



Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 2 June 2020
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: This meeting will be held remotely in a Microsoft Teams Live Event (see link below)

Membership: (Quorum 3)

Piers Brown (Chairman), Mike Parkes (Vice-Chairman), Andy Canning, Beryl Ezzard, Barry Goringe, Brian Heatley, Sherry Jespersen, Howard Legg, Julie Robinson and David Shortell

Chief Executive: Matt Prosser, South Walks House, South Walks Road, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1UZ (Sat Nav DT1 1EE)

For more information about this agenda please contact Helen Whitby 01305 224187 - helen.whitby@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk



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Due to the current coronavirus pandemic the Council has reviewed its approach to holding committee meetings. Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting and listen to the debate online by using the following link: [Weblink to Dorset Council Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to observe – 2 June 2020](#)

Members of the public wishing to view the meeting from an iPhone, iPad or Android phone will need to download the free Microsoft Teams App to sign in as a Guest, it is advised to do this at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

Please note that public speaking has been suspended. However Public Participation will continue by written submission only. Please see detail set out below.

Dorset Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it carries out its business whenever possible. A recording of the meeting will be available on the council's website after the event.

A G E N D A

Page No.

1 APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

5 - 14

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on:-

- (a) 26 November 2019
- (b) 13 January 2020

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To receive questions or statements on the business of the committee from town and parish councils and members of the public.

Please note that public speaking has been suspended during the Covid-19 crisis. Each question or statement is limited to no more than 450 words and must be electronically submitted to helen.whitby@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk by the deadline set out below. The question or statement will be read out by an officer of the Council and a response will be given by the appropriate Portfolio Holder at the meeting. All questions/statements and the responses will be published in full within the minutes of the meeting.

The deadline for submission of the full text of a question or statement is 8.30am on Thursday 28 May 2020.

5 COVID-19 RESPONSE

15 - 102

To consider a report by the Chief Executive.

6 URGENT ITEMS

To consider any items of business which the Chairman has had prior notification and considers to be urgent pursuant to section 100B (4) b) of the Local Government Act 1972. The reason for the urgency shall be recorded in the minutes.

7 EXEMPT BUSINESS

To move the exclusion of the press and the public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public and the press will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the item of business is considered.

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DORSET COUNCIL - RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2019

Present: Cllrs Piers Brown (Chairman), Beryl Ezzard, Barry Goringe, Brian Heatley, Howard Legg and David Shortell

Also present: Cllr Tony Ferrari (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Assets)

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Dawn Adams (Senior Procurement Officer), Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Jim McManus (Corporate Director - Finance and Commercial), Susan Ward-Rice (Equalities and Diversity Officer) and Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

19. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sherry Jespersen, Mike Parkes and Peter Wharf (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change).

20. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2019 were confirmed and signed.

21. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

22. Public Participation

There were no statements and questions from Town and Parish Councils, public statements or questions at the meeting:

23. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

24. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Executive which set out Dorset Council's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. It contained the Council's equality objectives which would ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and specifically the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Members noted that when the Council was established on 1 April 2019 Dorset County Council's policy had been adopted until such time as a policy for the new

Council could be developed. Work on the new policy had started in January 2019 and this had included consultation involving HR, the Trade Unions and the Stonewall Charity. A workshop with the Trade Unions had been held on 5 November 2019 and a deadline for comments had been extended to 27 November 2019 at their request. An action plan to deliver the equality objectives was being developed and the Eqla had been completed and was in the process of being signed off. The process was being overseen by an Executive Advisory Panel chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change. Members' feedback was sought with a view to the policy being recommended for adoption by the Cabinet in December 2019. The Portfolio Holder had suggested that the sentence "the council ,,, policies" in paragraph 9.1 be replaced by "The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the relevant portfolio holder and will be taken through the committee process every three years to ensure that it reflects the latest legalisation, best practice and other council policies."

A number of questions were raised about the policy. In response it was noted that the only major difference between the previous Sovereign Councils' policies and the new policy was the inclusion of procurement and social value; undertaking Eqlas would help to understand impacts on different groups and the potential to mitigate these impacts; protected characteristics included learning disability, mental health, long term health conditions (over 12 months) and did not necessarily mean that the person was disabled; the additional characteristics identified in paragraph 4.8 of the policy would be considered as part of the decision making process; local characteristics were identified through demographics, discussions with Stonewall and talking to communities; there was a need to be able to engage with people, not necessarily through traditional methods; some of the local characteristics were national, not just local to Dorset; when services were being commissioned, it was the Council's duty to ensure that companies tendering adhered to equality duties and signed up to the Council's policies which was monitored through contract management; equality and diversity training should be mandatory for staff in order to ensure adherence and implementation of the policy; key performance indicators (KPI) were being developed and Stonewall would feedback on our results in participating in the Workplace Equality Index which could inform the work on KPIs; there was a need for the Council to improve data collection with regard to reasons for leaving the Council's employ, staff grievances and disciplinaries and this was included in action plan; staff support was available for those being harassed whilst undertaking their duties and for those wishing to take this further; and part of the EAP's task was to identify training for members and staff using various mediums.

Members also suggested that an annual report on statistics might be useful, including complaints against the Council and accolades.

Details of membership of the EAP were given and members asked for sight of the minutes of the first meeting held in September 2019.

It was noted that the completed Eqla would be presented at a future meeting.

With regard to recommendations to Cabinet, members agreed with the Portfolio Holder's amendment; suggested that the term "local characteristics" within the policy be changed to "Dorset Council's protected characteristics" and that a minimum of one key performance indicator be developed for equality and diversity once the Council Plan was finalised.

Resolved

1. That the minutes of the Executive Advisory Panel meeting held in September 2019 be emailed to members.

2. That the completed Eqla be presented to a future meeting.

Recommended

That the Cabinet adopt the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy subject to the following:-

- (a) that the sentence "the council ,, policies" in paragraph 9.1 be replaced by "The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis by the relevant portfolio holder and will be taken through the committee process every three years to ensure that it reflects the latest legalisation, best practice and other council policies."
- (b) that the term "local characteristics" be changed to "Dorset Council's protected characteristics".
- (c) that a minimum of one key performance indicator be developed for equality and diversity once the Council Plan was finalised.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy would ensure that the Council was delivering services fairly and meeting the needs of Dorset communities whilst also being a fair and inclusive employer.
2. The policy would ensure that the Council was meeting its statutory duties as contained in the Equality Act 2010.

25. Procurement - The Dorset Pound

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director (Corporate Development S151) which provided a proposal that the Council considered, as part of the Procurement Strategy, a corporate approach to social value to assist maximising the Dorset Pound through procurement outcomes.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercial and Assets explained that the report was seeking members' views on proposed ways of calculating and encouraging social value from procurement. He recognised that a balance needed to be struck between price and social value and he welcomed comments. The Executive Director added that the Strategy would be considered by the Cabinet in March 2020.

The following points were made in discussion:-

- that a small number of contracts were won or lost on a 5% margin, that this was not monitored and that a more consistent approach across the Council was being sought;
- that when a tender was being considered early market engagement was being undertaken to better understand the market and competition in order to help identify criteria and thinking on social value;
- that national guidance was available on how to use social value and bigger contracts could be broken down into smaller lots which were more attractive to smaller and medium sized enterprises in Dorset.
- the law stated that social value had to be considered when procuring but companies outside of Dorset could score as well as local companies with regard to social value.
- supplier engagement and understanding the market shaped procurement;
- that unsuccessful Dorset companies received feedback as to why they were unsuccessful so that they were better able to tender in future.

- the procurement and evaluation process needed to be able to balance tenders from local firms with their smaller travel and transport costs against economies of scale from larger companies;
- the Council's diverse procurement needs meant that social value could not be fixed;
- the need for a clear definition of the Dorset Council area should be included in the Strategy;
- that any joint working with Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council would need to be agreed separately;
- whether there was a reverse incentive with regard to the green and sustainable category in that a company being carbon neutral might not get as many social value points as a company using older vehicles which could improve its carbon emissions performance;
- whether the cost of tendering could be reduced to make them more accessible to smaller businesses;
- the Dorset Care Framework was open to new suppliers who could bid for work as it was advertised with a lighter touch approach;
- to attract small businesses the procurement process needed to be as simple as possible;
- that all people who produce goods got a fair price and for these companies to be sustainable and resilient;
- need to make sure procurement was legal and that small businesses were not put off by the tendering process being over-complicated;
- the national push for social value and for the profile of it to be raised within the Council in order for there to be better outcomes for Dorset and its residents.

Members were thanked for their comments and areas identified for further exploration. The Committee would scrutinise the draft Strategy before it was considered by cabinet.

Resolved

1. That the Council establish a Procurement Strategy that sets out key principles and actions to embed practical and effective commissioning for social value in every aspect of its procurements, commencing (as the Public Services (Social Value) Action 2012 requires) at the pre-procurement stage.
2. That the above comments be considered as part of the development of the Strategy.
3. That the draft Strategy be scrutinised by the Committee before it was considered by Cabinet.

26. People Strategy

The Committee considered the notes of an informal meeting of some members of the Committee held on 13 November 2019 with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development and Change and the Corporate Director for HR and OD to discuss the Council's People Strategy. The Portfolio Holder had delegated authority to deal with any minor changes. The Strategy had been considered by the Trade Unions and some minor changes had been suggested by the Audit and Governance Committee.

A concern was expressed at the informal meeting that the Authority might seem more concerned about minor considerations rather than getting the work done more efficiently and effectively.

Members supported the Strategy but recognised it would continually develop,

Resolved

That the findings of the Informal meeting be endorsed.

27. Resources Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee considered its Forward Plan.

Members noted that a budget cafe would be held on 13 January 2020 for all members but particularly for those of the People, Place and Resources Scrutiny Committees. This would provide training and development as well as giving members an opportunity to consider the impact of budget proposals on service areas. The Scrutiny Committees would meet individually the same afternoon to make recommendations on the budget proposals for Cabinet to consider in February 2020.

The Executive Director (Corporate Development S151) reminded members that an item on the budget was scheduled for the meeting but had been withdrawn because of the forthcoming general election and purdah period. Members would receive information about the budget proposals prior to the meetings on 13 January 2020.

