting the domiciliary care markets, 20% and 10% payment in

advance to domiciliary care providers and residential homes, staff working additional hours supporting the 8 am to 8 pm service now being provided, cost of personal protective equipment, and additional cost of updating the IT infrastructure to enable the workforce to work from home.

- Cost associated from being in lockdown – Pressure on services including Children’s Social Care as the number of vulnerable children increases, a reduction of fees and charges and commercial income.
- Impact of the County Council’s planned activities – Savings plans will be impacted in 2020/21 as efforts have been refocused on COVID-19 measures. Also, the capital programme delivery and cost avoidance projects will be impacted as the construction industry has paused during this time.
- Cost of recovery – Looking at how we will emerge will bring additional costs including:
 - dealing with a backlog of work where activity has been paused
 - costs to ensure social distancing can be maintained in our buildings
 - costs of transporting students to school while maintaining social distancing
 - costs incurred in developing cycle and footway initiatives.
- Cost related to the local economy including:
 - significant fall in anticipated income arising from business rates, particularly as a result of impact of Gatwick on the local area
 - a loss in Council Tax collection due to increased levels of hardship
 - loss of ‘growth’ in Council Tax base due to very little, if any housing development
 - a potential reduction in LEP funding necessary to deliver significant road schemes in the county.

The estimated costs to the County Council fall into the following portfolio areas

By portfolio	A	B	C	D	E	F
	2020/21 Budget	Covid-19 2020/21 Exp Pressures	Covid-19 Income Losses	Potential Unachieved Savings	Total Estimated Cost of Covid-19 (B+C+D)	Estimated Cost as a % of Net Budget (E/A)
Adults & Health	£209.42m	£21.42m	£1.62m	£4.59m	£27.64m	13%
Children and Young People	£129.57m	£7.86m			£7.86m	6%
Economy and Corporate Resources	£52.81m	£0.89m		£2.40m	£3.29m	6%
Education & Skills	£20.82m	£1.17m	£1.54m		£2.70m	13%
Environment	£60.38m	£0.17m	£0.13m		£0.30m	0%
Finance	£13.89m	£0.30m			£0.30m	2%
Fire & Rescue and Communities	£35.73m	£0.38m	£2.05m		£2.43m	7%
Highways and Infrastructure	£35.40m	£0.44m	£2.85m		£3.29m	9%

By portfolio	A	B	C	D	E	F
	2020/21 Budget	Covid-19 2020/21 Exp Pressures	Covid-19 Income Losses	Potential Unachieved Savings	Total Estimated Cost of Covid-19 (B+C+D)	Estimated Cost as a % of Net Budget (E/A)
Leader	£1.45m				£0.00m	0%
Total portfolios	£559.47m	£32.63m	£8.19m	£6.99m	£47.81m	£0.00m
Non portfolio	£34.39m	£1.07m	£1.20m		£2.27m	7%
Income Losses Collection Fund & Business Rates		£20.00m			£20.00m	
Total Net Expenditure	£593.86m	£53.70m	£9.39m	£6.99m	£70.09m	12%

127 It is likely that the pressures resulting from the pandemic will impact the financial planning over the medium-term as the longer-term economic impacts is understood.

128 It is important that the County Council continues to lobby the Government for sufficient funding to ensure that the County Council can play an active role in the County's recovery from lockdown, ensuring communities are able to access employment and continue to lead healthy and happy lives. The Government has indicated that there will be a further spending review in the autumn, which will provide some invaluable context for financial planning over the medium term.

Lobbying

129 We are focused on using all the levers available to us to seek to influence government funding decisions and policy development to ensure the best outcome for West Sussex residents and businesses.

West Sussex County Council activity

130 The Leader is engaging regularly with West Sussex MPs to seek their support in raising matters of concern with the Government, including the significant financial challenge the County Council is facing.

131 The Chief Executives is one of nine regional CEOs who represent Local Government and have a direct route to Ministers and Senior Officials in the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government.

132 Leaders meet regularly to update on the response to COVID-19, and West Sussex local authorities are undertaking co-ordinated lobbying where appropriate (for example on planning issues).

Regional partnerships

133 As part of the South East 7, the Leader is working with other Leaders to make the case for the South East as the Government develops recovery thinking.

National bodies

134 Through the County Councils Network we are seeking to make the case for additional funding for authorities who are facing particular challenges with demand-led services such as adults' social care and children's social care.

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- 135** West Sussex County Council is participating in a piece of work commissioned by the Local Government Association's Strategic Aviation Group to explore in detail the impact of COVID-19 on places where aviation is a key sector, and make recommendations for recovery, with a view to influencing government recovery policy development.
- 136** Officers are working through their professional representative organisations (the Association of Directors of Adults' Social Services, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Society of County Treasurers, etc) to lobby on service-specific issues.