

## **West Sussex County Council COVID-19 update**

### **Priority issues**

- a) Local Outbreak Management (paras 1 - 16)**
- b) Schools reopening - update (paras 17 - 70)**
- c) West Sussex County Council financial position (paras 71 - 78)**
- d) Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant (paras 79 - 83)**

## 1. Priority issues

### a) Local Outbreak Management

#### West Sussex Data

1. In West Sussex, we have seen the number of people testing positive for COVID-19 rise over the past few weeks. However, this should be put into context to fully understand the impact on the local population:
  - In the 7 days to 27 August, 44 residents tested positive. This is a rate of approximately 5 per 100,000 population less than half of the national rate (approximately 12 per 100,000).
  - It does differ across the county and at present there have been some higher numbers in Mid Sussex – where the rate per 100,000 is closer to 11, but numbers do fluctuate.
  - If we were seeing rates closer to the level at which countries are put on the quarantine list this would be approximately 175 cases per week and if we were at the level of some of the areas in the country in the north west experiencing additional lockdown - then this would be in the region of 350 cases per week.
  - It should be noted that the average age of cases was much higher in the Spring– in March 2020, the average age of someone testing positive was 70 years, now it is 40 years and we have not seen rises in hospital activity. Of course, testing itself has expanded. Of the 44 people who tested positive in the 7 days to 27 August just 3 people were over 65 years old.
  - We have seen a few cases of people returning from holiday and then testing positive - but we don't always have such detailed information as to how someone may have contracted the virus.
  - Just because, at present, we have comparatively low figures does not mean we can be complacent, all information is monitored daily by the public health team - both in terms of people being tested positive but also in relation to any specific setting or location such as workplaces etc and we work closely with colleagues in Public Health England (PHE) and district and borough councils to understand the local situation.

#### **Laboratory Testing Capacity: the implications of the recent reduction in COVID-19 tests for West Sussex residents**

2. West Sussex County Council has been notified that the laboratory capacity to test for COVID-19 has been reached. This has resulted in a decrease in the availability of COVID-19 Pillar 2 testing in areas of the country with a low incidence of COVID-19. The South East Region has the lowest incidence of the virus at present therefore we are a low priority for Pillar 2 testing.

3. West Sussex County Council has raised the issue with government but have been informed that this will possibly take some time to resolve (4 to 6 weeks). We are urging government to take action as a matter of urgency.
4. The implications for West Sussex are that without testing of pillar 2 at full capacity, we are unable to have an accurate picture of the number of cases of the virus and therefore may not be able to detect any concerning increase in the number of cases at locality level. It also means that we are unable to put any planned advance action in place, including advising residents to take further preventative action.
5. At the moment with a relatively low incidence of COVID-19 in West Sussex and no outbreaks, things are stable. However, we are monitoring the situation carefully.
6. Please note: Pillar 1 testing (those with a clinical need and health and care workers) continue as normal as these tests are analysed in hospitals.

### **Managing Local Lockdowns: National COVID-19 Contain Framework: A guide for local decision-makers**

7. The Department for Health and Social Care published the [national COVID-19 Contain Framework: a guide for local decision makers](#) on Friday, 17 July 2020.
8. The Framework sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks.
9. Successful management of local outbreaks is a core element of NHS Test and Trace's ambition to break the chains of COVID-19 transmission to enable people to return to and maintain a more normal way of life.
10. This framework supports local decision-makers by clarifying their responsibilities and empowering them to take preventative action and make strong decisions locally, supported by mechanisms that safeguard key national assets and interests.

### **Accountability**

11. Ministers are accountable nationally for setting this framework and for oversight and intervention where necessary.
12. Locally, Directors of Public Health (DPH) are accountable for controlling local outbreaks, working with Public Health England (PHE) and local health protection boards, supported with resource deployment by local 'gold' structures led by council chief executives, and local boards to communicate and engage with communities led by council leaders.

### **Designation of Local Systems – Three Escalation Categories**

13. For the majority of scenarios, it will be most effective to deal with the local arrangements, where local community spread will largely be manageable within local COVID-19 arrangements, as has been the case during national lockdown. However, depending on the prevalence and progression of the virus, local systems will be designated into three 'escalation' categories which would enable specialist expertise and resource to be drawn down from regional and national levels to augment the local systems.