Members were also reminded that established Executive Advisory Panels (EAP) would report their findings to scrutiny committees prior to being considered by the Cabinet. The relevant EAPs had been added to the Committee's Forward Plan.

The Chairman explained that the Scrutiny Officer was leaving the Council's employment, thanked her for her hard work and wished her well for the future.

One member drew attention to the use of blinds and air conditioning during the meeting when natural light could have been used. The Executive Director (Corporate Development S151) agreed to follow this up outside of the meeting.

Resolved

1. That information regarding budget proposals would be issued for the meetings being held on 13 January 2020.
2. That the Executive Director (Corporate Development S151) would follow up on the use of blinds and air conditioning during meetings.

Duration of meeting: 10.00 - 11.35 am

Chairman

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DORSET COUNCIL - RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 13 JANUARY 2020

Present: Cllrs Piers Brown (Chairman), Mike Parkes (Vice-Chairman), Andy Canning, Beryl Ezzard, Barry Goringe, Brian Heatley, Sherry Jespersen and David Shortell

Also present: Councillor Tony Alford (Cabinet Member for Customer, Community and Regulator Services), Councillor Tony Ferrari (Finance, Commercial and Assets) and Councillor Peter Wharf (Deputy Leader and Corporate Development and Change).

Officers present (for all or part of the meeting):

Aidan Dunn (Executive Director - Corporate Development S151), Helen Whitby (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and Jim McManus (Corporate Director - Finance and Commercial)

28. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Howard Legg and Julie Robinson.

29. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made at the meeting.

30. Public Participation

There were no statements and questions from Town and Parish Councils and no public statements and questions at the meeting:

31. Urgent items

There were no urgent items.

32. Pre-decision Scrutiny of the 2020/2021 Budget

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Corporate Development on pre-decision scrutiny of the 2020/21 budget.

The Executive Director explained how the budget had been formulated and highlighted Section 7 of the report which set out council tax considerations including the proposed approach to unoccupied houses, treasury management and capital. A prudent and realistic approach had been taken in balancing the budget, which did not rely on services, and which would help create a long-term sustainable organisation.

Members then scrutinised the budget in detail. The following points were made and clarified in discussion:-

- with regard to paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5 and the proposals for council tax rises of 2% from 2021 onwards, it was proposed and agreed that the Cabinet be asked to consider whether this was necessary as members had not had an opportunity to discuss them;
- the significant changes in council tax bands from 2020/21 and in subsequent years;
- the potential for a large overspend in total, future pressures on children's and adults' services budgets and possible areas of underspend which might offset these;
- the difference a 4% increase in council tax would make;
- that climate change implications were not included in the budget this related to policy and the budget avoided all areas of policy;
- how reserves would or could be used to address budget risk or offset overspends;
- officers' assurance relating to the budget projections for children's and adult services and the assumptions these were based upon;
- the Council was learning from other local authorities who were containing the growth in demand for services;
- decreases in care packages over the next couple of years;
- the difficulty in trying to fix costs and the rise in demand for services;
- the need to continue to address demand;
- the need for Key Performance Indicators so that outcomes for service users could be measured;
- the chairmen of Executive Advisory Panels would be reminded that they could bid for funding to take forward ideas to save money or make reputational improvements which could include climate change proposals;
- waste savings arising from operating depots with fewer managers;
- the need for broadband coverage to be improved and efforts being made to secure this;
- the need to reduce agency staff usage and steps being taken to ensure that the Council becomes an "Employer of Choice";
- the need to expedite asset sales to reduce costs to the Council and that some of these had been included in the place-based budget for 2020/21;
- the Council's appetite for risk if it was to become more commercial;
- whether members were happy that the proposed budget would deliver the Council's priorities and that risks had been mitigated; and
- a policy was being drawn up in relation to the transfer of assets to towns and parish councils.

Members then agreed the following:-

Recommended

1. That the Cabinet be asked to reconsider paragraphs 6.4 and 6.5 of the report to see whether these were necessary as members had not had an opportunity to discuss them.

2. That the Cabinet be recommended to adopt the proposed budget for 2020/21 subject to the above.

33. Exempt Business

There was no exempt business.

Duration of meeting: 4.00 - 5.15 pm

Chairman

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Resources Scrutiny Committee 2 June 2020 COVID-19 Response

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All Dorset Councillors

Executive Director: Matt Prosser, Chief Executive

Report Author: Nina Coakley
Title: Programme Manager
Tel: 01305 224836
Email: nina.coakley@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation: The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider the effectiveness of Dorset Council's response to the COVID-19 crisis with a focus on learning from Dorset Council's experience of responding to the COVID-19 emergency and not to scrutinise the effectiveness of other agencies and any decisions which are rightly the responsibility of the Council's partners.

Reason for Recommendation: That the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee are assured of the effectiveness of the Dorset Council response to COVID-19 and able to learn from the council's experience of responding to the emergency thus far.

1. **Executive Summary**

A detailed summary of the council's response to COVID-19 was submitted to Cabinet on 5 May 2020.

The report sets out the legal status of the council in its response as a Category One Emergency Responder under the 2004 Civil Contingencies Act along with the structure established to deliver a response to COVID-19. This is in collaboration with our partners and our community.

Communications have been stepped up during the response to ensure that MPs, governing and regulatory bodies, Councillors, the public,

employees, Town and Parish Councils and local businesses are engaged with and informed throughout the response.

To best coordinate critical activity for Dorset Council, ten cells/task groups were stood up, each with a nominated lead and where required employees within the council were redeployed from non-critical services or suspended services to support delivery of that work.

- Community Shield cell
- Property cell
- Workforce cell
- Commercial cell
- Transport & Logistics cell
- PPE cell
- Testing cell
- Digital cell
- Safety cell
- Recovery cell

The Community Shield cell has been critical in the way vulnerable people in Dorset have been cared for and supported during this crisis. A team of people have come together from across the council and from the voluntary and community sector and together they have:

- Received 1,696 incoming calls from vulnerable people to the Dorset Council helpline (as at 19 May)
- Made 3,838 proactive calls to see if vulnerable people were ok and determine their needs (as at 19 May)
- Completed 3,800 e-assessments of vulnerable people
- Provided 1000 food parcels directly from Dorset Council to those people with dietary requirements or other specific needs
- Supported central Government delivery of over 13,000 food parcels
- Age UK have made 6,900 outbound phone calls to vulnerable people offering a befriending service and have received 3,800 incoming calls
- The Dorset Volunteer Centre continue to coordinate 1,779 local volunteers to support the Community Shield

The work has been highly praised by our 'valuable people', many of whom have deemed it their life line during this period of isolation. Additionally, the Community Shield has been held up as an exemplar with the LGA inviting Dorset to share their successes.

In addition to activity within cells to respond directly to the needs of our residents, operational services consistently monitored the impact of COVID-19 across all directorates, escalating issues through SLT meetings which were held daily and then thrice weekly. This enabled a corporate-wide response to escalations where required and to ensure that our residents continued to be provided with the critical services they needed.

From the early stages of the pandemic, the council was focussed on taking learning from this crisis to embed in future working as part of a recovery and reset of the organisation. A Recovery Coordinating Group

has been set up across the Local Resilience Forum area focussed on how the Dorset-wide system will recover, this is supported by a Dorset Council recovery cell working on the strategy for how the organisation will recover. Transformation plans in place before the pandemic have been reshaped to focus on the immediate organisational reset as well as longer term transformation.

During the response period, the Leader has maintained oversight and communications with the Chief Executive and Cabinet have continued to work closely with Executive and Corporate Directors. All Councillors have continued to represent the views of their communities through weekly webinars.

The quality of joint working and willingness of statutory and non-statutory partners to work collaboratively has been exceptional. It is of significant note that without this commitment by partners, it would have been challenging to provide support to residents in the same way.

2. Financial Implications

The full financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Dorset Council is currently at an additional cost of £13m per month. Financial support from central government has been received with further mitigation required during 2020/21 (and beyond) once the full cost of COVID-19 and the full compensation package from central government is known.

3. Climate implications

The implications of COVID-19 have been positive for our climate and ecology, with a significant reduction in travel due to the lockdown. This is likely to change as restrictions ease, but it is recommended that consideration is given to the impact of the temporary lockdown in the climate change action plan.

4. Other Implications

Public Health implications are ongoing due to the active pandemic. Additionally, there are implications for all aspects of business as usual service delivery as the significant impact of the virus on our residents and our economy is ongoing. This includes and is not limited to sustainability, property and assets, voluntary organisations, community safety, corporate parenting, physical activity, safeguarding children and adults, the workforce and HR implications.

5. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: HIGH

Residual Risk: HIGH

The risk profile for COVID-19 indicates that the majority of risk has been mitigated where possible through the delivery of the response. Overall, however the Council continues to face a high-risk situation during a major incident with many factors still unpredictable. The risk management strategy remain focussed on the oversight of known risk and management of capacity to respond to priority situations as they evolve.

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is underway which is considering how COVID-19 is affecting different groups of people in Dorset and the potential issues they may be facing and if some are facing a disproportionate impact, the assessment also considers the mitigating actions being taken by either Dorset Council, our partners or the Government. This draft impact assessment is currently being shared with councillors through virtual roundtable discussions, where there is an opportunity for councillors to voice any concerns they may have about vulnerable groups of people. Once finalised, the EqIA will need to be regularly reviewed and updated to take into account changes from government and locally.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Report to Cabinet on COVID-19 Response

Appendix 2: Summary of compliments

Appendix 3: Summary of complaints

8. Background Papers

[Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#)

9. Update on response since 5 May

9.1 Tragically 142 residents from the Dorset Council and BCP Council area have died of COVID-19 in hospital settings and 111 in care homes as at 13 May 2020.

Dorset Council area has reported 92.4 cases per 100,000 of the population compared with 115 cases per 100,000 of the population in the BCP area and 244 per 100,000 national average (as at 13 May). Dorset sits in the lowest 10 of upper tier authorities across the county for reported cases. The council continues to mobilise support to maintain the increased capacity of the NHS, and to control the virus.

9.2 On 10 May, central Government amended their guidance from 'stay home, protect the NHS, save lives' to 'stay alert, control the virus, save lives'. This has led the way for an easing of some restrictions.

