

Agenda

Cabinet

Thursday, 4 June 2020, 10.00 am

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Worcestershire County Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant legislative arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to: Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

Please note that this is a public meeting, conducting remotely by videoconferencing between invited participants and live streamed for general access via a link on the Council's website to the Council's You Tube Channel.

The Agenda papers and background papers can be accessed electronically on the Council's website. Members of the public and press are permitted to report on the proceedings.

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DISCLOSING INTERESTS

There are now 2 types of interests:
'Disclosable pecuniary interests' and **'other disclosable interests'**

WHAT IS A 'DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST' (DPI)?

- Any **employment**, office, trade or vocation carried on for profit or gain
- **Sponsorship** by a 3rd party of your member or election expenses
- Any **contract** for goods, services or works between the Council and you, a firm where you are a partner/director, or company in which you hold shares
- Interests in **land** in Worcestershire (including licence to occupy for a month or longer)
- **Shares** etc (with either a total nominal value above £25,000 or 1% of the total issued share capital) in companies with a place of business or land in Worcestershire.

NB Your DPIs include the interests of your spouse/partner as well as you

WHAT MUST I DO WITH A DPI?

- **Register** it within 28 days and
- **Declare** it where you have a DPI in a matter at a particular meeting
 - you must **not participate** and you **must withdraw**.

NB It is a criminal offence to participate in matters in which you have a DPI

WHAT ABOUT 'OTHER DISCLOSABLE INTERESTS'?

- No need to register them but
- You must **declare** them at a particular meeting where:
You/your family/person or body with whom you are associated have a **pecuniary interest** in or **close connection** with the matter under discussion.

WHAT ABOUT MEMBERSHIP OF ANOTHER AUTHORITY OR PUBLIC BODY?

You will not normally even need to declare this as an interest. The only exception is where the conflict of interest is so significant it is seen as likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

DO I HAVE TO WITHDRAW IF I HAVE A DISCLOSABLE INTEREST WHICH ISN'T A DPI?

Not normally. You must withdraw only if it:

- affects your **pecuniary interests OR** relates to a **planning or regulatory** matter
- **AND** it is seen as likely to **prejudice your judgement** of the public interest.

DON'T FORGET

- If you have a disclosable interest at a meeting you must **disclose both its existence and nature** – 'as noted/recorded' is insufficient
- **Declarations must relate to specific business** on the agenda
 - General scattergun declarations are not needed and achieve little
- Breaches of most of the **DPI provisions** are now **criminal offences** which may be referred to the police which can on conviction by a court lead to fines up to £5,000 and disqualification up to 5 years
- Formal **dispensation** in respect of interests can be sought in appropriate cases.

Cabinet

Thursday, 4 June 2020, 10.00 am, Online only

Membership: Mr S E Geraghty (Chairman), Mr A T Amos, Mr A I Hardman, Mr M J Hart, Mrs L C Hodgson, Ms K J May, Mr A P Miller, Dr K A Pollock, Mr A C Roberts and Mr J H Smith

Agenda

Item No	Subject	Page No
1	Apologies and Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 1)	
2	Public Participation (Agenda Item 2) Members of the public wishing to take part should notify the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in writing or by e-mail indicating both the nature and content of their proposed participation no later than 9.00am on the working day before the meeting (in this case Wednesday 3 June). Further details are available on the Council's website. Enquiries can also be made through the telephone number/e-mail address listed below.	
3	Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting The Minutes of the meeting of 26 March 2020 (enclosed)	1 - 8
4	Covid-19 Response	9 - 38

NOTES

- **Webcasting**

Members of the Cabinet are reminded that meetings of the Cabinet are broadcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the broadcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.

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To obtain further information or a copy of this agenda contact Nichola Garner, Committee & Appellate Officer on Worcester (01905) 843579 or email: ngarner2@worcestershire.gov.uk

All the above reports and supporting information can be accessed via the Council's website.

Date of Issue: Wednesday 27 May 2020

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Cabinet**Thursday, 26 March 2020, County Hall, Worcester, 10.00 am****Minutes****Present:**

Mr S E Geraghty (Chairman), Mr A I Hardman,
Mr M J Hart, Mrs L C Hodgson, Mr A C Roberts and
Mr J H Smith

Also attended:**1970 Public
Participation**

None.

**1971 Apologies and
Declarations of
Interest**

Apologies had been received from Mr A T Amos, Ms K J
May, Mr A P Miller and Dr K A Pollock.

Mr Hardman and Mr Smith both declared an interest as
members of West Mercia Energy Joint Committee,
appointed by the County Council.

Mr Hart declared an interest in item 4 as he was a Non-
Executive Director of Worcestershire Children First.

**1972 Confirmation of
the Minutes of
the previous
meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed as a
correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**1973 Approval of
Worcestershire
Children First's
Business Plan**

The Cabinet considered the Worcestershire Children
First's Business Plan. The Cabinet Member with
Responsibility for Children and Families highlighted that
following the statutory direction in September 2017 for
the creation of a wholly owned Council Company,
progress had been made in delivering services to
improve outcomes for children. The interim Business
Plan would be replaced by the 2020/21 Business Plan,
which maintained the previously agreed Vision, Mission
and Values and a Performance and Commissioning
Group was operational and would monitor the Key
Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The budget and grants which would be received by WCF
showed that the Council was committed to supporting the
Company with its clear mission and values.

**1974 West Mercia
Energy -
Treatment of
WMS Pension
Liability**

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- (a) noted the contractual performance update on Worcestershire Children First (WCF);
- (b) approved Worcestershire Children First's Business Plan 2020/21; and
- (c) noted the agreed contract sum for 2020/21 to WCF as set out in paragraph 15 of the report and noted the indicative contact sum for 2021/22 and 2022/23 included in the Business Plan.

The Cabinet considered the transfer of WMS pension liability to a new 'employer body' within the Shropshire County Pension Fund, called 'WMS Pension'. The Deputy Leader explained that some companies had been cautious about doing business with West Midland Energy (WME) due to their apparent pension fund deficit, so it was proposed to transfer the liability back to the owning authorities – even though it had already been underwritten by the Owning Authorities.

RESOLVED that subject to the Executives of Shropshire County Council, Telford & Wrekin Council and Herefordshire Council agreeing to the same recommendations, the Cabinet agreed:

- (a) to remove the responsibility for the discharge of its function in relation to the pension deficit liability in relation to former WMS employees (including Compensatory Added Years Benefits) as identified in the report from the business of the WME Joint Committee with effect from 1 April 2020;
- (b) to allocate the pension deficit liability identified in (a) above to a new employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund, called 'WMS Pension';
- (c) to establish a joint committee pursuant to section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, with Shropshire County Council, Telford & Wrekin Council and Herefordshire Council known as the WMS pension joint committee and delegate responsibility with effect from 1 April 2020 to the WMS Pension Joint Committee to discharge the functions of Worcestershire County Council relating to the pension deficit liability from former WMS

employees (including Compensatory Added Years benefits) as set out in paragraphs 9 to 19 of the report allocated to the WMS Pension Employer within the Shropshire County Pension Fund;

- (d) to approve the proposed governance arrangements set out in the Appendix to the report, and that the Council's appointed Executive Members to the WMS Pension Joint Committee shall be the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Adult Social Care and the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing, as the council's current representatives on the West Mercia Energy Joint Committee;
- (e) to delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer to progress and agree the arrangements as set out in paragraphs 9 to 19 of the report, including a relevant payment mechanism and finalise a joint agreement for the WMS Pension Joint Committee incorporating the terms set out in the appendix to the report, in consultation with section 151 officers from the remaining Owning Authorities;
- (f) to approve the treatment of the WME asset share to be fully funded with effect from 1 April 2020 using IAS19/FRS102 actuarial assumptions with the resulting additional cost of this funding option allocated to the WMS pension employer within the Shropshire county pension fund; and
- (g) to delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer to agree the final figures, of which estimates are set out in paragraphs 20 to 32 of the report, and in consultation with the Section 151 Officers from the remaining owning authorities.

1975 Resources Report - Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring - Month 10 (31 January) 2019/20

The Cabinet considered a number of financial matters as set out in the agenda report. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance (also the Leader of the Council) explained that due to the developing position with regard to Covid 19 some additional information and recommendations had been circulated the day before. Due to the flooding in January and the Covid 19 virus it was unlikely that the previously expected overspend would be fully resolved at year end and additional resources would be required. Additional funds were being

made available by the Government and it was expected that all the funds would be required to respond to the virus within the County, for example by setting up hubs to arrange for support for vulnerable people. The County Council was prepared to do whatever it took and therefore spend whatever was needed.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Services clarified that an extra £15 million would be made available for adult care and the Council would not run out of money, however planning was underway to accommodate people who would not be accepted to nursing homes unless they had been tested for the virus. Community resilience forums had been set up and money was available for 10 weeks.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Schools pointed out that the wording of recommendation G needed to be updated to refer to the Act rather than Bill. The Higher Needs block overspend could not be written off and could not be covered by either using mainstream council tax funding or top slicing the amount from the National funding formula. Additional money had been made available for schools but the Council would continue to lobby for more money for the DSG.