14. The three 'escalation' categories are:

- **Areas of concern** – Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs) will work with their partners, supported by regional PHE and NHS Test and Trace resource, to take additional actions to manage outbreaks and reduce community spread of the virus to more normal levels e.g. additional targeted testing.
- **Areas of enhanced support** – UTLAs deemed as areas for enhanced support will be provided with increased national support, capacity and oversight, including additional resources deployed to augment the local teams.
- **Areas of intervention** - in certain instances, decision-making will be referred to national level. This includes cases where local leaders request an intervention from government, multiple outbreaks require resource prioritisation by Ministers, outbreaks raise issues of national importance e.g. impact on critical infrastructure, and local capabilities and controls are exceeded. A multi-agency national incident resource will be deployed to significantly bolster local resources to respond to the incident.

## **West Sussex Escalation Framework**

15. A draft West Sussex Escalation Framework has been developed in liaison with Brighton and Hove City Council and East Sussex County Council to ensure a consistent approach is adopted across Sussex. The framework outlines potential triggers, escalation determination, notifications and communications, and potential actions required.

16. It is currently going through County Council internal sign-off processes and will be ratified by the West Sussex COVID-19 Health Protection Board at their next meeting.

## **b) Schools reopening - update**

### **Summary as at 1 September**

17. It remains the directive of the Department for Education (DfE) that all pupils, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the beginning of the autumn term. This directive has been given by the Government and remains to be the case at the time of this briefing.

18. As reported in their [latest guidance](#) to schools, now the circumstances have changed, the prevalence of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased, the NHS Test and Trace system is up and running, and the Government is clear about the measures that need to be in place to create safer environments within schools.
19. Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development, particularly for disadvantaged children. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.
20. The guidance reports the risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.
21. Lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs due to having a less well-qualified workforce. This affects the standard of living that today's pupils will have over the course of their entire life. For many households, school closures have also affected their ability to work. As the economy begins to recover, we need to remove this barrier so parents and carers can return to work.
22. In relation to working in schools, whilst it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, the Office of National Statistics' analysis on [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) related deaths linked to occupations](#) suggests that staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults.
23. Given the improved position, the DfE guidance reports the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), and this guidance explains the steps schools need to take to reduce risks still further. As a result, we can plan for all children to return and start to reverse the enormous costs of missed education. This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.
24. The DfE are, therefore, asking schools to prepare to welcome all children back this autumn. While coronavirus (COVID-19) remains in the community, this means making judgments at a school level about how to balance minimising any risks from coronavirus (COVID-19) by maximising control measures with providing a full educational experience for children and young people. Schools should use their existing resources to make arrangements to welcome all children back, though additional funding has been agreed in the form of a 'catch up' premium to support children to recover gaps in their learning caused as a result of the pandemic.

25. The outcome of the year's A level assessments were initially published on the 13 August and prompted a national outcry that the algorithm used to determine results has unfairly disadvantaged particular groups of students and schools. A similar algorithm was in place for moderating GCSE grades due to be published this week. Government announced on 17 August that students in England will instead receive centre assessment grades for this week's GCSE results and last week's A and AS level results. If students' calculated grades were higher than the centre assessment grade, their calculated grade will stand. Government also now intends to remove temporary student number controls for Higher Education which had been introduced for the coming academic year. We are still awaiting publication of vocational BTEC qualifications for 16 and 18 year olds which were withdrawn to ensure alignment with changes in the A level and GCSE awards.

### **Our support to school leaders and governing boards.**

26. Throughout COVID-19, the Department for Education have provided national guidance to schools, and West Sussex County Council through our weekly Education and Skills e-briefings to schools has fully adopted this guidance, together with that provided by Public Health England (PHE), to ensure all schools in West Sussex have been supported to provide a continuous service to children and families whether children are in school or have remained at home.

27. At all times, the DfE require Governing Boards of every school to have in place robust risk assessments in order to safely provide the education services they are permitted to provide to children and families, and at all times with due regard for the health, safety, and safeguarding of all children. The DfE require Governing Board to continually review these and to communicate and publish any changes to parents and carers via the school website.

28. In West Sussex, we have seen many excellent examples of how school leaders and governors have routinely updated their school website with the necessary information about their re-opening plans and risk assessments, giving assurance to parents and carers of the safety and safeguarding arrangements in place, and particularly during the pandemic. Many school websites contain very detailed risk assessments in order to provide additional reassurance to parents and carers.