9.3 On 11 May, the government released [Our plan to rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy](#) which sets out the national roadmap for how and when the UK will adjust its response to the crisis.

The council is responding by implementing the guidance across the county in a planned and measured way.

- 9.4 Whilst the council continues to respond to the crisis, the approach taken by employees to the way they are working has not changed. Where possible all employees continue to work from home and those who need to visit residents or work from an office are doing so according to social distancing guidelines using PPE where appropriate.
- 9.5 On 11 May, 9 out of 10 of Dorset household recycling centres reopened for the disposal of waste that poses a risk of injury, health or harm. This included additional staff to manage traffic and the safe flow of residents through facilities. Residents have largely heeded advice that it is only to be used for specified waste items and demand has therefore been manageable.
- 9.6 On 10 May the Government released guidance to support schools and early years settings to prepare for the return of children in addition to children of key workers and vulnerable children from 1 June. A Phased return is in development for schools to enable children in reception, year 1 and year 6 to return along with provision for year 10 and year 12 to attend on a limited basis. Transport arrangements are also being established. Special schools are developing a phased return plan of more children and young people without a focus on specific year groups and informed by risk assessments.
- 9.7 On 12 May, the decision was taken by the Leader, Cllr. Spencer Flower for beaches, destination car parks, country parks and public toilets to remain closed and for parking charges in off-street car parks to be reintroduced on 13 May. An exemption was agreed for key workers who, upon application of a permit, are still able to park for free in areas where there are not existing restrictions such as yellow lines or anywhere that causes an obstruction.
Largely this decision has been supported by residents who are concerned about visitors travelling to Dorset and increasing the risk of transfer of the virus.
- 9.8 On 13 May, virtual planning committees went live to support the continuation of democratic decision making in relation to planning permission. The council is using Microsoft Teams to conduct virtual meetings during the pandemic.
- 9.9 On 15 May, following the decline in the number of cases and deaths related to COVID-19, two mortality facilities that were activated as part of Dorset's response to a possible worst-case scenario during the crisis were put on standby.

As part of the Excess Deaths Operational Plan, the services provided at the Mortality Support Facility at Poole Port, and the similar facility at the Old Radio Station, Dorchester will remain on standby and can be reopened within 72 hours if the need arises.

- 9.10 As at 15 May, the council has made 7,462 grant payments to businesses in the Dorset Council area totalling £89m which is 92% of the grant claims received. The council is awaiting new guidance in respect of the discretionary fund for the continued support of businesses and teams are prepared to make payments to businesses accordingly.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Dorset Council Cabinet

5 May 2020

COVID-19 Response

For Recommendation to Cabinet

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All Dorset Councillors

Executive Director: Matt Prosser, Chief Executive

Report Author: Nina Coakley
Title: Programme Manager
Tel: 01305 224386
Email: nina.coakley@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Recommendation: That the COVID-19 emergency response is noted and that the report is referred to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for members to consider the response.

Reason for Recommendation: To ensure that cabinet are fully informed and assured of the way that services have been managed under the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to date.

1. Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the whole of the country and Dorset as a county – the impact on our residents, communities and businesses has been immense. However, at a time of great challenge the council and the communities and economy it serves have together risen to the challenge, seeking to support the best outcomes for all through the delivery of national initiatives at a local level (e.g. the Community Shield work) and working as an agent of the government to distribute business grants and support for council taxpayers facing hardship.

The council's Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Cabinet on an informal basis, set an early strategic approach to guide the work and is now developing its statutory response to the inevitable recovery work with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) but also developing initial thinking about

how we reset Dorset after the pandemic both in terms of delivering services and supporting our residents, communities and businesses.

This report sets out a summary of the council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and identifies some of the many changes that have taken place to the way that services are managed, and the command structures enacted to do this. Details of these changes and the budgetary implications are identified along with a need to carry out a fundamental review of the Council's budget for the current financial year.

It is important to note that the council has undertaken this response as a category 1 responder under [Civil Contingencies Act](#) responsibilities. This includes a responsibility for planning and responding to the emergency with partners. The responsibility for leading on recovery across the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) also rests with the local authorities. It is also the LRF's role to raise public awareness and advise on risks before an emergency and maintaining arrangements to warn and keep them informed in the event of an emergency, and the Council has played a key part in that.

The response to the pandemic is moving constantly, at pace, and therefore this report is a 'snapshot in time' of when it was written. From its publishing to the virtual Cabinet meeting on 5 May 2020, there will undoubtedly be changes, either in the form of guidance and advice from the government or Public Health England, or in the data contained within the report. Any significant matters will be updated verbally at the meeting.

2. **Financial Implications**

The full financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Dorset Council is still being analysed whilst the emergency response is ongoing. There will be a significant impact from the suspension of income generating services, additional expenditure and incurred, and planned transformation savings not achieved. These will require mitigation during 2020/21 (and beyond) once the full compensation package from central government is known.

3. **Climate implications**

The implications of COVID-19 have been positive for our climate and ecology, with a significant reduction in travel due to the lockdown. This will change following the removal of lockdown, but it is recommended that consideration is given to the impact of the temporary lockdown in the climate change action plan.

4. **Other Implications**

Public Health implications are ongoing due to the active pandemic. Additionally, there are implications for all aspects of business as usual service delivery as the virus nears its peak. This includes and is not limited

to sustainability, property and assets, voluntary organisations, community safety, corporate parenting, physical activity, safeguarding children and adults, the workforce and HR implications.

5. **Risk Assessment**

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: HIGH

Residual Risk: HIGH

The risk profile for COVID-19 shows that whilst a majority of risks are in the 'high' category, posing the most amount of risk to the Council, the likelihood of these happening are 'possible', which could suggest that there are mitigations in place to prevent these risks from occurring. Overall, however the Council is currently facing a high-risk situation during a major incident with many factors unpredictable including the central government response during the outbreak. The risk management strategy at this time is for continued, focussed oversight of known risk and management of capacity to respond to priority situations as they evolve.

6. **Equalities Impact Assessment**

During the COVID-19 response, impact screening tools and assessments have been undertaken where a permanent change in service delivery has been made. A draft EqIA for the COVID-19 pandemic is currently being produced which covers all the protected characteristics and the additional characteristics that Dorset Council consider important. This is a lengthy document and is being shared with a key group of members w/c 27 April for discussion. Once finalised, it will be shared publicly, however, it should be noted that this is ever-changing situation and the EqIA will need to be updated on a regular basis. The cabinet member for equalities and diversity will update the meeting verbally on this matter.

7. **Appendices**

Appendix 1: COVID-19 Strategic Approach

Appendix 2: Local Resilience Forum battle structure

Appendix 3: Dorset Council battle structure

Appendix 4: Warning and Informing communications dashboard

Appendix 5: Compliments

Appendix 6: Timeline of events

8. **Background Papers**

[Purpose of the Local Resilience Forum](#)

[National guidance on Emergency Response and Recovery](#)

9. **Introduction**

- 9.1 Six weeks ago, the Coronavirus turned Dorset, along with the rest of the Country, upside down virtually overnight. Tragically to date 111 residents have died¹, and 291 people have contracted the virus in Dorset (as at 26 April). The council has mobilised to help increase capacity of the NHS, and to flatten the curve.
- 9.2 The virus has had a significant impact on every resident from how they work, to how they live their lives and keep themselves safe. Every member of the community, young or old, has a story to tell about this momentous time and how it has affected them.
- 9.3 The council have continued to function with a collective effort to best help people, no matter what they've needed or when they've needed it. It is important that the incredible work and humbling feedback is therefore captured as a record of these first weeks of COVID-19.
- 9.4 This time has seen the council recapture the spirit of caring for one another along with the rest of the Country. There has been clapping for carers, an emotional experience, amongst whom we count our hardworking colleagues; neighbours have helped each other, strangers have been kind and understanding of one another during extremes of emotions not witnessed in this way before.
- 9.5 With uncertainty and fear remaining within our community, the council continues to focus on Dorset residents and their ongoing needs, whatever the landscape.
- 9.6 Dorset Council is proud to have been a part of helping residents. This is some of the anecdotal feedback received:

"I've had the pleasure of calling our shielded residents this week, one lovely lady misheard when I referenced the 'vulnerable list' and said she was delighted to be on the 'valuable list'. This is the phrase I will be using in future."

"We used a bus to help a family move house in Dorchester yesterday. This was an unusual request for us but we're more than willing to help someone in need."



"Made my first batch of calls to residents on the shielding list this evening, what lovely people and all full of praise for the support they've received from DC. One lovely man talked me through every item in his food parcel - he and his wife had eaten chocolate weetos for the very first time this morning!"

"IT have reconditioned nearly 200 old laptops to give to children to help them with online learning. One little girl was so pleased, she sent us a picture she made using her new computer".

"We gave an extra cheer for all George's medical and social care team. We know they are feeling awful about having to cancel appointments, but we know they are out there on the frontline saving lives and we salute them."

"Please pass on my thanks to the refuse collectors who did our bin today. They were both working fast and efficiently and even waved at our daughter. Thank you, they are doing fantastic work!"

"At the weekend you delivered 90 Easter Eggs as part of the food parcels. One father called to give his thanks - he's caring for his sick wife and was worried his children wouldn't have a chocolate treat."

"Our work with courts, enabling parental access to virtual hearings, has been flagged nationally as a trailblazer. Well done to everyone who has made this happen."

"We had a really lovely thank you from a lady who is shielding with her husband. They were advised to sleep separately and as a result she has been sleeping on a recliner chair. We were able to secure a grant from Dorset Poverty Action Group and they bought a single bed. The highways team kindly collected it from the store and delivered it yesterday. The lady rang first thing this morning to say a big thank you as it was the first time she'd slept the whole night in weeks"

9.7 The council also recognises that there are some areas where residents have been frustrated with how services have been prioritised, however this action has always been focussed on those who needed help most. We have adopted the sentiment of our communities during this time by supporting those who need it most. During COVID-19, nobody should get left behind.

10. **Initiating and developing the Dorset Council response**

10.1 Dorset Council is classed as a Category One Emergency Responder under the 2004 Civil Contingencies Act, alongside emergency services (police, fire, ambulance); coastguard; health and the environment agency. All Category 1 responders are members of Dorset's Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The Forum is the principal mechanism for multi-agency planning and co-operation in response to an incident.