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities wished to thank volunteer groups and individuals who were helping within their communities. The Council had launched Here to Help and all groups were asked to register what they were doing so people offering help could be matched to those who needed it. The Council was setting up hubs, aiming for one in each postcode, to support and deliver to the most vulnerable which was expected to be around 15,000.

The Leader thanked Healthwatch who had made their staff available to help. He thanked the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board for allowing the new information to be dealt with as an urgent item at short notice.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- (a) noted the 2019/20 revenue and capital budget monitoring up to 31 January 2020;**
- (b) noted that £0.25 million has been made available from earmarked reserves to provide support for communities directly affected by the recent flooding incidences and that further updates will be brought back to cabinet on this**

**1976 Corporate
Landlord and
Facilities
Management**

spend and any Bellwin claim;

- (c) agreed that up to £0.7 million expenditure (the amount beneath the Bellwin scheme threshold) is allocated from earmarked reserves to support recovery expenditure from recent flooding;
- (d) noted that £0.2 million has been made available this financial year from earmarked reserves as an initial sum to contribute towards costs arising in response to the covid-19 outbreak – recognising that further support including from central government is likely to be available as circumstances continue
- (e) noted the current situation regarding the development of the covid-19 virus and the council's response to this
- (f) noted the receipt of un-ringfenced grant for dealing with the impact of coronavirus in the county, and the Chief Financial Officer be authorised to include in the revenue budget
- (g) delegated authority to the relevant Strategic Director, or in their absence Assistant Director or in their absence the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, Monitoring Officer, Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and relevant CMR, to take appropriate action in relation to the coronavirus pandemic, including authorising expenditure and making temporary changes to council policies arising from the Coronavirus Act, and any other legislation, national guidelines and government directions and report back to Cabinet.

The Cabinet considered a report which enabled the Council to discharge its responsibilities as Corporate Landlord and oversee its facilities management.

Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public shall be excluded from the meeting during item 7 on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding the information) and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the

public interest in disclosing the information.

Summary of the proceedings of the meeting during which the press and public were excluded

The Cabinet considered the background to, and conclusions from, an appraisal and analysis of the commissioning arrangements for delivery of property services and facilities and project management.

RESOLVED that Cabinet

- (a) authorised the Strategic Director for Commercial and Change to serve notice on Place Partnership Limited (PPL) by 31 March 2020 of its intention to withdraw from the service agreement with effect from 31 March 2021**
- (b) agreed to give up the Council's shareholding in Place Partnership Limited with effect from 31 March 2021**
- (c) authorised the Strategic Director for Commercial and Change, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to work with appropriate partners and support services to draw up an alternative model for delivery to be in place by 31 March 2021, including consideration of any TUPE considerations and business needs**
- (d) receives a further report, subject to and following prompt pre-scrutiny, to approve the alternative model for delivery referred to in (c) above**
- (e) notwithstanding the intention for Cabinet to further consider the alternative model ((c) above) authorised the Strategic Director for Commercial and Change, in consultation with the Leader, to take all necessary all financial and contractual actions necessary to ensure the continued delivery of property services; and**
- (f) authorised the allocation of £500,000 within the Financial Risk earmarked reserve to support the project.**

The meeting ended at 10:54am.

Chairman

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CABINET
04 JUNE 2020**COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr S E Geraghty

Relevant Chief Officer

Chief Executive

Recommendation

1. The Leader and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Finance recommends that Cabinet:

- (a) Notes and endorses the action taken by the Council in response to the Covid-19 pandemic to date;**
- (b) Notes the revenue expenditure incurred by the Council to date, receipt of further Government grant and that further updates will be presented to Cabinet in due course;**
- (c) Uses the information in this report as the background for reporting to Council about the urgent decisions taken at the meeting of Cabinet on 26 March 2020.**

Background

- 2. A pandemic is an epidemic of disease that spread across a large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, affecting a substantial number of people. The current coronavirus pandemic emerged at the end of December 2019 with a reported cluster of cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, Hubei Province in China. A novel coronavirus was eventually identified and the World Health Organisation (WHO) set up the IMST (Incident Management Support Team) at the start of January 2020. On 11 March the WHO made the assessment that COVID-19 was to be characterized as a pandemic. In the UK on 23 March the Prime Minister asked the UK public to stay at home, to protect the NHS and to save lives. Council officers and colleagues in Worcestershire Children First were already co-ordinating the Council's response to a rapidly developing situation.
- 3. Our response included activating the Corporate Emergency Response Framework, setting up Councils own internal Gold, Silver and Bronze arrangements to meet the Covid-19 response requirements, which in turn are aligned to the LRF structures of Strategic (SCG) and Tactical (TCG) Co-ordinating Groups. The Mission of Gold being: "to preserve life, prevent the

spread of infection and maintain critical Council services”. Appendix 1 sets out a diagram of the governance structure.

4. Schools were closed nationally from the end of Friday 20 March, whilst being required to provide a service for children of key workers and vulnerable children.
5. On 26 March Cabinet noted the allocation of £0.2m from earmarked reserves to fund actions already being taken in relation to public health and business continuity plans. It also noted receipt of un-ringfenced grant of £14.9m from the Government for dealing with the impact of coronavirus across the County and this was added to the revenue budget. Cabinet delegated authority to officers to take appropriate actions, including authorising expenditure and making temporary changes to policies arising from the Coronavirus Act, and associated legislation and guidance.
6. Officer decisions made in dealing with the Covid-19 response have been reported on the Council’s website and include provision of PPE, Here2Help, development of the Adult Social Care Access Centre and purchase of care. In addition, various management decisions were made relating to the response, including closing County Hall to the public once the remote delivery of services was established.
7. The following sections and paragraphs set out by Directorate in more detail how the Council has been responding to COVID-19 and initial recovery planning, as well as the financial, asset and workforce impacts.
8. Looking forward as the Council begins to move into recovery and out of response, we will continue to bring forward updates to future Cabinets.

➤ **People Services**

➤ **System Wide Response**

9. The Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP) is the system wide health Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRRR) structure that was set up in the Health and Social Care Act (2012) and is jointly led across the Herefordshire and Worcestershire footprint and jointly chaired with an NHS England Director and the Director of Public Health. The main function is to gain assurance from health partners of compliance to EPRRR standards to ensure that health organisations have plans in place and are prepared for several scenarios, with global pandemic being number 1 on the risk register. As of the end of January the LHRP was stood up on a weekly basis and membership was widened to include social care, this was escalated to 3 times weekly and then became NHS Gold when it became evident that a full multiagency NHS focussed response would be required.

➤ **Response Overview**

10. The People Directorate is formed from three Divisions covering: Adults Social Care; Public Health and Communities. Following Government guidance, in relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic, on 16 March 2020 the Directorate moved away from business as usual activity and established an emergency planning approach to developing and enabling its response to the pandemic, whilst continuing to meet statutory duties.
11. From 16 March 2020 a robust Communications Strategy was developed by the Communications Unit. This has ensured proactive engagement and communication with all internal and external partners, providers and residents, sharing information, advice, and case studies from our independent providers reporting on the level of support provided by the Council. Examples are provided in Appendix I.
12. The Interim Strategic Director and Director for Public Health established a formal governance framework to support the Directorate response, Assistant Directors, Public Health Consultants and Senior Managers, from across the Directorate, initially met twice daily to develop and deliver the People Directorate's Emergency Plan and response.
13. The Council's EPRRR function, which is based in the Emergency Planning (EP) team in the People Directorate's Public Health Division and, is responsible for ensuring a EPRRR infrastructure, policy framework and ongoing support and advice, to enable senior WCC managers to contribute to the Local Resilience Framework (LRF) during the response phase in tackling the Covid-19 epidemic as part of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) responsibilities of the council as a category 1 responder and usually the lead authority on recovery.
14. The Council has not enacted any easements to the Care Act 2014, permitted under the Coronavirus Act 2020. It has put in place a robust review of demand for social care and capacity to respond, and this is reported weekly to the Directorate Leadership Team. The Council does not anticipate enacting any easements in the future.
15. A Record of Executive Officer Decisions, taken to support the People Directorate's response to the pandemic were published on 28 April and are attached at Appendix 2.

➤ **Social Care Response**

16. All people, in receipt of social care have been risk assessed to ascertain their level of need and contacted as appropriate. Their care and support plans have been reviewed and revised to ensure that appropriate levels of care and support are in place. Staff re-deployed from our internal day services and colleagues from the Health and Care Trust have supported this approach. This has been very well received by our service users and their families.