29. In addition to daily e-briefings to school leaders and governors provided by the Director of Education and Skills, and taking into account national guidance and direction from the government, DfE and PHE, the Council issued to every school a copy of our 'Framework for Re-opening Schools in West Sussex', first in May 2020 ahead of the phased re-opening from 1st June 2020, and further re-issued in July 2020 to support the full re-opening of schools from September 2020. Accompanying the frameworks issued was a 'risk assessment tool'. Both the framework and the risk tool were designed with teams from across the Council, ensuring all aspects of 'risk' were considered for mitigation, not limited to but including:

- Preparing to re-open buildings and facilities

- School organisation and planning, including transport and catering
- Staffing and deployment
- Health, safety and hygiene
- Curriculum and learning provision, models and practices (including online provision)
- Emotional wellbeing and mental health support for children and staff
- Safeguarding children and staff
- Updating policies and procedures
- Finance matters
- Human Resources matters
- Governance arrangements
- Communicating with pupils, parents and carers.

30. The framework and risk assessment tool have been produced in consultation with representative head teachers, unions representatives, senior representatives of the County Council and representatives from Public Health England (PHE).

31. In addition to the framework and risk tools, supplementary guidance has been collaboratively created by the West Sussex County Council teams and issued to parents, school leaders and governors, particularly, but not limited to, supporting them to keep their children active and learning safely online for children who remained at home during lockdown periods; transition arrangements for pupils returning to school or joining school for the first time; assessment and moderation guidance for school leaders to support end of year assessments and children's progression into the next year, phase or next school.

32. In April, we produced and shared with parents and carers some specific guidance on how to keep children active and positively engaged in on-line and physical learning and development, whilst prioritising their emotional wellbeing, online safety and online safeguarding, providing a list of useful learning and development website links and resources, including highlighting the availability of the [Oak National Academy](#) and [BBC Bitesize](#) online learning facilities.

33. Specifically to support a re-start of the curriculum in September, we have produced and issued to schools our curriculum guidance to support school leaders in their restart planning of the curriculum and learning, taking into account a variety of curriculum models to support children in making a successful return to school, recognising the potential and likelihood of any children experiencing significant gaps in lost learning, and whilst ensuring the emotional wellbeing and mental health of both children and staff are fully considered during the period of restart throughout the Autumn term.

34. Throughout COVID-19, the education and skills service has remained fully engaged with school leaders and governors in providing the necessary support to facilitate them providing a continuous service to children and families. Our school effectiveness, SEND and inclusion teams have provided a continuous service of support and challenge to all schools, working most closely with Head teachers and Chairs of Governing Boards, including working closely with the Academy Trust Boards and CEOs, to ensure national and

local guidance has been interpreted correctly and adapted by each school and academy.

35. The school link advisers, SEND and inclusion teams have worked closely with the headteacher and Chair of Governors in each school in supporting them to provide continuous childcare provision for children of key and critical workers, and those with an EHCP, as well as in maintaining an education provision for pupils who have remained at home during the lockdown period. The link advisers have provided appropriate support and challenge to the Headteachers and Chairs of Governing Boards in the development of their re-opening plans and risk assessments, taking into account national and local guidance. We have remained in close contact with academy principals and the Multi Academy Trust CEOs in supporting them in their plans.
36. In working with our school leaders and governors, we have promoted the importance of local decision making taken by school leaders in consultation with the Governing Board, as the arrangements for re-opening any school, and the risk assessment pertaining to this, are unique to each school setting and must be adapted to reflect the individual characteristics of a school such as its location, facilities, staffing, opening and closing times, health, safety and safeguarding arrangements. Furthermore, the DfE in issuing its own guidance has always promoted the guidance is provided as 'guidance' and may need to be interpreted and adapted by school leaders in consultation with the governing boards to take account of their local context and setting.
37. As of the 1 June, as directed by the DfE at the time, our primary schools partially re-opened to welcome back children from Reception, Year 1, and Year 6, while our secondary schools partially re-opened to welcome children from Years 10 and 12 back into face to face tuition.
38. In West Sussex, our schools remained partially open and provided a continuous childcare service to children of key worker families, vulnerable children, and children with Education Health and Care Plans, whilst maintaining an education provision for all other children who remained at home during the lockdown period. These services continued throughout Easter and bank holiday periods, meaning many of our school buildings remained opened during the holiday periods.
39. Our discussions with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors at the end of July confirm all schools and academies, including special schools, are planning to fully re-open from September 2020.