10.2 The Council and LRF emergency planning arrangements have for some time had a key focus on responding to a pandemic, aligned to it being the highest risk on the national risk register. Internally these plans have been

subject to testing, with Place, Children's and Adults all participating in pandemic flu planning exercises in the latter part of 2019. Business continuity plans were also well established for critical services following BREXIT planning throughout 2019.

- 10.3 Following the growing global escalation of COVID-19, Dorset Council established a weekly Corporate Incident Management Team (IMT) on 26 February chaired by Gold command with representatives including Silver command, emergency planning, Public Health and managers across all directorates of the Council. The purpose of this is to coordinate activity for the lifecycle of the incident and identifying any issues for escalation to the LRF.
- 10.4 This planning activity was quickly stepped up to the formal battle rhythm with the LRF and multi-agency partners across the region following Government announcement to move the COVID-19 response DELAY phase on 9 March.
- 10.5 Alongside the weekly IMT, a daily meeting of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) chaired by the Chief Executive, was established from 16 March to respond to nationally and locally identified service delivery change. This daily stand-up of SLT, Gold command and Silver command, communications and emergency planning enabled:
 - Review of relevant information from the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) via Gold and Silver command
 - Consideration of public health information, action and impact on service delivery
 - Review of operational issues escalated by services and agreement of actions
 - Update on progress of new initiatives to support vulnerable people
 - Review of workforce capacity and agreement of how critical services would continue to be delivered
 - Agreement as to the mitigation of new risks and issues
 - Review of the Government daily briefing and local response to this
 - Development of strategic approach to COVID-19 stated as:
"During the COVID-19 Crisis, Dorset Council will work to maintain critical services, sustain care, support the vulnerable and support our economy."
- 10.6 The IMT and the SLT meetings are coordinated within the context of the Dorset Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which is using well established emergency planning governance arrangements to coordinate a multi-agency approach to the pandemic.
- 10.7 The LRF has stood up a Strategic Coordinating Group, which is attended by Gold command, Aidan Dunn, Executive Director for Corporate Development, three times a week, and a Tactical Coordinating Group

meeting twice weekly attended by Silver command, Matthew Piles, Corporate Director for Economic Growth and Infrastructure. The LRF is also responsible for coordinating recovery planning via a Recovery Coordinating Group.

- 10.8 A range of LRF sub-groups have been stood up which include:
- Health and Social Care
 - Excess Deaths Advisory Group
 - Warning and informing
 - Workforce demand (across the system, including any need for mutual aid)
 - Safety cell
 - Contingency planning
 - Ports & Borders
 - Recovery
- 10.9 Within the contingency planning subgroup, planning is underway to prepare should a second concurrent incident require a response alongside the COVID-19 activity. In order to respond appropriately a second rota is in place for Business as Usual 'BAU' Gold and Silver command. This is being managed proportionally with senior leaders as they also respond to COVID-19 pressures. Gold and Silver are supported by a 24/7 Duty Emergency Planning Officer

11. **Communications and engagement**

- 11.1 The role of Communications during the COVID-19 pandemic is:
- a. Warning and Informing
 - Relaying and amplifying government messaging
 - Working with partners and sharing essential council information
 - b. Signposting help and advice
 - c. Keeping employees informed and engaged
 - d. Social listening
 - What are residents' concerns?
- 11.2 MPs
The Leader, Deputy Leader and Chief Executive and COVID-19 GOLD command have been meeting twice weekly with MPs which has been positively received. Dorset MPs are pursuing several issues of local importance for us with central government, including the council's financial position, provision of superfast broadband, and funding of social care as well as any anomalies with the guidance and support provided for individuals and businesses through the governments various COVID-19 support schemes/grants.
- 11.3 Governing and regulatory bodies

Across the council, significant communication has taken place with government offices, governing bodies and partners, including:

- Local Government Association (LGA): daily update to chief executives and leaders
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG): daily update to chief executives and regular conference calls
- Local Government Information Unit (LGIU): daily update and weekly summary to members
- Department for Transport (DfT): monthly briefing notes
- Department for Education: weekly phone call to provide a comprehensive progress report and assurance on the action plan in place
- Ofsted: Monthly updates and support calls and deployment of a Social Care Regulatory Inspector as part of commitment to support local authorities. The purpose of this placement is to assist with dealing with urgent activities that have been impacted by COVID-19 or by back-filling roles that enable others to deal with urgent activities related to COVID-19.
- LGA legal advisors
- Lawyers in Local Government (LLG)
- Association of Electoral Administrators
- MHCLG Resilience and Emergencies Directorate (RED)
- HMG Cities & Local Growth Unit
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport to notify of temporary library closures

11.4 Councillors

Weekly webinars have been held throughout April to enable Councillors to raise issues via Q&A's and including presentations from at least three portfolio holders at each session. This arrangement maintains their assurance role on behalf of their ward. The webinars have received positive feedback and engagement levels have been good.

The Deputy Leader, Cllr. Peter Wharf has used the employee and Councillor communications to further report outside of Dorset Council.

11.5 Public (including Dorset residents)

- Social media: Regular updates on DorsetCouncilUK Facebook and Twitter. An additional 1,200 followers have joined the council Facebook page over the past month, bringing the total to over 16,000. Along with 400 more followers on Twitter in the past month, bringing the total to 40,400 followers
- Email newsletters: On topics such as 'Dorset Council news', 'bins & waste', 'travel and transport'. During the coronavirus outbreak, the number of subscribers to council e-newsletters has increased by 1,658 over the past month to over 40,000 subscribers in total.

- Website www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/coronavirus. 266,000 views of the coronavirus web pages.
- Media coverage: Secured extensive coverage in local press, radio (including community radio stations) and TV.
- Postcard mailing to all 187,000 households in Dorset
- Briefing to key stakeholders
- Personal postcards and letters sent to all Children in Care and Foster Carers.

11.6 Employees

- Email updates to all colleagues with IT access from SLT on COVID-19 activity several times a week
- Intranet constantly updated with news and guidance
- Managers' email every fortnight
- All-colleague 'Need to Know' email every fortnight
- Directorate-specific communications including e-newsletters and webinars.
- A new private Facebook group set up for Dorset Council employees which has over 1,100 members.
- Letters posted every fortnight to remote workers at their home addresses.

11.7 Town and Parish Councils

- Email updates several times a week to all town and parish councils
- Matt Prosser, Chief Executive; John Sellgren, Executive Director for Place and Theresa Leavy, Executive Director for Children meet virtually with the clerks of the larger town & parish councils and Dorset Association of Parish and Town council (DAPTC) every fortnight.

11.8 Local Businesses

- Regular e-newsletter to over 6,000 local businesses
- Social media updates
- Briefings to Dorset Chamber of Commerce & Industry*(DCCI) and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
*DCCI – supported to provide advice and guidance to all businesses regardless if they were members of the Dorset Chamber

12. Decisions

- 12.1 During the first 3 weeks of lockdown a significant number of key decisions were taken nationally and locally in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. 109 decisions were taken locally over this period in response to national guidance and instruction and identified local need.

- 12.2 The strategic approach to the COVID-19 crisis was developed and shared informally with the Cabinet, it was communicated to all elected members via the first all member webinar. The approach set out: “During the COVID-19 Crisis, Dorset Council will work to maintain critical services, sustain care, support the vulnerable and support our economy.” See Appendix 1 for more detail.
- 12.3 In addition, it set out the principles for decision making and messaging, these were:
- We will seek to support our communities and businesses to respond positively to Public Health & Government messages
 - will be based on keeping our employees safe and well
 - will support the change in culture we want for Dorset Council post the crisis (ways of working; behaviours etc.) – driving the use of digital services whilst maintaining effective communication to all. #socialdistancing #stayathomesavelives #shieldthevulnerable
- 12.4 In line with the principles agreed key decisions included:
- Communications strategy to keep residents and employees informed
 - £1000 grant for each Dorset food bank
 - Updated HR policies for employees
 - Suspension of services such as household recycling centres, garden waste, play areas, parks, libraries, day centres, car park charges in off-street car parks, weddings and civil partnerships
 - Increased some services such as the telephone hub to 8am – 8pm 7 days a week, relaxing of bus pass criteria to enable vulnerable people to access special supermarket opening hours, worked with local community to set up 2 care hotels for those fit enough to be medically discharged from hospital but requiring some additional support.
 - Restricted services to critical provision only, such as harbours, highway maintenance, commercial fishing,
 - Offered services in a different way such as registration and bereavement services, public council meetings
 - Provision of 200 laptops and 10 smartphones for vulnerable children and care leavers
 - Provision of £15 weekly voucher to all children entitled to free school meals
 - Maintained face-to-face contact with vulnerable children and families to ensure they continue to be supported
 - Paid an additional week’s fees to all foster carers with active placements to support the extra costs and purchase of support equipment
 - Development of prioritised services, critical, medium and low.

Council response to support Dorset residents

- 13.1 To best coordinate critical activity for Dorset Council, ten cells were stood up, each with a nominated lead and where required, employees within the council were redeployed from non-critical services or suspended services to support delivery.
- Community Shield
 - Property
 - Workforce
 - Commercial
 - Transport and logistics
 - PPE
 - Testing
 - Digital
 - Safety
 - Recovery

Community Shield Cell

- 13.2 This cell has coordinated the provision of food, medicine and emotional support to individuals and families identified on the Government 'shielded' list.
- 13.3 As part of the Community Shield COVID-19 response, the group has been liaising with:
- NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
 - Dorset Healthcare Foundation Trust
 - Primary Care Networks
 - Public Health
 - Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue
 - Voluntary & Community Sectors (Age UK, Volunteering Dorset, Help & Care)
 - MOD Military Planners.
- 13.4 The work has been undertaken across 7 service components in a council-wide effort to provide support to the most vulnerable people who are shielding. The council is now planning arrangements for the next 3, 6 and 9 months as this group of people are likely to continue shielding at home.
- a. COVID-19 support helpline and email hub
The helpline was set up in March as Dorset Council's first point of contact for shielded or vulnerable people who are self-isolating due to their increased risk of contracting coronavirus. The helpline provides information, advice and referral to voluntary and community agencies or other council services as required. The helpline is operated 7 days a week from 8am – 8pm resourced by council employees working remotely. Employees from library

services were upskilled and redeployed to support the helpline following closure of the libraries on 20 March.