17. During the recovery period the service will explore the feasibility of retaining a named worker approach for people with Learning Disabilities, who have higher levels of care and support needs. We also will be focusing on a review of our processes, systems and procedures – building on the lessons learnt from the new ways of working, adopted during this time. This will bring added focus to community asset building and strengthen the 3 conversations, strengths-based approach.
18. Our Urgent Care and Community Hospital Teams immediately responded to the need to support discharges, within 3 hours, 7 days a week, 8am – 8pm. To achieve this staff have been re-deployed from other social work teams.
19. In anticipation of an increased demand for COVID-19 related hospital admissions and subsequent discharges, Public Health worked with Age UK to scale up the Home from Hospital discharge scheme and Independence at Home support. The Home from Hospital scheme was increased to enable rapid discharge of both COVID and non COVID patients from 8 till 8. The scheme was suitable for patients who required meet and greet and further settling in at home for up to 48 hours. The service provided a safe and well check, ensured availability of food/shopping and that the home was warm and secure to support recovery and independence and to prevent any re-admissions. The surge and demand for local hospital beds or discharges was not as high and was not required for as long as anticipated and the service was scaled back to usual activity at the end of April.
20. Fortnightly virtual meetings of the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board statutory partners have been convened to provide oversight of safeguarding responses and facilitate information sharing and communication.
21. Operational safeguarding has continued as usual, with staff working at home. The number of safeguarding concerns reported has been variable on a week to week basis, but overall there is no significant difference in the number of reports received. The team has received a high level of calls for advice and support. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team (DoLS) initially prioritised urgent cases but has now resumed assessment of all high priority cases in line with usual practice.
 - **Protecting Those Who Are More Vulnerable**
22. There are several considerations that make certain population groups more vulnerable to severe disease. This is those who are extremely clinically vulnerable (also termed shielded population), for example those undergoing chemotherapy treatment, having had a solid organ transplant or with severe asthma. The County Council was given a direct instruction from Government to enable this group to shield. They were advised to shield for a period of 12 weeks in the first instance and to not leave their homes. Further there is a clinically vulnerable group which was characterised as those over 70 years of age or with at risk conditions (i.e. eligible for an NHS funded seasonal influenza vaccination).

23. In addition to that the Council planned for prevention and protection for groups who are vulnerable due to their social circumstances, for example those who are homeless. A homeless task force has been set up to bring together all district LA's and key partners in Worcestershire to take a proactive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Public Health is leading a workstream of this task force ensuring that the requirements outlined in the Homeless Sector Plan, Care & Protect guidance are being met in a pragmatic and practical way that best meets the needs of the homeless population of Worcestershire. Protocols have been developed in conjunction with district housing colleagues which outline key procedures which will help to protect the vulnerable homeless population against COVID-19 infection. A pathway has been developed which outlines a multidisciplinary response to a COVID-19 symptomatic individual which allows them to be isolated safely and receive the ongoing care and support they require during isolation.
24. Partnership working between Public Health, the health and care trust and the CCG is developing easy access routes into health services for the homeless population which will have long term benefits after the threat of COVID-19 has reduced. The homeless taskforce also receives regular updates from other key service areas that work with vulnerable groups such as domestic abuse, the probation service, substance misuse and West Mercia Police.
 - **Protecting and working with our Care Homes**
25. Colleagues from across Public Health, Social Care, CCG and PHE have developed new systems to co-ordinate and facilitate action across the care home system to protect homes and prevent infection. Coordination of this joined-up approach is provided through regular daily operational meetings (Care Home Huddle) and weekly strategic meetings (Care Home Hub).
26. To help deliver this response proactive engagement at least once a week with all care homes in Worcestershire. This engagement provides help and support to prevent transmission of COVID-19 infection and control of local outbreaks. This enables early identification of issues for escalation and information collection to inform local RAG-ratings of care homes.
27. A key feature of the Action Plan relates to developing diagnostic testing capacity for all care home residents and staff. CCG, adult social care and Public Health have been working together to implement a testing programme for our care homes. This includes implementation of testing of both symptomatic and asymptomatic residents and staff in all homes is being targeted in order of prioritisation.
28. Adult Services Commissioners are working in partnership with Commercial and Financial colleagues to ensure appropriate financial support for our care providers, including continued payments to providers of domiciliary care, supported living, extra care and day services, for the duration of the Covid-19 outbreak, even in cases where services cannot be delivered. This is covered further under Commercial and Change and the Chief Executive Directorate commentary.

29. These measures have been taken in order to contribute towards the resilience of the health and social care system in Worcestershire and prevent provider failure. This is essential to ensure that there is sufficient, good quality supply of services in Worcestershire in order that the Council's duties under the Care Act can continue to be met now and moving forward once the Covid-19 outbreak has ended.
30. Additional payments to providers for Covid-19 related cost pressures such as additional staffing costs, increased cost of Personal Protective Equipment etc. These payments took the form of an additional temporary percentage increase to providers, from the beginning of April. The temporary nature of the increase will be reviewed in line with the developing COVID-19 situation. For domiciliary care, supported living, extra care and shared lives providers this increase is an additional 5% on their fee rates. For residential and nursing care providers, the increase is 5% on Band 2 and Band 4 rates respectively.
31. It is likely that some providers will be incurring additional COVID-19 related costs over and above the costs already reimbursed, but this is also likely to vary considerably from provider to provider. A process has been put in place to consider additional reimbursements for providers who apply to the council for further financial assistance. Providers who approach the Council are asked to submit details of the further additional costs which they are incurring. These applications are reviewed by Commissioners and the Head of Finance on a case by case basis and payments made where costs are deemed reasonable and directly related to COVID-19. This is alongside the additional funding which the Council is allocating to providers from the Council's share of the £600m national additional funding to support providers.
32. Where these additional payments relate to clients who have been discharged from hospital or are made to prevent hospital admission, funding is claimed via the CCG, otherwise the payments will be funded by the additional grant being allocated to local authorities.
33. We have also established a single point of contact to deal with all provider queries during the crisis. This is staffed 7 days a week and able to respond to urgent situations. Providers continue to receive updated advice and guidance, working in conjunction with the CCG and Public Health colleagues, for example health and infection control guidance has been circulated in the form of easy-to-use action cards and are now also working closely with Worcestershire CCG to co-ordinate swabbing and testing of provider staff, working flexibly to upscale arrangements in line with national and local health direction and policy
34. In line with advice from the NHS and to ensure prompt discharge from hospital (and to potentially avoid hospital admissions) it was agreed to pre-purchase (block) beds in Residential Care Homes and Nursing Care Homes for Older People for a period of three months from 30 March 2020. Purchasing in this way ensured there was an adequate supply of beds to meet anticipated needs identified for a) minimising hospital admissions for older people, where possible and b) facilitating discharge of older people from hospital to maximise hospital capacity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

35. A new block contract has been commissioned with a home care agency. The block contract will deliver 450 hours of homecare per week in Wyre Forest, Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Bromsgrove for a duration of up to 6 months (initial contract length of 4 months, with an option to extend by a further 2 months for either all or a geographical part of the contract). The contract started during week commencing 20 April 2020.
36. Working closely with the Commercial Team to co-ordinate the distribution of Worcestershire's stocks of PPE. This includes implementing systems for appropriate prioritisation of stocks and working with providers to identify and support their PPE needs, in line with the most up to date infection control guidance.
37. Government recently announced a £600 million financial package of support for Care Home prevention and protection equipment. Worcestershire County Council is due to receive £7.5 million of this in two instalments and 75% of the allocation will be made, also in two instalments, to care homes based on the number of beds per home, and 25% retained to help further management of infection control working locally with our care providers.
 - **Working with the other partners**
38. We have supported the CCGs to roll out iPads to all care homes in Worcestershire and Herefordshire. The capability delivered has enabled online GP consultations and further opportunities are being explored to build on this development.
39. The Commissioning Unit is working actively as part of the newly established "Worcestershire Care Home Hub". The purpose of the Hub is to strategically lead, co-ordinate and facilitate action across the system to support care homes and prevent infection during COVID19. The joint-working aims to reduce the increase in the number of homes experiencing an outbreak and reduce the absolute number of cases and deaths, to pool and adapt resources and capacity to work collectively using a proactive and supportive methodology.
40. Through work with West Midlands ADASS colleagues, we are ensuring that Worcestershire is fully involved in regional data sharing and collaboration, feeding in local information e.g. with regards to market management and provider support as well as ensuring regional and national information is shared and disseminated locally.
41. Analysts across the council and system are working in new ways across WCC public health, Management Intelligence and Research & Digital, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust, NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, West Mercia Police and the military. The main function of the intelligence group is to produce situation reports to support COVID-19 response planning.
42. Future work includes continuing to track cases and deaths, whilst looking ahead to attempt to predict the types of resources that will be needed in our acute hospitals and system wide over the coming months.