### **Preparing our schools for full re-opening from September 2020**

40. To support our school leaders and governors in preparing for the full re-opening, and in completing their risk assessments throughout, our school link advisers have been in regular contact with the head teacher and chair of governor of each school. We have also maintained close contact with the Multi Academy Trusts in providing support and securing the full re-opening of schools from September.



41. We re-issued our 'Framework for re-opening West Sussex Schools from September 2020' and 'risk tool' to every school and academy early in July in response to the issuance of further guidance to schools from the DfE.
42. The additional measures set out in this version of the 'framework' specifically promotes the importance of school leaders and governors putting in place additional proportionate protective measures for all pupils and staff in their return to school, whilst also ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality education that enables them to thrive and progress.
43. Many schools have refined their re-opening plans and risk assessments ahead of closing in July for the summer holiday period. Whilst schools remain closed, we are providing a continuous school effectiveness service for any school leader and governor to assist them with their re-opening plans and in completing their risk assessments, recognising this is ever changing as new national guidance is provided.
44. In supporting parents and carers during the summer holiday period, we have published on our own West Sussex website and local offer pages some additional advice, guidance and support for keeping children active and positively engaged in purposeful and developmental learning and activities throughout the summer holidays, including access to local provision such as leisure and recreation services.
45. The very [latest updated guidance](#) for the re-opening of school, issued by the DfE on 7 August provides additional specific updated guidance relating to:
- risk management
  - welcoming children back to school in September
  - clarification on the age requirements related to face coverings on public transport
  - confirm revised guidance on cleaning has now been published
  - how the Department for Education will be supporting schools over the summer on communications with staff, parents and pupils
  - information about pupils with education, health and care plans
  - information about managing contractors and other visitors to schools, including immunisation programmes
  - details of the test and trace process
  - additional advice on staff who are clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable
  - expanded guidance on use of space and ventilation
  - a website link to the recorded webinar on mental health and wellbeing, clarify resources available from MindEd, and link to e-Bug resources to support teaching children about hygiene measures
  - advice on exam results day.
46. This DfE guidance is intended to support schools, both mainstream and alternative provision, to prepare for the full re-opening. It applies to primary, secondary (including sixth forms), infant, junior, middle, upper, school-based nurseries and boarding schools. The DfE expect independent schools to follow the control measures set out in the guidance in the same way as state-funded schools. The guidance also covers expectations for

children with special educational needs and disability (SEND), including those with education, health and care plans, in mainstream schools. Separate guidance is provided for early years, further education colleges and for special schools.

47. This DfE guidance is in 5 sections. The first section sets out the actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their school. This is public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

48. The rest of the guidance is focused on how the Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to operate in this new context. This includes:

- school operations
- curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support
- assessment and accountability
- contingency planning to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak.

49. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated significant additional risk assessments to be conducted and put in place by school leaders and in consultation with their Governing Board, and for parents and carers to be communicated with throughout the pandemic, and particularly in leading to a full re-opening of schools in September.

50. The local authority, through our school effectiveness service, and in our duty to all children attending all schools in West Sussex, will continue to provide a continuous service of support and challenge to school leaders and governors in developing their risk assessment and in preparing for fully re-opening their school in September. We have planned a robust conversation with every school headteacher and chair of governors around their planned returns and risk assessments between 24 August and 4 September, guided by an aide memoire, and aiming to assure the Council that risk assessments have been comprehensive and are fully aligned to national guidance and local context

51. At all times we have been guided, and will remain guided, by that provided by the DfE and PHE. We have been, and remain, especially vigilant to information relating to COVID-19 cases, any rises, spikes or outbreaks whether local or national, including monitoring the 'R' level and any scientific evidence available to us nationally, across the South East, and in West Sussex.

52. Recognising that the environment in which we currently operate is rapidly evolving and may change, perhaps requiring additional guidance and quick response to national guidance issued either by the DfE or PHE, our school link advisers will be speaking with every head teacher and Chair of Governor in each school towards the end of August and by the end of the first week of September to provide any new guidance and to conduct further enquiries to ensure every school can fully re-open safely and securely in September, and to ensure that all necessary health, safety and safeguarding arrangements are in place as directed by national policy and statute.