As at 20 April, over 2500 proactive calls have been made to vulnerable people, and almost 900 incoming calls have been received.

- b. **Delivery network spoke model**
Spoke locations form a weekday distribution network across Dorset Council area for delivery of urgent food parcels, urgent prescriptions, and other urgent deliveries (e.g. PPE for carers, baby/infant sanitiser); as well as craft and well-being packs. The trigger for spokes becoming operational is when demand across Dorset exceeds 70 deliveries a day, until this trigger point is met. deliveries are being made from main hub at Charminster. When Spokes are operational, weekend emergency deliveries will continue from Charminster hub.
As at 23 April, the spokes have not yet needed to be triggered.
- c. **Medicine supply chain**
This work has focussed on establishing open communications with local pharmacies and coordinating opening times across the network. A network of volunteers is in place within the pharmacy network which have been able to signpost residents to for help with their medicines. The council has supported the direct delivery of controlled medicines using its fleet.
- d. **Food supply chain**
Provision of food has been coordinated to ensure that requests for support with food receive an appropriate response. For people who have some food in the house, food has been sought through supermarket online delivery and/or small food suppliers, or via volunteer support. For those who have run low on food supplies, the council has provided a food parcel while longer-term support is put in place. The coordination of this provision is provided from 8am – 8pm, 6 days a week from Charminster depot. As at 21 April, the council have made 389 deliveries of food parcels in addition to the 1062 deliveries made by the government across Dorset. Council employees have been redeployed to screen phone calls and to call recipients to advise on food delivery times. Where required, Dorset Council has supplemented Government food parcels with food suitable for those with dietary requirements and also provided additional food for a family where the shielded person(s) have dependants or additional caring responsibilities.
- e. **Mental Health Support and Safeguarding**
A coordinated approach has been stood up to support the emotional wellbeing and mental health of people who are shielded,

vulnerable, part of the wider workforce in addition to the general population. This has established ways to support volunteers in identifying and referring on any emotional wellbeing and mental health issues beyond their capabilities, to the appropriate organisation.

The group is also ensuring that there are processes in place to safeguard the key groups identified above and that volunteers have the confidence to identify and refer any safeguarding issues to the appropriate organisation

f. Volunteer Network

The council has led the coordination of volunteer agencies to respond to shielded, super shielded and all vulnerable people with non-care related requirements. The group utilise 1300 volunteers and other local community groups to support all vulnerable people and families in Dorset. Support is being delivered 9am - 5pm, 7 days a week with urgent volunteer requests available in the evenings.

g. Production and Management of Data

In Dorset, the NHS has written to 10,309 people in two tranches – 6,690 in the tranche 1 and 3,618 in tranche 2 advising them to stay at home for at least 12 weeks. These people are known as shielded people. The initial letters advised people to log on to a national website if they needed help. Latterly the advice has been to register on the website regardless of whether you need any help.

Each day a list is received of people who have registered on the national website for shielded people. This list is processed to identify those who are unable to access essential supplies and / or meet their basic care needs. This is then cross checked to see which of these people are known to the council and have a care worker, and relevant leads than establish the best way to make contact.

As at 21 April, 6,801 people had registered on the website for the Dorset Council area.

A number of datasets have been pulled together covering what is known about shielded people, children, adults and community facilities. Many of the datasets are available to view on an interactive map on Dorset explorer, some are publicly available whilst more sensitive personal data is available to view only for those who need it in the council or partner agencies.

Property Cell

- 13.5 This cell has coordinated the safe management of Dorset Council properties including closures, some restricted managed access, and some repurposing of properties, facilities management arrangements including extra or deep cleaning in all properties including schools, and coordinated the provision of accommodation for services such as social care at the Hotel Rembrandt in Weymouth, provision for key workers and homeless.
- 13.6 Since 23 March:
- All library buildings have closed
 - Most Children's Centres have closed
 - Day Centres have closed, with 7 being repurposed as Spoke locations as part of Community Shield response
 - All buildings and car parks in country parks are closed to the public
 - All leisure centre buildings have closed
 - Tourist Information Centres have closed
 - Registration Offices have closed to the public
 - Dorset History Centre has closed
 - 7 customer access points closed, with a procedure put in place for emergency booked appointments if required
 - Two locations set up for Family Court hearings remote access
 - 8 Dorset Council offices have been closed, with managed access maintained for critical services, with over 2500 employees working from home
 - All public toilets closed
 - Accommodation provided for 81 people.

Workforce Cell

- 13.7 As the impact of COVID-19 became apparent, there were critical services which started to experience a shortage of employees to provide an effective service. The workforce cell set up a skills agency, matching employees who work in services currently prioritised as 'low' and 'medium' with those critical services that need additional resource at this time.
- 13.8 To resource the skills agency, employees were asked to complete a skills survey detailing their relevant experience and skills so the council could make best use of their abilities to keep critical services running.
- 13.9 Over 500 employees have joined this scheme in addition to those who had been redeployed as a whole service e.g. libraries service redeployed to support customer services in the telephone hub. To date approximately 100 employees have been reassigned to areas that need support such as Community Shield, Brokerage Service and Registrars. Significant volumes of staff have been redeployed within their existing service areas as each department has been able to directly reassign resources from 'low' to 'medium' areas their critical services.

13.10 This operation has also maintained clarity as to what services were being delivered and what have been suspended as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

Commercial Cell

13.11 Prioritised activity for the COVID-19 response has been to clarify policy against the financial package of measures set out by central Government in respect of customers, suppliers, council tax and business rates

a. Hardship fund

Processes have been implemented to distribute the hardship fund in line with National Guidelines. For residents already in receipt of Local Council Tax Support, their bills are being reissued automatically, reflecting the additional discount.

If an individual's financial circumstances have changed, they have contacted the revenues and benefits team who have discussed the particular circumstances and agreed the best solution.

b. Business rates relief

The government announced temporary support measures for businesses in March. This included provision for businesses in the retail, leisure and hospitality sectors with a 100% rate relief for 2020/21. At the time of announcement, the annual business rates bills had already been generated so these bills are being revised and reissued as needed. Bills will start being sent via post at the end April 2020.

c. Business grants

The government has provided small business grant funding for local authorities to support small businesses that already pay little or no business rates because of Small Business Rate Relief (SBBR), Rural Rate Relief (RRR) and tapered relief.

A one-off grant to be paid to eligible businesses to help them meet ongoing business costs.

An e-form went live on 1 April and as at 23 April, 7,241 claims had been received and 4,326 claims had been paid. This is a total of £52.1m sent to businesses in the Dorset Council area and almost 60% of claims paid.

In data released by the government on 21 April, Dorset was identified as an upper sixth performer for payments, making more payments than 267 councils out of a cohort of 314 councils. Only four of those councils, Leeds, Cornwall, Bradford and Birmingham have a higher total number of estimated grant payments to make than Dorset.

d. Supplier relationships

To best support valued suppliers during the crisis, changes have been made to payment terms from 30 days to immediate payment with daily payments runs being undertaken to help suppliers maintain cash flow.

Additional support has been provided to specialist functions providing adult social care and to foster carers. These are managed on a case by case basis.

It is possible that the coming weeks and months will require purchasing or financing decisions to be taken in ways in which would not be regular business. For example, to purchase additional goods or services over and above those provided for in the core budget.

e. Fees and charges

The council has not changed its fees and charges with the exception of the suspension of car parking charges in off-street car parks.

The council will continue to take a proportionate approach to enforcement and debt management.

Financial impact

13.12 When Dorset Council's budget was set in February this year, a balanced budget of £304m was approved by councillors. The size and scale of the COVID-19 pandemic was not known at this point so was not budgeted for.

13.13 In mid-April an assessment was made of the financial cost to Dorset council of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is estimated that additional costs of £13m per month are being incurred by the council as it supports Dorset's residents, communities and businesses through the ongoing crisis.

13.14 The financial impact of COVID-19 on Dorset Council's budget has been significant. It includes:

- additional unexpected expenditure on social care for adults and children including a 10% increase in fees for care providers, renting and converting a hotel to meet people's social care needs, providing staff and care agencies with extra PPE and additional staffing costs.
- lost income from suspension of car parking charges, closure of leisure centres and other commercial services, and lower than anticipated income from business rates and council tax savings which were planned to be achieved through transformation projects. These savings can no longer be delivered due to employee redeployment to support our communities including shielded individuals

- 13.15 If the crisis continues into the summer, then the council is likely to incur additional costs of over £53.6m in 2020-21.
- 13.16 At the start of the COVID-19 outbreak in March, the government provided £1.6bn in additional funding to councils across England to help them tackle the crisis. Dorset Council's share of this funding was £10.7m and has already been spent in the first month of response. The government announced a further £1.6bn of additional funding for councils and at the time of writing Dorset Council is waiting to hear what its share of this funding will be. It is hoped that the sum will be a similar amount again of around £10.7m.
- 13.17 This additional £21.4m funding from government for the COVID-19 response represents just 40% of the total forecast total additional costs of £53.6m, leaving a shortfall of £32.2m. Dorset Council's 2020-21 budget included reserves of £28m but even if all the councils were taken reserves into account there is still a shortfall.
- 13.18 The council will continue to meet its obligations but, like all councils in the Country, is reliant on continued government financial support to ensure its viability in both the short and medium term.