➤ **Public Health**

43. On 19th March, all Public Health commissioned services were provided with written assurance that their contractual payments would continue as scheduled for the existing and following quarter and that services would be given tolerance around their key performance indicators. There were discussions with providers about how they could continue to support service users and link them with other practical support that they may need. This assurance enabled providers to continue to deliver services, including Health Visiting, sexual health and support for carers.
44. Localised Public Health advice and support has been provided within WCC, and to partners and other agencies regarding COVID-19. This advice has interpreted national guidelines and applied to local services and scenarios. Advice has been provided regarding social distancing measures, appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Infection Prevention Control (IPC) advice and guidance for various settings and services. A variety of local guidance, flow charts and training aids have been produced and disseminated.
45. Those staff, who were identified as vulnerable, due to underlying health conditions, have continued to be shielded at home and for those who are employed in face to face services, they have, wherever possible, been re-deployed into front door and social work teams activity to provide telephone and email support to residents, carers, families, providers and social work teams. This approach will be kept under review.
46. A key workstream has focussed on the sensitive issue of management of the deceased and working in a multi-agency environment to ensure that the death to funeral service timeframe is managed effectively. Working through the death's management Bronze Group, working closely with the Ministry of Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), District Councils and Acute NHS Trust colleagues, funeral directors, crematoriums and cemeteries to develop effective response processes and facilities. The work of the EP team, while still assisting with advice and support on the Covid-19 response, is now turning to focus on the approach to Recovery, again through the formalised LRF process, with the WCC CEO chairing the SCG Recovery group. In support of Government requirements, the EP team will contribute to what will be a complex and challenging longer term process to support the local community recovery process, including that of local Government and the wider infrastructure affected by Covid-19. Part of the return to the "new normal" will be to ensure learning at LRF and local level to ensure resilience against future emergencies.
47. The Registrars service commenced the registration of deaths over the telephone and aims to introduce birth registrations and small wedding ceremonies in line with the Government's 3 Step Plan. The majority of the c.250 weddings affected by the pandemic have been rescheduled for late 2020 or 2021 with few cancellations. The team have responded effectively to the increasing demand on death registrations experienced during this time.

➤ **Community and VCS**

48. A community response was rapidly established with a range of partners, including District Council and VCS organisations to support people in need of practical help as well as the collection and co-ordination of offers of help. As part of this Here2Help was launched as “One Worcestershire’s” Community Action response with the sole aim of supporting residents through the Covid-19 pandemic. Here2Help is a campaign as well as a dedicated response service for all residents who ask for help and those individuals and organisations who offer to help. It aims to complement the national programme to support those individuals extremely vulnerable and being the most at risk of becoming severely ill from Covid-19 (our shielded cohort) and the NHS Volunteer Responders initiative.
49. The aim of the Here2Help service is to provide practical information and assistance enabling people to remain safe and well in their own homes. The Here2Help website was launched with online information and advice that followed an evidence-based MIND checklist for health and wellbeing. Individuals can make a request for help and individuals; groups and organisations can also offer help via the Here 2 Help website. www.worcestershire.gov.uk/here2help For those with no internet access, a helpline has been set up 01905 768053.
50. By the end of March 2020, a one contact telephone helpline was established and promoted for Worcestershire’s residents, service users, carers, families and providers. The service is presently open 8am-8pm, 7 days a week, although we are reviewing the need moving forward. This has supported many thousands of people in accessing care and support services, food supplies, medical supplies, as well as linking individuals with local voluntary and community groups for day to day support, information and advice. Mutual aid and NHS Good Sam volunteers are providing additional support where needed.
51. Information regarding requests and offers of support was detailed in the daily updates.
52. Worcestershire Association of Carers have aligned their opening hours and service provision for carers with the 8am-8pm, 7 days a week offer. This is supporting the County’s carers and has resulted in an increased number of carers assessments being undertaken via telephone, over recent weeks. This service enhancement has been funded by the County Council.
53. All libraries were closed on 24 March and an immediate focus was brought to enhancing the on-line offer. The speedy introduction of a Digital Library Hub was established to help Worcestershire residents stay active and connected with their communities. This has brought together a wide range of new and improved digital library resources and services. Libraries staff have been re-deployed to provide telephone and email support to our residents, through the new Here2Help service.
54. We have seen the largest ever increase in on-line library membership and digital book borrowing.

55. Worcestershire's green spaces and countryside centres have remained open and from 13 May have scaled up resources to support the recent Government Announcement in relation to outdoor activity and easing of restrictions. Plans are also being put in place to open take away café services, in County Council run green spaces, in line with Government Social Distancing advice.

➤ **Children's social care and safeguarding**

56. At the beginning of April 2020, Children's Social Care and Safeguarding implemented a Covid 19 protocol to provide clarity for staff, partners, children and families about the most appropriate way to safeguard children during the pandemic. The purpose of the protocol is to deliver required interventions to safeguard, promote welfare and prevent escalation for those "vulnerable children" already open to the service and for those who may be identified as at risk of significant harm in the community. It is also designed to adapt delivery in order to minimise spread of the virus in the community and maximise our staffing capacity for the duration of this pandemic. The main changes to usual service delivery in the Covid19 approach are:

○ **Assessment of risk and monitoring of children's welfare**

57. This is completed through direct visits and keep in touch (KIT) calls. A detailed operational protocol was written to promote quality and assurance in our assessment and our monitoring contacts

58. Children assessed as 'High and immediate risk' and 'priority' receive visits from social workers as part of weekly field work home visiting programmes, whereas others receive contact through KIT calls and technology. These keeping in touch calls are meaningful and used to reassess risk and promote attendance at school, so that the list of children requiring priority visits is regularly updated. Staff carrying out visits have been provided with the appropriate PPE in order to reassure parents and to keep them safe.

○ **Early Help and Social Work resource at Family Front Door (FFD).**

59. These staff resources have been pooled to manage all new incoming contacts and assessments of need and risk and to support in the delivery of Here 2 Help (see later notes).

○ **Face to Face Supervised family time.**

60. This has been suspended and contact for children in care with the family have continued using virtual methods that suit the child's age and understanding.

61. Operational protocols that give staff additional guidance to enable the service to continue work but within the wider limitations of staff capacity and movement restrictions are in place and these relate to: Legal Protocol, Family Time, Visits to Children and Young People and Care Leavers

62. The executive summary for partners and stakeholders of the protocol is available on WCC website and covered by an Executive Officer Decision Notice. It is in line with the DfE guidance about additional flexibilities during the pandemic and clear that our safeguarding, welfare and responsibilities to protect children from significant harm remain in place.
63. The protocol sets out the decision to work in a way to meet statutory duties within the current Covid 19 pandemic. The protocol will be reviewed in August 2020.
64. Additional financial support to in-house foster carers has been provided at the Free School Meal rate of £15 per week for the 6-week spring half term period to contribute to additional costs. There have also been some minimal temporary additional staffing costs to support the service and costs of temporary resource for additional care costs as a result of coronavirus, which are contained within the decision notice.
65. There has not yet been a significant increase in the numbers of children coming into care as a result of the virus. However, plans are in place to reopen a temporarily closed children's home in Worcester to accommodate children if this becomes necessary. This will require additional funding, as referred to in the ROED (see Appendix 2), if required.
66. Work is underway to plan for increased direct work with children and young people to ensure that their plans are appropriately progressed.
67. Families with vulnerable children continue to be actively encouraged to take up their school places as a further protective factor for the children.

➤ **Education**

68. Schools were closed for most children on 20 March 2020. They have however remained open since then for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children, including over the Easter school holiday period. Pupils not in school have been accessing online learning at home in order to continue their education.
69. The following table shows the numbers of pupils attending school in the work commencing 30 March and the figures for week commencing 11 May. This shows an increase in attendance which is particularly important for vulnerable children.

First Week of Lockdown - week commencing 30th March is first full week of data available

	Attending Week Total	Total Pupils for week	% Attending	
All	5646	402000	1.4%	Based on 80,400 children per day
Vulnerable	1009	8755	11.5%	Based on 1751 children per day - liquidlogic data
Critical	4653	30000	15.5%	Based on 6000 children per day - WCF estimate from original school returns

week commencing 11th May

	Attending Week Total	Total Pupils for week	% Attending	
All	10306	402000	2.6%	Based on 80,400 children per day
Vulnerable	2926	9045	32.3%	Based on 1809 children per day - liquidlogic data
Critical	7563	30000	25.2%	Based on 6000 children per day - WCF estimate from original school returns

70. DfE has issued guidance for schools to open further from 1 June 2020. The priority is for reception, year 1 and year 6 pupils initially, with an ambition for all primary, year 10 and year 12 pupils to return a month before the end of the school year. These year groups are designed to support children facing a transition. Worcestershire has a three-tier arrangement in parts of the county and there are other transition points for those children at year 4 and 8 mainly which creates additional complexity. Work and support are ongoing to enable all county schools and settings to respond to the guidance.
71. On 14 May the DfE issued further guidance for primary school opening, starting with reception, year 1 and year 6 pupils. The DfE resisted any change from this for pupils in three tier school arrangements, despite our and local MP representation. Detailed risk assessment work is underway with schools to cover the logistical, capacity, health and safety and staffing arrangements required to support wider opening with effect from the beginning of June. Governing Bodies, Trust Boards and the Local Authority will be involved in the decision making.
72. Transport is a key issue for schools' wider opening and capacity will be affected by the need to apply social distancing measures. There are costs of this that are currently being assessed, although these will depend on the numbers of children returning to school.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**
73. The DfE made amendments to the SEND legislation in order to relax some of the duties on assessing children for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to require 'best endeavours' to be used to meet children's needs. However, the statutory duties remain in place. There are over 4000 children and young people with EHCPs in the county and individual risk assessment is being carried out for each one and risk assessed. For those who are rated at high risk of provision not being reasonable to meet the child's needs, action has been taken to minimise this risk.