53. Recent announcements on the use of face coverings in secondary schools and colleges have reinforced that such coverings are not to be used in classrooms but that flexibilities have been provided for headteachers to consider their use in communal areas where the organisation makes it difficult to keep students in different learning bubbles apart.
54. We are confident the guidance we have provided, and will continue to provide to all West Sussex schools, takes full account of the national guidance provided by the DfE and PHE, and is robust and detailed, placing significant emphasis on school leaders and governors prioritising the safety, safeguarding, emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and staff in all risk assessments and decisions regarding the full re-opening of any school.
55. In welcoming children back this autumn, schools will be asked to minimise the number of contacts that a pupil has during the school day as part of implementing the system of controls outlined to reduce the risk of transmission. If schools follow the guidance set out by the DfE and PHE, and maximise control measures, they can be confident they are managing risk effectively. Our school link advisers will continue to work closely with school leaders and governors throughout the re-opening phase to ensure they receive appropriate support and challenge to ensure our schools operate safely and securely at all times and in the best interests of children.
56. Schools are planning for the fulltime return of students including changes to break and lunchtimes to ensure full time access even where schools are operating staggered start and finish times.
57. The school link advisers will be working very closely with school leaders and governors to ensure any gaps in children's learning are rapidly recovered, supporting leaders to make best value use of additional 'catch-up' premium funding, and specifically focusing on those children who are known to as being disadvantaged as well as those who have become disadvantaged as a result of lapses in learning, provision and support whilst they remained at home during Covid-19 and were unable to attend school. This is a particularly important aspect of their role as many schools will expect a 1-day visit from Ofsted inspectors who will focus much of their attention on the re-opening arrangements, risk assessments, curriculum and learning, and school leaders' use of the 'catch-up' premium funding to address gaps in pupils' learning.
58. In supporting our schools, the Education and Skills service will continue to work collaboratively and purposefully drawing on the expertise of other Council teams and directorates to provide coherent and robust guidance and support to our schools, and in consultation with our stakeholders.
59. The local authority has received a grant of £101,000 to support wellbeing for students returning to school. Plans are being drawn up on how to utilise this funding to provide social, emotional and mental health support to those who need it the most.

## **Local lockdown**

60. While our aim is to have all pupils back at school in the autumn, every school will also have a plan for the possibility of a local or national lockdown, partial closure of a school owing to an outbreak in a 'bubble', 'class' or 'year group', and how they will ensure continuity of an education service should such scenarios occur.

61. Our school leaders and governors, as well as our academy partners, have been overwhelmingly positive and exceptionally professional in responding so positively to the COVID-19 pandemic, at all times considering what is in the best interest of their children to make the best start in life in West Sussex, to maintain the safety, safeguarding and wellbeing of every child, and to mitigate any gaps in learning and delays in development.

62. Our school leaders and governors have responded exceptionally positively to our guidance and support including our framework and risk assessment tools, as evidenced by the continuous service provided by every school during COVID-19, and the very few complaints we have received from parents and carers. However, whilst we recognise each school has been supported to take an individualised approach to their re-opening plans and education / childcare provision during the lockdown period, as a result of their individual school context, this may not have satisfied all parents.

63. We are assured our school leaders and governors, whilst operating with the national and local guidance we have provided, have been supported to take and make the very best decisions on behalf of children and families in their community, and will continue to work closely with us to achieve this safely and securely from September.

### **Home to school transport**

64. National guidance has been provided on home to school transport arrangements for the September return. Key recommendations made include:

- Encouraging children to walk or cycle
- Recommending the use of masks on dedicated school transport as well as public transport
- A reduction of social distancing requirements on dedicated school transport
- Provision of additional transport where demand is greatest and there exists conflicts between demand for school travel and general public travel at times.

65. We have been working with our suppliers and the bus operators to understand what additional capacity might be available and indicative costs.

66. We have completed a survey of parents to understand their thoughts on travel arrangements for September with a response of approx. 2200 – this will help inform our response.

67. We have been awarded £150k to assist us looking at ways to try to manage travel demands to aid the issue of capacity on public transport due to social distancing requirements.
68. We have been and shall continue to provide PPE for staff including contractors where needed. Whilst this is a requirement within the expected guidance it ensures that we will retain as many staff as needed to provide the service as they see it as a key requirement.
69. The County Council has updated its communications for parents on school reopening that shall include advice on guidance to try to reduce demand on transport with a preference for active travel options such as walking and cycling.
70. Transport emails and letters about arrangements are currently being sent to parents of eligible pupils.