Transport and Logistics Cell

- 13.19 Focussed coordination is in place for the delivery of food and prescriptions to vulnerable people. To do this effectively, vehicles have been redistributed to support the response working from Charminster depot. Core hours are 0745 – 1630 with an emergency response always available where needed.
- 13.20 The redeployment of council employees from highways services, including any that are suspended as a result of COVID-19 has taken place to allow a 120 strong workforce available for this high-priority task.
- 13.21 Food is delivered from national suppliers to Charminster depot where it is packed and transported to shielded individuals. The cell coordinators are also able to purchase quantities of food from any supermarket if required.
- 13.22 The cell has 375 council vehicles which can be redeployed at relevant times to support the delivery of food and medicines coordinated by the Community Shield Cell.
- 13.23 The cell has also coordinated and delivered stocks of personal protective equipment (PPE) across the county to the frontline.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- 13.24 The supply and distribution of appropriate PPE to protect employees and prevent the risk of onward transfer of the virus is an ongoing challenge for the council, as it has been nationally. The council does not under usual business as usual procure and/or distribute PPE. For the purpose of the current crisis the council has developed a PPE Hub to manage the stock controls and logistics. The council has established an approach which aims to ensure that it maintains adequate stock of PPE. Working closely with BCP Council a [shared protocol](#) is in place to ensure there is consistent support to providers across the county.
- 13.25 The approach being taken is to secure supplies from government via the LRF, and by purchasing directly from suppliers and through donations from local businesses and groups.
- 13.26 At times this has been challenging but currently supplies are being maintained with prioritisation for social care colleagues in place. There is still uncertainty around the resilience of the supply chain and concerns about the increase in costs from direct suppliers as products remain in high demand. As a result, the local spend on PPE is increasing.
- 13.27 Public health guidance has been updated and reissued and gives clear advice as to what and where PPE should be provided to services.
- 13.28 Ongoing concerns exist around the sustainability of PPE supplies and representations will continue to be made through appropriate channels to strengthen supplies to these vital service providers.
- 13.29 There may also be PPE issues moving forward from specialist services such as mortality management.

COVID-19 Testing

- 13.30 A cell has been established locally to coordinate a whole Dorset approach to testing including who should be tested.
- 13.31 The key issue regarding the testing of frontline care staff is the ability to access the test site currently planned in Bournemouth. A high proportion of care staff do not have their own vehicle and transport solutions will be a challenge due to social distancing.
- 13.32 The Care Quality Commission is taking the lead control for care staff testing in care homes and testing is arranged via the national pilot sites. To date there has been limited testing in care homes. However, where homes suspect that two or more residents may have COVID-19 symptoms testing can be arranged by notifying Public Health England South West Health Protection Team.

13.33 Logistics of testing is being explored as the test is only effective on day 3 or 4 of symptoms.

Digital Cell

- 13.34 The cell was stood up to support services and other cells with the development of technical solutions to support their work. The cell has:
- Supported the library service to develop an offer online
 - Helped Dorset Council councillors and employees to use Microsoft Teams to collaborate and efficiently work remotely
 - Supported and hosted live committee meetings
 - Set up and run the digital helpline to provide support for anyone accessing services or information digitally. Employees and volunteers work together to maintain the helpline daily. Over 50 phone calls have been received in the first three weeks
 - Worked with the Community Shield cell to design a medium term approach to managing calls
 - Set up web traffic monitoring for COVID-19 traffic in addition to the usual web traffic monitoring
 - Set up a business grant form online
 - Created COVID-19 web pages and have updated them daily
 - Mapped out the Dorset system response to supporting people at risk and very high risk from COVID-19 for the CCG

Safety Cell

- 13.35 The safety cell supports Dorset children by ensuring the provision of enhanced services in relation to:
- School and early years provision for vulnerable children and those of keyworkers
 - Remote education for children not able to attend school
 - Teacher resilience during COVID-19 closures
 - Free school meals
 - Domestic abuse
- a. School and early years provision
With no return date nationally for schools and early years settings, the focus is currently on Dorset's 3,000 most vulnerable children. Schools and the council have worked together to identify this group of school aged children and are using a common tool to track the needs of this group of children to best map and plan services. This keeps Dorset in line with the new DfE requirements outlined in new guidance.
Currently 9% of vulnerable children are attending school and with the return of schools following the Easter holiday, a new approach has been implemented to support the return of 84 priority children by end April, followed by two further focussed cohorts of 200 and

1000 children. This is being undertaken via an individualised approach using the knowledge and experience that schools have about the children along with the views of parents.

b. Remote education

All schools are supporting children and young people to access learning from home. It is acknowledged that this can be a challenging time for families and schools are managing expectations with their families around this.

The government have announced that all 'disadvantaged' children will have laptops and 4G made available to them. The guidance around this new announcement is still being clarified but locally, a questionnaire has been sent to all schools to identify this group of children.

Dorset is already ahead of this announcement in some way as 200 laptops and 10 smart phones have been provided by the council to help vulnerable people stay in touch including care leavers and looked after children.

c. Teacher resilience

A paper written by The British Psychological Society has been shared with schools on how to cope with the impact of COVID-19 on teachers and school staff. Additionally, the Dorset educational psychologists are supporting schools as required.

d. Free school meals

Following the closure of schools on 23 March, the council very quickly set up a scheme to continue provision of a meal via a voucher scheme to children who would ordinarily receive a free school. The scheme continued to be delivered over the Easter holidays and the Easter bank holiday weekend. This was in advance of the government guidance released on 31 March. There are mixed reports on the success of schools registering on the new government central scheme. Until all schools have successfully registered with the new scheme, the council will continue to support the local scheme to ensure no children are left without adequate food provision. However, the move onto the national scheme will remove the financial implications locally for all partners involved.

e. Domestic abuse

It is recognised around the country that this extended period of lockdown will likely have a detrimental impact on adults who experience domestic abuse. The impact on children within families where domestic abuse is present is significant so a campaign [#youarenotalone](#) has been developed with partners to encourage reporting of domestic abuse.

Recovery Coordinating Group

- 13.36 A proposal for the initiation of the recovery strategy and plan was agreed by the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) on 8 April 2020 and will be jointly led by Dorset Council and BCP Council. This is in line with the LRF Recovery framework and guidance. The Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) will undertake an initial impact analysis and define the recovery strategy for Dorset, focusing on the economy and welfare and wellbeing of residents and employees.
- 13.37 A Dorset Council Recovery Cell, led by John Sellgren, Executive Director for Place, will support this activity, establishing workstreams appropriate to the needs of Dorset communities as identified in the strategy.

14. Impact on operational services

Children and Schools

- 14.1 **Schools and Early Years**
Dorset Council has worked to quickly establish a way for schools to work together on a cluster basis with. With 11 arrangements in place, each is led by a representative Headteacher who maintains close contact with the local authority through three times weekly meetings chaired by Theresa Leavy, Executive Director for Children.
- 14.2 Schools have continued to stay open including over the Easter bank holidays with 137 keyworker children attending schools on Good Friday, and 104 on Easter Monday. Schools are continuing to submit data to DFE and Dorset Council daily and trends are carefully being monitored to ensure a response as required within school cluster arrangements.
- 14.3 The average rate of attendance for all schools over the Easter break was at 1.25%. Work is ongoing with Headteachers and the Department for Education to support the return of more vulnerable children to school. Every school has a Children's Services Family Partnership Zone (FPZ) link worker helping to support with helping vulnerable children to return to school. 153 laptops have been delivered to vulnerable learners at home, with a further 47 laptops to be distributed.
Senior Advisors from the Education Advisory Service are linked to each school cluster to monitor attendance and facilitate conversations if schools need to merge to ensure sufficient provision as attendance numbers begin to increase.
Outdoor Education Centres and the Council's Specialist Advisory and Education Psychology Services have developed an offer of support for schools.

- 14.4 **Vulnerable Children**
Child-level information from has been combined from Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Social Care, Family Partnership Zones and schools to more closely monitor the children where there are existing concerns.
Dorset Council continue to fulfil Corporate Parenting responsibilities to 480 Children in Care and over 200 Care Leavers and these children and young people are prioritised for continued help and support during this time.
- 14.5 **Early Years**
The Family Information Service is maintaining a list of which early years settings are currently open for the children of critical works, and vulnerable children.
As of 21 April, the picture is 116 early years settings are open, they are spread across the County and able to provide funded places for 2, 3 and 4 years olds.
The Early Years Childcare Service and Family Partnership Zones are working to support a number of settings to stay in touch and support the most vulnerable children on their roll.
- 14.6 **Communication with Families**
A wide range of information and resources have been developed, collated and made available to schools and families on the Dorset Council website. This has been closely aligned with key social media messaging.
Additionally, the frequency of relevant e-newsletters including SEND, Early Years Settings and the Family Information Service have been increased.
- 14.7 **Safeguarding**
Safeguarding arrangements continue to be a focus during the pandemic with no changes to the statutory requirements for child protection conferences or looked after children. Staffing levels are good and face-to-face visits to children continue where it is deemed safe for employees during this difficult time.
- 14.8 **Arrangements for Child Protection Conferences** have continued using conference calls. All statutory agencies are expected to continue their involvement, and the police have provided reports as usual so that the Child Protection Chair is able to make an informed decision.
- 14.9 The number of children subject to a child protection plan has risen, (20 April 2020) 293 children in comparison to 271 on the 20 March 2020. Similarly, the number of children who are looked after has increased from 473 to 480 over the same period. The increase in the numbers of Looked after Children are placing the placement system under considerable pressure. A small number of young people are awaiting a match to a suitable placement. A new [Foster for Dorset recruitment](#)

[campaign](#) has been launched and new assessments are continuing within social distancing frameworks.

14.10 Between 17 March 2020 - 17 April 2020 5 children who became looked after were under 2 yrs old (24%) and 10 children became subject to Child Protection Plan who were under 2 yrs (22%). A 0-5 years Focus Group has been developed initially in response to COVID-19 to ensure there is appropriate support in place for the most vulnerable expectant parents, unborn children and children aged 0 – 5, for partner agencies to work together to remove barriers to effective practice.

14.11 All care leavers continue to receive support from their Personal Advisor (PA), through phone calls asking what the PA can do to support them e.g. shopping, medicine, but also to ensure they get medical advice if they need it. Every young person is sent a weekly text reminding them to keep in touch, let their PA know if they become unwell or need help them in any way. 10 mobile smart phones have been provided by the ICT department for vulnerable care leavers to enable them to keep in touch. PA's have purchased sim cards and data bundles to ensure that care leavers can keep in touch with the people who are important to them.

14.12 Safeguarding and partnerships

The pan-Dorset Children's Safeguarding Partnership retains its statutory function and are developing new working arrangements through this period, prioritising key current issues, such as concerns about the increased risk of domestic abuse. Weekly operational and strategic meetings are in place to ensure a robust and co-ordinated response to support vulnerable children and families.