- **Early Years**

74. Early Years providers have been affected by the virus with approximately 51% of providers closing. This is a challenge in terms of the Council's sufficiency duty for early years' places and work has been undertaken with the sector to provide appropriate financial support where necessary.
75. Potential funding requirements for Early Years has been identified in an Executive Officer Decision Notice along with a process to reimburse providers for verified additional costs relating to Covid-19. This is estimated in excess of £500k.
76. Childminders are also allowed to return to work and early years providers can charge for their commercial activities.

- **Economy and Infrastructure Directorate**

- **Response Overview**

77. Representatives of the Economy & Infrastructure Directorate Leadership Team and Senior Management Team have taken-up active leadership roles as part of the COVID-19 Emergency Response activity. This enabled the countywide response activity to be firmly established with a clear battle rhythm in operation. The Gold and Silver Commander roles have been occupied by the same individuals since the beginning of the emergency response to allow for robust arrangements to be established, ongoing delivery and continuity.
78. Staff representatives from across the Directorate have supported specific areas of response activity, e.g. food distribution, supporting businesses, project support.

- **Highways**

79. Highways reactive and safety critical works are ongoing and have been throughout the lockdown period, including gulley emptying. All customer enquiries continue to be responded to in the usual way, although direct contact is significantly reduced. This has provided time to catch up with the huge amount of flooding enquiries received.
80. The footways programme is being finalised and Members will shortly be notified of works in their area. In June there will be seven gangs on this, increasing to 10 gangs from July through to the end of the financial year. The Surface Dressing programme is now well underway, and Members are receiving weekly updates, in addition to the daily whereabouts (if applicable in their Divisions). There was a short delay in starting this programme, due to the contractor pausing works due to COVID-19, however we are confident that we'll be able to make up any lost time, subject to the usual caveats (weather, machinery etc). We have reviewed the Lengthsman activities during this period in line with Government Guidance to ensure safety when working in the public highway.

81. Grass cutting began on 4 May and the first cut should be finished by mid-June.
82. There are two mini-patching gangs on the ground (one more than usual) and they will be responding to the small permanent patches and small areas of surfacing.
83. Our Streetworks teams are examining utilities' applications, paying particular attention to social distancing rules, ensuring that pedestrians can move about easily. The same applies for our own works (where practicable) and there are additional signs on site to remind people to adhere to the Government advice.
84. Street Lighting works have continued, where possible, throughout the response period, with operatives working alone or where necessary travelling separately. Replacement of larger units involving two operatives working in close proximity has not yet resumed.
85. Development Control experienced a slight downturn during the lockdown in terms of the design-auditing activity, workloads have now returned to pre-lockdown levels. Discussions regarding the re-opening of sites with developers are well underway and the site supervision service has recommenced inspections of live works.

➤ **Major Infrastructure Projects**

86. Following the Lockdown announcement on 23 March 2020, the majority of construction work on Major Infrastructure Projects was temporarily suspended and sites safely closed down. This was due to; supply chain matters, resourcing, being able to socially distance, confidence to be able to safely finish work started.
87. Where possible on-site work continued, including; Worcestershire Parkway – Platform 2 works and snagging, Kidderminster Station – internal / external works and seasonal / critical survey works and inspections. Non-construction work on infrastructure projects has continued throughout the period e.g. design works, business case development, planning development.
88. Further advice was received at the end of April from Transport Minister, Baroness Vere, regarding Highway maintenance and guidance provided from Highways Sector Council. On receipt of this contractors have been working through plans for how to Restart construction works. This has required; establishing new practices regarding social distancing, preparing Risk Assessments and Method Statements, mobilising the supply chain and workforce (some furloughed), re-establishing sites, confirming and agreeing plans.
89. Key work is now underway or planned at most locations including; SLR4, Churchfields, Pinvin, although there are some elements of the supply chain still to remobilise. Communications are carried to support Restart and new work, and this will continue as plans progress. Work continues to finalise plans, however at this stage the impact of COVID-19, in terms of any pause in works and the impact of new ways of working, on programmes and costs is not known.

90. Worcestershire 5G testing has also been temporarily suspended due to flooding and CV19 lockdown preventing final testing of the project that has also impacted on other final reporting deliverables. Consequently, an extension has been agreed with DCMS to end of June. With recent government announcement plans are now being actioned to re-commence testing at MHSP, subject to satisfaction of several factors.

➤ **Transport**

91. Our internal Fleet team has supported a number of specific response activities including:
- Receipt, storage and distribution of 400+ food parcels;
 - Support for delivery of medical supplies;
 - Support for transportation of Waste Collection Operatives for district councils.
92. Transport has continued to be provided for children of key workers; this amounts to 27 mainstream contracts and 74 SEND/Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). Liaison with operators takes place on a weekly basis to identify their capacity regarding vehicles and drivers. The same applies to our in-house fleet to ensure that we always have an up to date, accurate forecast of assets available to undertake service provision.
93. We are working extensively with public transport operators to identify those services that will provide a benefit for commuters e.g. adding additional vehicles on key commuter routes based on the latest DfT Guidance, with a view to increasing services back up to 70%-80% pre Covid-19 levels. To support this, we can confirm that our principal operators in the north and south of the county offer contactless payments, with smaller operators to follow within the next eight weeks. This would mean that 90% of the bus services in Worcestershire would be able to offer contactless payments.
94. We are working with operators to improve public confidence in bus services through, e.g. cleaning regimes, social distancing and better information. There will also be additional signage at bus stops to highlight social distancing. We will also be using our infrastructure, Real Time Information points and other information points, to disseminate messages to the public regarding social distancing.
95. A COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant of £336k has been received from the DfT. This is to support services through this challenging period. We have also been granted early access to funding for supported bus services of £468K. Whilst these might at first seem like considerable sums, they are to deal with the immediate issue and short/medium term issues to support the bus industry, based on the dramatic downturn and likely slow recovery.

96. In March, we took the decision to maintain 100% of the contract payment for operators and maintain the levels of concessionary and Severn card reimbursements. This was to protect the economy based on our evidence that the operator market is fragile; we know that there are parts of the county which have poor commerciality and a reducing number of operators. We are in regular liaison with operators and, in line with national trends, patronage has reduced by circa 90% on public transport. There are, however, slow signs of recovery, which have been assisted by our financial support and funding from DfT for the bus industry on a national basis.

➤ **Waste**

97. The Waste Management Service has continued to operate throughout the response period with the key waste facilities of EnviroSort, EnviRecover and the Landfill site remaining fully operational. Throughout the period there has been regular dialogue with the Waste Collection Authorities in Worcestershire, including discussion and facilitation of contacts regarding support to maintain collection rounds.

98. Immediately prior to the “lockdown” announced on 23 March, Worcestershire Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) experienced their busiest weekend of the year, with usage similar to that of an Easter weekend. Following the introduction of the “lockdown”, all HRCs in Worcestershire were then closed reflecting the overall position of “Stay at Home” other than for food, health or work reasons.

99. On 7 April 2020, the Government published ‘Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice to local authorities on prioritising waste collections’. This ‘*non-statutory guidance*’ included some details relevant to HRCs. Having considered both the Regulations regarding travel and the non-statutory guidance relating to waste collections the conclusion was that the Regulations take precedence and therefore the HRC’s should remain closed, as under the Regulations residents are not permitted to travel to them to dispose of their waste. This also recognised the local Waste Collection Authorities in Worcestershire were maintaining their recycling and residual waste collections. Where they were running the service, some were seeing a fall in requests for bulky waste collections and were maintaining their garden waste collection services where it was possible to do so (depends on resourcing).

100. In relation to incidents of fly tipping, none of the local Borough, City or District Councils in Worcestershire advised of any significant increases beyond that normally experienced at this time of year.

101. In April Defra reviewed the “non-statutory guidance” and in advance of receipt of that the Waste Service team worked with the Council’s contractor and partners to consider what matters, circumstances and considerations could enable the reopening of HRCs.