### **c) West Sussex County Council Financial Position**

71. The anticipated financial impact of the COVID-19 emergency upon West Sussex County Council has not significantly changed since the last COVID-19 briefing. The financial impact is included in the first quarter TPM, considered elsewhere on the agenda. The next DELTA return will be submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the 4 September.
72. The Government has issued draft guidance on the proposed compensation scheme for income losses. In this scheme the Government has committed to compensating authorities for 75% of income losses after allowing for a 5% loss across income categories. We are considering the guidance but have not yet determined if our estimate of £1.2m, which has been included in the current forecast, needs adjusting as a consequence.
73. Additional support has been announced for Local Authorities' Home to School transport. The government has also announced additional support for public transport which will be distributed direct to transport providers. We do not yet know how local providers will benefit from the funding. We continue to review our forecasts as government guidance emerges.
74. Our current financial modelling indicates that the estimated gap in funding arising from the pandemic will be in the region of between £9m and £19m in 2020/21. The picture for 2021/22 and future years remains uncertain. The major variables include the impact of unemployment on our council tax base and the impact of business closures on our business rates income.
75. Unemployment continues to increase across the county and as the furlough schemes end it is likely we will continue to see pressure in this area. Across the county the numbers of claimants for JSA or universal credit have risen from 2% in March to 5.1% in June. The highest number of claimants are in Crawley followed by Worthing. Districts and Boroughs are revising their council tax estimates and we will continue to update our assumptions as

information emerges. We are currently projecting a reduction of between 2.5% and 5%.

76. We are in regular dialogue with our Districts and Boroughs regarding their financial position for 2020/21 and future years. The major financial issues facing our Districts and Boroughs is the loss of income from car parking and the loss of income/additional support for leisure centres. Council tax income is a smaller proportion of their overall funding and therefore the reduction in the council tax base is less of an issue. The Government support for income losses is beneficial to authorities who receive an income stream for car parking, however, the application of the scheme to leisure services is not yet clear. Our current understanding is that our Districts and Boroughs plan to use reserves to cover in year losses and are focussing on understanding the potential impact on their financial position for future years.

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

	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Budget Gap February County Council</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Optimistic scenario:</b>					
COVID pressures (includes undeliverable savings)	50	14			64
Service pressures		12	8	9	29
Council tax and business rate funding	0	18	3	3	24
Government funding	-41	-17	13	0	-45
<b>Revised budget gap – optimistic</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Pessimistic Scenario:</b>					
COVID pressures (includes undeliverable savings)	54	27			81
Service pressures	6	16	8	9	39
Council tax and business rate funding	0	41	4	4	49
Government funding	-41	0	13		-28
<b>Revised budget gap - pessimistic</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>186</b>

77. Given the current overall financial outlook for the County Council and in the absence of further funding, the current expenditure in excess of Government support would have to be met through either serious service reductions or use of reserves. Any unplanned use of reserves would reduce the financial resilience of the County Council.

78. It is important that the County Council continues to lobby 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 happy and productive lives. The Government has indicated there will be a Spending Review in the

autumn, which will provide some invaluable context for financial planning over the medium term.

#### **D) Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant**

79. In response to the continuing COVID 19 situation DEFRA has announced a Local Authority Emergency Assistance Grant for Food and Essential Supplies to support people who are struggling with food and essential supplies. The county's share of the grant is £737,319. The guidance states the authority can use its discretion to support those most in need – DEFRA envisage the majority to be used over the next 12 weeks.
80. It is proposed that £140k of the grant is passported to voluntary organisations for distribution. £100k will be allocated initially to *Citizens Advice* to pass to residents who face hardship due to COVID-19. This will primarily be through vouchers for utility payments or food supplies. £40k will also be passed to Food banks to provide additional assistance to residents who are in urgent need of food supplies.
81. The remaining grant will be set against costs resulting from the delivery of essential food and medicines through the community hub and for essential supplies and services to those residents who are known to our social care teams to need essential supplies and services due to the impact of Covid-19. This will be administered through the Community Hub on behalf of, and in partnership with, District and Borough Councils and the voluntary sector.
82. There will be a review of the relative quantum of the two elements based on experience over the early operation of the scheme. They may be rebalanced in order to direct the remaining proportion of the grant to the area of greatest need.
83. Appropriate safeguards against misuse and reporting arrangements will be in place.