The challenges this crisis has placed on families is recognised and the council is a partner to a new local campaign on domestic abuse [#youarenotalone](#) and are supporting children and families for whom this is a reality.

14.13 Workforce

In anticipation of coronavirus impacting staffing levels, a workforce tracker has been built that enables the Children's Services Leadership Team to have a daily overview of key criteria, including:

- Sickness
- Self-isolation
- Shielding
- Working in the community, continuing to have direct contact with families
- Working from home
- Staff whose job is not critical to the Covid-19 response and could be redeployed if needed
- Red, amber, green rating of critical services related to real time staffing levels

To support this, a Children's Services specific brokerage team has been established within the corporate Skills Agency to support the delivery of critical services.

Adults and housing

14.14 Social Care

Adult Social Care (ASC) are continuing to meet powers and duties under the Care Act 2014 in monitoring and reviewing over 4,000 people already known to social care to ensure they have the appropriate support and care and are safeguarded from harm.

14.15 In addition, in response to the national [COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Guidance](#) and the *Action Plan for Social Care*, ASC staff have now also been organised to focus on three additional priorities:

- Supporting the hospital discharge pathways to help hospitals to maintain capacity
- Supporting community shielding work
- Supporting the external care market with guidance, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) where appropriate, and exercising the council's duty regarding market sustainability and viability.

14.16 Actions to deliver new priorities

Following the publication of the government COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Guidance, Dorset Council's hospital teams swiftly implemented the Dorset Discharge to Assess (D2A) model to deliver the challenging timescales for discharge from acute hospitals (within 3 hours). This has involved significant changes to practice in a short space of time for both hospital and community teams.

14.17 In order to respond to the current crisis, locality, specialist and commissioning teams have changed their working patterns to 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week and are using technology to have virtual meetings and, in some cases, virtual assessments and monitoring. To date the localities have supported around 575 people who have required shielding in the community.

14.18 Safeguarding

The ASC safeguarding team continues to work with the Safeguarding Adults Board and partner organisations to safeguard vulnerable adults along with working closely with the Quality Improvement Team to ensure safeguarding within care homes.

14.19 Support for carers

For individual carers, following the closure of the Tricuro and private day centres (to ensure safety because of the need for social distancing), bespoke support is being designed to ensure that carers are supported

with breaks to enable them to continue with their caring role. Carers Support Dorset is also using local links to support carers.

14.20 Carers at risk of breakdown have been identified by localities and regular welfare calls are being made by the carer support workers and care managers. Contingency planning is taking place to support carers to avoid breakdown and respond effectively if carers themselves become unwell.

14.21 Directorate workforce

In anticipation of coronavirus impacting staffing levels, a workforce tracker has been built that enables the Directorate Leadership Team to have a daily overview of key criteria, including:

- Sickness
- Self-isolation
- Shielding
- Working in the community, continuing to have direct contact with individuals
- Working from home
- Staff whose job is not critical to the Covid-19 response and could be redeployed if needed
- Red, Amber, Green (RAG) rating of critical services related to real time staffing levels

14.22 Based on priority need, people with key skill sets are being moved to fill gaps in services across locality and hospital teams e.g. Locality based Adult Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) have been used to support the out of hours AMHP hub when it has been stretched due to staff sickness and a rise in Mental Health Act Assessment requests to enable provision of a 7 day, 8am – 8pm service.

14.23 The workforce is being mapped by service and key function for capacity. Check points and triggers have been identified to ensure that any risk to the service or our residents, due to staff who are not available for work, is picked up and mitigating action put in place.

14.24 Legislative changes set out on 15 April in the government's *Action Plan for Social Care* also creates new challenges for the council. People in receipt of domiciliary care will not be tested in the same way and will be discharged home with the expectation that they will be treated as if they are positive for a period of 14 days. This will increase the pressure of domiciliary care services and will increase demand for PPE.

14.25 End of life visits

Residential home providers are being asked to support family visits using PPE where the cared for person is facing end of life. Whilst this is a positive step it will present challenges in delivery for care homes with

outbreaks and potentially a number of residents in that stage. This will also impact on demand for PPE.

14.26 Hospital Discharges

Between 1 – 19 April, hospital teams discharged 1,709 people and maintained the hospital bed occupancy at between 49%-52 %. People will be tested prior to being discharged to a care home setting. If they test positive, they will remain, subject to capacity, in hospital for the anticipated 14 days. If hospital capacity is not available individuals will be discharged and it will be the council's responsibility to accommodate in isolation prior to admission to a care home. This means that the council will have to commission some element of isolation care accommodation.

14.27 Shielding & access to social care

In the Adult Access Team, between 1 - 22 April, 1,413 calls were handled. In localities, of the 575 people who have been matched between our resident's database and the COVID-19 shield lists, 378 have received welfare checks or contacts since 19 March. Of these there are 56 planned follow ups. The remaining 197 are being contacted or live in residential accommodation.

14.28 Day Services

Following the decision to close both Tricuro day services and those run by private organisations, approximately 800 people who attended these services are now being supported in the community with the locality teams who ensure regular contact, either through welfare calls and/or direct support in their own homes to ensure people stay safe and well.

14.29 Commissioning & Providers

In preparation for expected demand for hospital discharge two hotels with care have been set up, one in Weymouth (31 beds) and one in Sherborne (12 beds). These have been set up in partnership with the Best Western Hotel Group and Abicare, in order to provide short term care, not medical treatment, for individuals being discharged from acute hospital settings. These individuals are not COVID-19 positive and the accommodation is only being provided in order to enable longer term social care provision to be arranged, thus reducing delayed discharges.

14.30 Dorset Council has increased its fees to residential and nursing care homes by 10% until the end of July 2020. This increase has been backdated to 19 March in order to align with the release of government funding.

14.31 Daily telephone contact is made with all CQC registered care providers in the area in order to ascertain:

- Capacity and ability to take new referrals
- Staffing availability and wellbeing

- Quality/operational concerns including PPE
- COVID-19 status e.g. confirmed cases, asymptomatic, and deaths

14.32 The council's approach is personalised contact, regardless of the size of the provider service and is recognised as valued by the Care Quality Commission and providers alike.

14.33 Housing and community safety

Following the Government deadline to all Council's in England to provide accommodation to rough sleepers, 28 were provided with accommodation by the Council. All are supported by daily visits from support workers and have been provided with a mobile phone from charities so they can call for further support if they need it. Eight rough sleepers have declined the offer of accommodation but continue to be supported. A longer-term strategy is in development to enable those to whom the Council has a duty to move into longer term settled accommodation.

14.34 Advice is being sought from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) about the longer-term support needs for those who the Council has no statutory duty to support.

14.35 The number of households presenting as homeless has increased since the restrictions were introduced. These are a separate group of people to the rough sleeping community. The main reasons for the increase relate to persons who were sofa surfing or renting a room from a friend being asked to leave due to concerns about self-isolation.

14.36 Over 60 households (mainly single persons) have been accommodated since the crisis began. The Housing Team are working to secure longer term temporary accommodation options for households to move to once restrictions are lifted.

14.37 Domestic Abuse

Work is underway with the Police and domestic abuse support providers to ensure there is capacity to deliver wrap-around support to pick up any increased demand on the service. To date, Police data and feedback from providers, indicate there has not been a significant increase in domestic abuse locally. This is causing a wider concern that victims are finding it increasingly difficult to call for help during the current restrictions.

The council are working with the Police on a domestic abuse communications campaign. This is largely social media based with [posters](#) shared with key locations including pharmacies and GP surgeries. The campaign links in with the Government's #youarenotalone domestic abuse campaign.

Place based

14.28 Libraries and Tourist Information Centres

All libraries and Dorset Council managed Tourist Information Centres (TIC) closed on 20 March. The TICs are continuing to use social media to respond to phone and email enquiries.

The library service has built on its existing online offer and has boosted the e-resources which includes e-books, e-audio, e-magazines and e-comics. People can join online if they aren't currently members of the library. The virtual offer includes signposting to national resources to support home schooling and adult learning as well as digital skills support. A programme of regular virtual activities is being offered for adults and children to include Rhymetime, Lego clubs, craft sessions for adults and reading groups with the aim of keeping people connected with the service and with each other to reduce social isolation. Library staff are being deployed to support the telephone helpline work led by Customer Services.

14.29 Customer Services

The COVID-19 helpline was established to support members of the public making general enquires as well as to request help. The helpline is open from 8 am to 8 pm 7 days a week handling both phone and email demand.

With the closure of face to face locations across Customer Services and Libraries, some employees have been retrained to help support the helpline using information on the Dorset Council website to answer general enquiries as well as the use of a contact form to capture requests for support from vulnerable people.

Individuals are also cross-referenced with our other systems to see if they are known to the Council from a social care perspective so that we can identify our most vulnerable residents.

From the 30 March to 15 April, the helpline alone has received over 1,700 enquires. During this period, over 650 interactions have included requests for assistance with things like collecting shopping, picking up medicines, urgent request for food and social contact. Other general enquiries have related to Small Business grants, complaints about breaking social distancing rules and visiting holiday homes.

14.30 Dorset History Centre (Archives, Local Studies and Museums Development)

The centre was closed to the public 20 March and arrangements were made for all employees to work from home. Regular checks are being undertaken of the archive repositories and other areas of the building containing archival material.

Public service has been maintained through email and telephone contact and public engagement activities have increased in terms of digital activity with blogs, Twitter and e-newsletters.

A project has also been initiated with Lighthouse, Poole a 'Corona Diaries' which attracted significant public interest. Diarists will record (in hard copy and digital formats) their experiences of this most unusual period and in

due course deposit them to form part of the permanent archival record. Over 100 diarists, including an Academy School have signed up. In addition, preservation of websites is being undertaken to ensure that this key data is available in the future alongside also collecting other ephemeral material relating to the pandemic all of which will form part of the historic record.

In relation to museums development, work is ongoing to support Dorset's professional and voluntary-run museums sector, many of whom face a very challenging time. Advice and guidance in relation to grant aid from Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund plus government assistance towards furloughing staff is being provided as well as specific professional support in relation to collections, digital engagement and business continuity.