102. Preparations assumed that the 'lockdown' was to be lifted in some form and with social distancing remaining in place. Arrangements included:
- Opening hours would be as normal.
 - A reduced number of HRCs open to enable sufficient staff to provide the extra resourcing required to open and operate the sites safely.
 - Only a limited number of residents would be allowed on site at any one time with a 'supermarket style' system would be implemented, with a 'one out, one in' access policy.
 - No assistance would be provided on site.
 - The deposit of some materials may not be possible if the re-processor is unavailable as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.
103. On 7 May 2020 Worcestershire County Council confirmed plans to open 7 of the 11 Household Recycling Centres in Worcestershire as of Monday 11 May 2020. This recognised the need for higher levels of resourcing in order to operate the sites safely in line with the new social distancing requirements. The sites currently open are:
- Bromsgrove (Quantry Lane)
 - Malvern (Newlands)
 - Pershore (Hill & Moor)
 - Redditch (Crossgates)
 - Stourport (Bonemill)
 - Tenbury (*please note this is part time – normal hours apply*)
 - Worcester (Bilford Road)
104. Communications were carried out, including social media, to inform residents of the plans and the restrictions.
105. Work was undertaken with Highways and the Police to consider the impact of the centres and queuing on the Highway. Various traffic management arrangements were introduced.
106. The HRCs opened as planned as of 11 May 2020. Arrangements and traffic management have been adjusted as required recognising the very high numbers of people using the facilities.
107. The arrangements continue to be reviewed and plans are being finalised regarding the opening of some additional HRCs following the May bank holiday, details and timings to be confirmed. The costs associated with the impact of COVID-19 are being considered.
108. We continue to communicate regarding the HRCs and remind residents of the need to check the website for full details of the social distancing measures, opening times and other restrictions before they visit the HRC.

➤ **Management of the deceased**

109. A working group has been in place for some time to provide plans in relation to mass fatalities (major single incident) or an increase in the number of deaths which exceeds normal capacity (flu pandemic etc). The group is multi-agency including; all first responders, district councils, faith groups and funeral directors and is co-ordinated and chaired by the county council.
110. The group, working at bronze level, has been providing an operational approach and recommendations in terms of the management of the actual and forecast increased number of deaths within the County. Through the COVID-19 Response arrangements the group has worked with military colleagues to secure additional mortuary capacity via MHCLG. Information regarding deaths, funerals, capacity, plans etc has been critical to determine appropriate actions regarding the securing of local temporary mortuary capacity and management of funerals. It is acknowledged this is a very sensitive subject and work continues with partners and funeral directors to ensure the position is carefully monitored.

➤ **Commercial and Change and Chief Executive's Directorate**

➤ **Management of our land and buildings**

111. Gold Command confirmed closure arrangements for key buildings on 24 March and the Council's Property Team began to work with key providers particularly Place Partnership Limited (PPL) to manage the initial closure arrangements and ongoing management of closed and partially closed buildings. Staff and other users of the buildings were advised of building closures.
112. Our buildings are an important asset for the council and the Property team have been co-ordinating the security, maintenance, safety and recovery plans for all of our buildings throughout this period.
113. The property team together with colleagues across the Council and supply partners have from the outset considered and begun preparation for arrangements post the current lockdown arrangements. They are currently reviewing Government and industry guidance and engaging with various bodies to ensure that re-opening complies with requirements in unlock phases and the safety of our workforce and the public is a key priority.
114. A number of actions are already being undertaken (e.g. 'sneeze screens installed at County Hall reception and registrars) or planned for (e.g. sanitiser dispensers ordered, signs etc).
115. Offices across the County will face different challenges and need varying solutions to comply with the Government guidance. Offices will be risk assessed with certificates displayed to say they comply with Covid19 Secure Guidance. Complying with the 2m social distancing around use of workstations, County Hall could accommodate circa 150 staff.

116. The default position remains the same that staff continue to work from home where they can. As such assessing needs and providing equipment for people to work at home safely and effectively in the longer term is being developed with HR, IT and Property
117. The Property Team have also helped facilitate the use of the land at Sixways it leases from the Worcester Warriors for use as the Worcester COVID19 testing site working with all the stakeholders who have an interest in the site, Worcester City, Worcester Warriors, Ringway, NHS Acute Hospital Trust to release the land for this use.
118. The Council is also supporting the NHS Acute Hospital Trust (Worcester Royal) by providing the use of the top car park at County hall for use by its staff whilst they are unable to use the Sixways park and ride facility and there is increasing demand on their facilities. This is subject to review as the Council actions its recovery plans in due course.

➤ **Procurement**

119. The Council's Procurement Team has undertaken several critical activities including:
 - Establishing a PPE centre at the community equipment site, to source, stock and distribute PPE items & hand sanitiser to care homes, domiciliary care providers, personal care assistants, hospices, GPs, dentists, funeral directors, district councils and schools.
 - Creating a food preparation and distribution hub at County Hall to deliver food boxes to individuals in crisis and catering packs to street kitchens and food banks
 - Arranging alternative temporary accommodation for hospital discharge, rough sleepers and homeless
 - Agreeing 'block' contracts for additional care home beds and domiciliary care support for hospital discharge
 - Supporting the Commissioning and Finance teams with assessing care provider claims for additional costs
 - Changing invoice and payment processes to provide quicker payments to support businesses cashflow
 - Creating a financial risk assessment model to monitor the sustainability of the current supply base.
- **Purchase and distribution of PPE**
120. Public Health England issued new guidance on the use of PPE following the outbreak of COVID-19. As a result, demand for these items dramatically increased placing unprecedented demand on the existing UK stock and distribution network.

121. There has been an urgent need for the Council to step into the normal supply arrangements and secure items from other sources to ensure that care services and other key worker activities can safely continue.
122. In addition, central government has provided some PPE items for distribution via the Local Resilience Forum which the Council has taken responsibility for.
123. The items that have been purchased and distributed are face masks, medical gloves, aprons, body bags, hand sanitiser, thermometers and eye protection. An online request system for providers has been implemented and deliveries are done either same day or next day. There is also an 'out of hours' emergency delivery process.
124. Over 375,000 items have been distributed in the last 4 weeks. Orders have been placed for a further over 500,000 items with efforts continuing to source another 500,000 before the end of June 2020 to meet the expected demand. Sourcing of products is a whole region effort of 14 local authorities in the West Midlands and surrounding area coming together to place bulk orders.
125. The Procurement Team have also been working in partnership with the Community Equipment store where storage and distribution is being done with NHS delivery drivers. Where items are for primary care or require specialist support, e.g. training, the team are working jointly with Hereford and Worcester CCG.
 - **Food boxes and Street Kitchens**
126. Food parcels are also being distributed to individuals in crisis daily with requests being handled by our Public Health Colleagues on the Here2 Help Helpline. The requests are forwarded to the Procurement Team who then work in partnership with the Servest County Hall café staff to fulfil these. The café has been turned temporarily into an efficient food pick and pack centre.
127. The food boxes for individuals are procured from City of Wolverhampton Council who has established a production line with its local wholesalers. The boxes are collected and delivered by the Council's Community Transport team. The boxes contain enough food for 48 hours and can be delivered the same day.
128. The Street Kitchens and food banks are provided with a nutritious fresh combination of foodstuffs that Servest have developed. These are boxed up for voluntary organisations who either deliver or cook for people who are homeless or living in hostels. County Enterprises then undertake deliveries. To date 1,516 individuals have been provided with food across the County.
 - **Alternative temporary accommodation for hospital discharge and homeless**
129. As noted under the People Directorate feedback the Procurement Team has assisted in sourcing and securing additional capacity for discharge and rough sleepers as and when required. A 'call for help' was put out to local businesses and offers of over 400 rooms were received. 100 rooms were secured at two facilities under local and national contracts and the Procurement team worked with Adult Social Care team and hotel staff to ensure that the right arrangements

were in place and that PPE, waste disposal etc was in place. This accommodation is in place until at least the end of June 2020 as a contingency should future outbreaks in care homes occur and homes must close to new admissions. There may still be a requirement for a place for people to self-isolate when discharged from hospital and live with someone vulnerable.

130. The Procurement team has been working Public Health and District Council housing teams to secure accommodation for people who are homeless or rough sleeping. This is a complex issue to resolve and the places that will offer accommodation is very limited. Thirty-five rooms have been secured at the Fownes Hotel in Worcester and the Procurement team have supported seeking offers from hotels in other parts of the County. The accommodation needs to be supported with security and food provision that the team has worked on jointly with stakeholders.

➤ **Finance and Procurement supporting providers**

131. Several providers have contacted the Council claiming additional costs due to either staff absence through Covid19 related sickness, unable to undertake services due to resident sickness or increased operating costs e.g. PPE. The Procurement team worked with the Finance and Adult Social Care Commissioning teams to develop an approach to assessing claims for additional costs and how those costs can be recorded on an 'open book' transparent basis
132. At the start of the outbreak the Procurement and Finance teams agreed that all suppliers would be moved to immediate payment terms to assist businesses with cashflow during the lockdown period. The process for raising purchase orders and making same day payments to supplier (in particular for PPE) has been developed and agreed with the Finance team.
133. The Procurement team has started a process of assessing the risk of failure of key providers and suppliers. There are 911 with whom the Council spends more than £25k a year with, approximately 150 are care homes.
134. The Council's Insurance Team is presently working with schools and insurers to reclaim and repay monies for school trips and events. This matter is complicated as not all schools have taken out the Council's insurance. However, despite this the Council is supporting all schools in disputes and claims.

➤ **IT**

135. Our IT systems in normal times provide essential services to allow council business to be carried out for staff, residents and with our partners. With limited occupancy of our office facilities supporting remote working has been essential as has the development of new applications or solutions for specific pandemic responses.
136. All remote working systems have performed well supporting the vast majority of WCC staff to work remotely. Outages remain unusual even given the increased usage of our systems as highlighted here:
- 2900 Users on VPN - Peak number Connected simultaneously to our VPN

- 50% - 60% Internet Circuit – Average daily bandwidth usage of Internet Circuit
 - 1000+ Video Calls – Average number of video calls per week (increase from average of 30 per week prior to Covid-19)
137. Several specific applications have been developed to respond to various aspects of the Covid19 pandemic as shown here.
- Here2Help Website & App
 - Volunteer Redeployment App
 - Absence from Work due to Covid-19 App
 - Existing Medical Condition Declaration App
 - Previous Care Experience App
 - Covid-19 Testing App
 - Covid-19 Test Result App
 - PPE Request Form App
138. A number of specific solutions have been developed to respond to various aspects of the Covid19 pandemic as shown here.
- Desktop Background Rollout
 - Telephony Contact Centre Changes
 - Adults Access Contact Centre
 - Here2Help Contact Centre
 - Gov Notify to Text/Send Letters to residents
 - Provision of Zoom accounts for internal/external video calls
 - 25 Scanners provided to Registration Services
 - 100+ additional laptop devices provided
139. Several other business support activities have been taken to respond to various aspects of the Covid19 pandemic as shown here.
- Shielded Cohort Data - Analysis of Shielded Data against Social Care Data
 - Digital Devices for Vulnerable Children - Co-ordination of procurement & distribution
 - Staff Moves - Moving Discharge Team from Aconbury House to Skye Building at WRH
 - Out of Hours support – Extended to cover a wider range of issues
 - Online Council Meetings - Preparation for public Council meetings being held online via Zoom.
140. Despite the current situation the IT & Digital Service have been able to continue to deliver a number of key BAU activities:
- Internet Circuit Maintenance – Resilient Internet Circuit now installed in Wildwood
 - Liquid Logic - Post Go live Liquid Logic Upgrade & CPIS (Child Protection Information System) implementation
 - Civica Contact Centre – Transfer of the service back to WCC completed on 1st April.

- Babcock insourcing – IT & Digital elements of the project have been progressed and are on track for 1st June go live.
- Digital Worcestershire Website - www.worcestershire.gov.uk/digital - The site showcases the digital work we are delivering as a Council and will also provide digital resources for residents and businesses to help with digital inclusion.

HR, OD and Engagement

141. To date HR, OD and Engagement have undertaken several different Covid specific activities as part of the Council's Covid19 response including:
- a) Measures to protect and support our vulnerable and at-risk employees
 - b) Identification of key workers (c.1000) and implementation a process to ensure these staff can carry out their duties
 - c) Design and implementation of a voluntary redeployment process with districts/city
 - d) Worked with Deloitte to set up and co-ordinate all testing for non-NHS staff for multiple organisations including Police, Fire, Districts, Schools and care homes
 - e) Flexibility of policy provision to ensure workforce effectiveness during Covid
 - f) Continued Trade Union engagement throughout
 - g) Developed and implemented fast track onboarding and induction training for care staff
 - h) Specialist training and care home support
 - i) Workforce resilience course designed and launched – large uptake
 - j) Consumer relations
 - k) Regular staff communication and engagement
 - l) Stakeholder engagement across multiple organisations
 - m) Response to large increase in media interest (300% increase)
 - n) Social media response / awareness
142. At the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, HR, OD and Engagement designed and issued a medical disclosure survey for all WCC and WCF employees. This enabled us to ensure those who were most at risk could be effectively supported during this time. This activity identified 792 employees who have been written to and advised to work from home with immediate effect. If people have been unable to undertake their normal duties, we have worked with their line manager, and sought alternative deployment during this time, an example of this would be a frontline care worker, joining the Access Centre or Here2Help call centre.
143. HR, OD and Engagement have worked to identify 1,200 essential workers who were required to travel during lockdown. The team led on the design and distribution of key worker letters for each person and posted to their home address. This has meant they can travel to undertake essential activities such as safeguarding visits and personal care calls.

144. At the start of the Covid19 outbreak it was anticipated that we would see significant capacity issues for both County and District, frontline services. HR, OD and Engagement led the design, implementation and management of a voluntary redeployment scheme, liaising with partners from districts, WCF and WCC.
145. HR, OD and Engagement have led the employer referral testing route at Worcester Warriors Sixways, for those public sector (non-NHS) staff in Worcestershire who are eligible for testing, this includes but is not limited to West Mercia Police, Hereford and Worcester Fire Service, District Councils and schools.
146. The process designed and implemented is in the majority automated, fast, clearly defined and accessible. We have worked with the national testing team to ensure we have access to priority testing, and all employees who have requested a test and meet eligibility have been tested within 48 hours, the majority within 24 hours. This to date has resulted in c.700 employees who have been tested.
147. To date, there has been a need to review several HR policies and processes with a view to reducing the pressure and on all managers and employees. An example of this would be the review of the managing attendance policy, with the temporary suspension of elements of the process, this has elevated pressure on managers, freeing time up for them to focus on the Covid19 response and ensuring minimal impact on frontline services.
148. There have been fortnightly update sessions with all trade unions including school representatives. Close collaboration has enabled us to move at pace and ensure swift resolutions. It has built on our established and positive relationship with the unions, which has been invaluable at this uncertain time.
149. To ensure there is resilience in frontline provision, HR, OD and Engagement have run a bespoke campaign for care staff, created a fast track onboarding process and have designed and implemented a fast track induction programme. To date there have been 66 applications, 33 people have been offered relief contracts. 18 have started in their new roles, and 15 are still in process. 29 people have attended the fast track induction course which is open to new starters and people who have redeployed into frontline care roles.
150. Seven people within Learning and Development Team will be delivering the PPE training to nursing/care homes across Worcestershire from week commencing 11 May. They will attend specialist training, which will cover:
 - a) infection prevention and control,
 - b) application, correct use, removal and disposal of PPE
 - c) how to carry out swab testing safely
151. These staff will liaise directly with the care homes and arrange to go in and train the trainer or nominated champion within each home and carry out regular follow up checks and support until a vaccine is available.

152. Staff updates have been sent out every working day throughout the crisis. All staff x-mails have been issued on behalf of Paul Robinson, Richard Taylor, Kathryn Cobain, Elaine Carolan, Michael Hudson and Catherine Driscoll. More staff members than ever before dialled into the Staff Briefing which have been delivered online. To showcase the Council's response to coronavirus we have launched a series of videos under the theme of Our Story. This will become a video record of the council's response to the pandemic.
153. There has been a 300% increase in the number of media calls that we have been receiving daily during the crisis. Interest has come in from local, regional and national media outlets. 82% of the media releases that we have issued since the beginning of the lockdown have been issued proactively.
154. Our social media following has increased significantly during the lockdown across all our channels. On average we have been posting between 8 and 10 social media posts each day (including weekends) on each channel.

Legal Implications

155. The Council has responded to the national emergency in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, including participating in the Local Resilience Forum and working as 'One Worcestershire' with the District Councils to support residents and continue to provide services.
156. As reported to the Cabinet meeting on 26 March, the Coronavirus Act 2020 had just received Royal Assent. This changed requirements for certain service delivery and enabled changes to be made to current policy approaches, with a potential impact on finances. Various aspects of the Act have been implemented through Regulations and guidance has also been issued. Cabinet in March authorised officers to take appropriate action in relation to the coronavirus pandemic, including authorising expenditure and making temporary changes to Council policies arising from the Act, associated legislation, national guidelines and Government directions.
157. With the rapid development of the virus and the Council's response, notice of these decisions in March could not be given on the Cabinet Forward Plan, and it was not possible to convene a meeting of the Council to agree to the changes to the budget and policy framework. In accordance with constitutional requirements, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board was consulted and agreed to these decisions being taken as urgent. Cabinet is required to report to Council on the reasons for acting outside the policy and budget framework and the information presented here forms the basis for that report to the July Council meeting.

158. Officer decisions have been reported on the Council's website and include provision of PPE, Here2Help, development of the Adult Social Care Access Centre and purchase of care. Full details are set out in Appendix 2, and at the following link:
http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/download/1403/officer_executive_decision_making_-_record_of_officer_executive_decisions_2020

Financial Implications

159. Government has issued two grants to local authorities both totalling £1.6 billion. From this the County Council has received £25.5 million in allocation to contribute towards its cost of response and recovery to COVID-19.
160. In addition, the Council is working with the CCG and NHS England to recover additional costs in ensuring prompt and safe discharges from hospital to enable effective care and treatment through the whole system. Our working understanding is that all such costs will be funded 100% from the NHS £1.3 billion allocation. To date we have claimed and receipted just over £0.8 million from this fund.
161. To date the Council anticipates to spend at least £15 million of that by the end of the first quarter and more thereafter. As such the full extent of the additional grant is expected to be spent by the end of the second quarter. The s151 Officer with his peers is liaising with MHCLG and the County Council Network (CCN), regarding our future need. At this stage that is very hard to predict, and we will continue to model and work with Government over our future need, including the impact on our Council Tax and Business Rates income / bases. This will be reported to Cabinet throughout 2020/21.
162. In addition, £600 million funding was made available for Care Homes and processed via Councils under Government guidelines. The Council received £7.5 million, of which 75% will be directly distributed to all care homes in the County on a per beds basis. The remain 25% will be distributed in consultation with Public Health to support infection control and protection measures required and determined locally.

Risk Implications

163. A risk register has been maintained by Silver throughout the process and reviewed, with any escalation to Gold as appropriate.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

164. The response and recovery is being led with the Director of Public Health playing a key role in both the Council's Gold governance arrangements and the LRF engagement. Full assessments of risk and actions are being carried out on a daily basis and further information has been included within the body of this report.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Governance structure
- Appendix 2 – Record of Officer Executive Decisions

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

County Council: 01905 763763

Specific Contact Points for this report

Paul Robinson, Chief Executive

Tel: 01905 844125

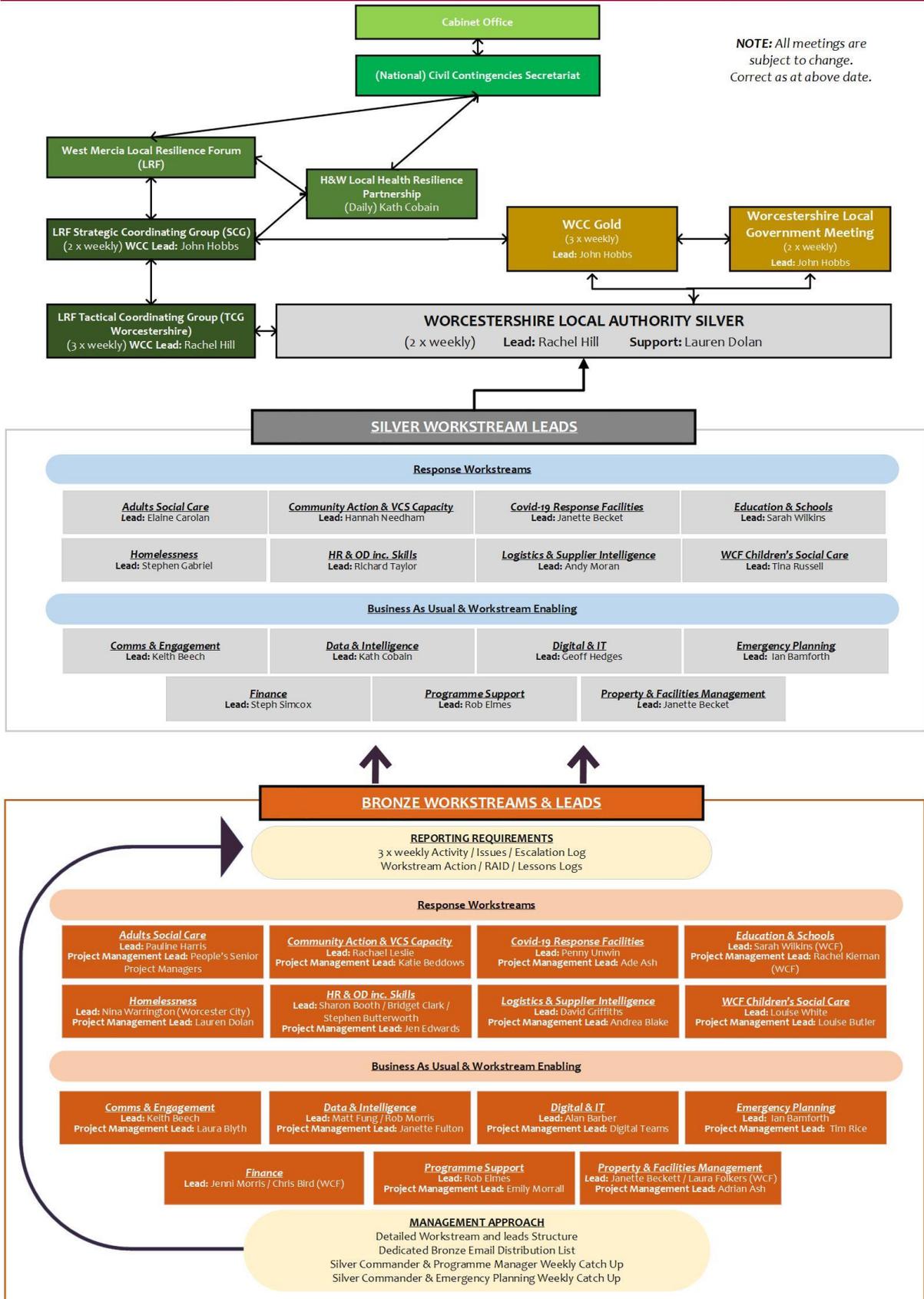
Email: PRobinson@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Chief Executive) there are no other background papers

APPENDIX 1: COVID-19 RESPONSE STRUCTURE

COVID-19 Programme Structure (HIGH LEVEL ONLY) v0.15 01 May 2020



Record of Executive Decisions

- A. Accommodation to house hospital discharge patients
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12491/accommodation_to_house_hospital_discharge_patients - 25 march 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12491/accommodation_to_house_hospital_discharge_patients_-_25_march_2020)
- B. Additional payments to commissioned providers of adult social care
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12485/additional_payments_to commissioned providers of adult social care - 1 april 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12485/additional_payments_to_commissioned_providers_of_adult_social_care_-_1_april_2020)
- C. Allocation of DfT Covid-19 bus services support grant
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12517/allocation_of_dft_covid-19 bus services support grant - 23 april 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12517/allocation_of_dft_covid-19_bus_services_support_grant_-_23_april_2020)
- D. Covid-19 emergency service delivery for social care safeguarding services
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12400/covid_19_emergency_service_delivery_for_social_care_safeguarding_services - 6 april 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12400/covid_19_emergency_service_delivery_for_social_care_safeguarding_services_-_6_april_2020)
- E. Extension of the hours and role of the adult services access centre
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12490/extension_of_the_hours_and_role_of_the_adult_services_access_centre - 24 march 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12490/extension_of_the_hours_and_role_of_the_adult_services_access_centre_-_24_march_2020)
- F. Here2Help
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12487/here2help - 27 march 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12487/here2help_-_27_march_2020)
- G. Offer of rental support for County Council tenants
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12493/offer_of_rental_support_for county council tenants - 24 april 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12493/offer_of_rental_support_for_county_council_tenants_-_24_april_2020)
- H. Personal protective equipment and hand sanitiser
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12492/personal_protective_equipment_and_hand_sanitiser - 19 march 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12492/personal_protective_equipment_and_hand_sanitiser_-_19_march_2020)
- I. Pre purchase of care home beds for older people
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12488/pre_purchase_of_care_home_beds_for_older_people - 25 march 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12488/pre_purchase_of_care_home_beds_for_older_people_-_25_march_2020)
- J. Purchasing care above care and support plans
[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12484/purchasing_care_above_care_and_support_plans - 19 march 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12484/purchasing_care_above_care_and_support_plans_-_19_march_2020)

K. Purchase of domiciliary care

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12489/purchase_of_domiciliary_care -
_20 april 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12489/purchase_of_domiciliary_care_-_20_april_2020)

L. Additional expenditure recorded as part of the Council's response to Covid-19 – children's services

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12523/the_record_of_additional_expen
diture incurred as part of the councils response to the covid-19 virus -
_15 and 19 april 2020](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/12523/the_record_of_additional_expenditure_incurred_as_part_of_the_councils_response_to_the_covid-19_virus_-_15_and_19_april_2020)