14.31 Economic Growth and Regeneration

There has been an increase in direct dealings with businesses and business organisation and networks as national and local interventions have been created and rolled-out, working with BCP Council, Dorset Chamber, Dorset Growth Hub, Dorset Gateway, Federation of Small Businesses and the Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure co-ordinated and consistent messaging and support. There is also close liaison with town councils and Business Improvement Districts to respond to local situations.

Regular liaison with HMG Cities & Local Growth Unit (joint MHCLG and BEIS unit) and MHCLG is taking place with regard to accessing unallocated European Regional Development Fund.

Activity around tourism has increased to support the local sector whilst deterring people from travelling to Dorset during the lockdown period (maintaining contact with DCMS and Visit Britain to ensure consistency and alignment of approach). There is a continuation of schemes to generate economic growth as far as possible, and plan for the recovery phase.

14.32 Waste

The waste service has been under pressure during the COVID-19 crisis with an initial absence rate which impacted on general day to day collections and as a result the garden waste collections were suspended. As the forecasted sickness levels have not increased, garden waste collections were reinstated on 27 April. Parks and Countryside staff along with highways staff have been trained and inducted in waste operations should they be required moving forward.

The council is managing its supply of PPE, and the closure of non-essential services such as household recycling centres in line with government guidance ensures priority provision of PPE for frontline critical services.

- a. Contracts and commissioning

Usually this team would be working on managing contracts, developing strategies, monitoring closed landfills and monitoring contractor performance. Since COVID-19 the team have adapted to working from home with a focus on developing plans to safely reopen the household recycling centres and are working with contractors to facilitate this. The team have worked hard with all contractors and outlets for waste disposal to ensure that there is no disruption to kerbside services. Officers have also worked with contractors to develop robust business continuity plans to increase resilience.

b. Strategy and enforcement

Usually this team would be undertaking educational activities, developing future policies, and investigating waste crimes. Since COVID-19 the team have suspended educational activities but are planning future campaigns. The enforcement team are actively investigating reports of fly tipping and working with other local authorities to develop a regional approach to preventative comms and intelligence sharing on fly tipping.

The team have worked hard to provide accurate data on fly tipping which is helping to challenge anecdotal reports of increased numbers since services have been suspended. The team have issued a fixed penalty notice to a resident caught fly tipping household waste.

c. Commercial Services

This team would usually be managing the requirements and customer requests for all the income generating services (garden waste, trade and container charging).

Since COVID-19 the teams are now all working from home. The teams have received high levels of customer contact and have been working tirelessly to respond to all contact in a timely manner. The trade waste team have been proactively contacting all 4,500 business customers to provide support and ensure that their waste services are adjusted to meet their current requirements. This has resulted in suspending collections for businesses while they are closed and increasing collection frequencies for 'essential' businesses to ensure they do not have large accumulations of waste that may affect their ability to trade.

The team have recently communicated the recommencement of the garden waste service to all customers. There have been hundreds of thank you and positive responses to the team and operational colleagues which has been really well received by the team and shows the value of the garden waste service to Dorset's residents. By proactively contacting our business customers, the trade waste team have helped businesses to suspend their collections and avoid incurring additional and unnecessary costs. A number of businesses have thanked the team as waste collections was not something they had considered. This proactive approach by the trade team has

helped to minimise the number of customers cancelling their contracts, which will hopefully minimise the impact of lost income when services do eventually return to normal.

14.33 Community and Public Protection

A diverse range of services have adapted quickly to carry on protecting people and the environment in Dorset.

- a. Bereavement and Registration Services have both been at the forefront of planning for mortality management, working closely with colleagues at BCP Council and the Local Resilience Forum. Weymouth Crematorium continues to provide funerals where close family and friends can attend, and plans are in place to accommodate higher number of cremations over the next weeks and months. The small dedicated team has continued to work tirelessly under difficult conditions. Registration Services has embraced emergency changes to legislation to allow the registering of deaths over the telephone with electronic submission of documents. Colleagues are providing lots of support to couples who are having to re-schedule marriage and civil partnership ceremonies.
- b. Trading Standards and Environmental Health are providing support and advice to businesses, helping them to navigate through business closure and social distancing requirements in the workplace. Food producers and retailers are being assisted to adapt their business models to trade legally and safely, providing local produce for communities. They are working closely with Portland Port, shipping and cruise companies to safeguard health whilst enabling essential work to continue. Neighbourhood complaints about noise; bonfires and dog issues continue to be investigated and wherever possible are resolved through negotiation.
- c. The Licensing & Community Safety team are providing good advice to event organisers and licensed premises, helping them to prepare for when restrictions are eased. Officers are providing valuable support to Dorset Police through joint patrols focusing on stopping anti-social behaviour and the CCTV team is now providing a daytime monitoring service, helping to keep people safe and provide intelligence to the Police.
- d. Building Control Officers have continued to undertake essential site inspection work where construction has continued and to assess new applications, levels of which have remained strong. There have been several incidents involving dangerous structures and officers have worked with colleagues from Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service to make safe.

The approach taken by Dorset Council since 23 March has been confirmed in guidance issued by government on 21 April.

14.34 Planning Service

The service has been adapting to new ways of working and business is being conducted remotely. This is causing some capacity and performance issues, relating mainly to IT and software, including connectivity to Development Management systems, as well as document management (plans and post). IT issues are in part due to remote working and private internet connections, but recent software upgrades have also affected the systems. Case officers are adapting working practices as site visits are on hold. Photographs and GIS /aerial photography are being used where feasible. Similar issues are affecting tree and conservation officers.

a. Planning applications

The most recent data has not shown any immediate reduction in numbers of applications submitted, although this may be due to the time lag of applications that were already in the pipeline, so it is anticipated that there will be a downturn. This will have an impact on planning income (including pre-application advice) although it is possible this may be delayed rather than lost (subject to any longer-term economic impacts). Delegated decisions are still being determined and issued, and preparations are being made for the resumption of virtual planning committees.

b. Spatial planning

This service is continuing to progress work on the local plan although there are some immediate impacts of COVID-19 that have put a halt to some work within the service. This includes local plan site assessment work requiring site visits, neighbourhood plan referendums and consultation on Purbeck Local Plan modifications. This should not hold up the overall timeframe for production of the new Dorset Local Plan unless there is a prolonged period of restriction. The Leader of Council announced during the Members Webinar on the 23 April that the Local Plan EAP would re-commence to oversee the achievement of key milestones and planning policy.

c. Resourcing

Staffing levels have seen some impact from caring responsibilities (for vulnerable family members and young children) as well as some staff contracting COVID-19 or self-isolating. However, sickness levels have been relatively low to date. Workarounds are being employed in many cases to enable the service to continue.

14.35 Highways

- a. Parking
Charges have been removed for off-street parking to help enable people to carry out their essential activities and also allow free parking for key workers. Car parks near to beaches and similar beauty spots have been closed. On street parking continues to be enforced. This is necessary to ensure people park considerately and do not impede vehicles carrying out essential activities.
- b. Pothole reinstatement and reactive maintenance
These works are a critical activity and have been provided since the outbreak of COVID-19.
- c. Highway Surfacing Programme
The Department for Transport have deemed resurfacing to be a critical activity, ensuring roads remain safe for essential and emergency vehicle movements. After a pause to review how this could be delivered in accordance with PHE social distancing guidelines, the surfacing programme restarted on 15 April.
- d. Highway Improvement Schemes
Live schemes have been suspended. Sites have been made safe and traffic management reduced to a minimum until they can be restarted. Initially these sites had to shut as the supply chain had closed down. Builders merchants and other parts of the supply chain are now coming back on line. Each scheme is being reviewed to see how it can now be delivered in accordance with PHE guidance. Restarting these schemes could be a sensitive matter with local residents. This will be discussed with the Portfolio Holder and local members before any sites restart. For sites such as Swanage High Street, it is important to also recognise the impact on local businesses if the restart coincides with the end of lockdown and peak tourist season.

14.36 Dorset Travel

The Dorset Travel team has continued to organise home to school transport for children of key workers and SEN children and transport to respite care, including during the school Easter holidays and bank holidays.

The council is playing a key role in transporting people home following a stay in local 'care hotels'. Using council drivers and fleet, transport is coordinated for these patients to get home. Drivers have also been redeployed to support vulnerable clients, for example by delivering hot meals and by taking people into Day Centres for essential personal care which cannot be delivered at home.

To provide additional protection to drivers and passengers, PVC bulkhead screens are being installed in 40 of vehicles. Guidelines have also been

issued to drivers about social distancing and other ways to ensure safe transport in council vehicles.

Public bus services in Dorset are all running at reduced frequency and carrying significantly reduced numbers of passengers. There is a focus on maintaining public transport services, even if the numbers travelling are very small. The council have committed to honouring tendered services for public and school transport, to maintaining concessionary bus pass reimbursement and providing grant support at pre-COVID-19 levels. These are further supported by the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) which was recently announced by government to:

- maintain appropriate bus services for people on the frontline against COVID-19 and for other essential journeys
- ensure that transport operators remain in business when Britain gets back to work

The council are working on how to make the best use of this grant to protect local services.

14.37 Assets and Property

In addition to work within the property cell, support has been provided to the commercial cell in advising upon the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's commercial tenants and developing corporate principals in which to deal with these impacts.

New ways of working have been adopted by the Building Projects and Special Projects teams who are continuing to plan for future capital projects working in conjunction with internal/external architects and consulting engineers.

Many existing construction contracts have been suspended and an assessment of wider implications is ongoing.

Coastal Defence Engineers are continuing to carry out essential asset inspections and repairs and the preparation for a joint 'Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management' service with BCP Council is still taking place. Property maintenance has been tailored to concentrate on emergency maintenance requests and compliance-related matters. This reflects the changing environment that council buildings are having to react to and ensures that all properties are safe and legal during these times.

14.38 Environment and Wellbeing services

Teams across all Services in Environment and Well-Being have adjusted the way they work complying with government guidelines and working from home where possible, social distancing on site, and taking additional measures not to share equipment and cleaning down after use. A number of staff are assisting with food parcel deliveries and have been redeployed to assist other areas such as waste services.

14.39 Coast & Greenspace

- a. Arboriculture

The arboricultural team have been working as normally as possible dealing with dead, diseased and dangerous trees and continuing tree inspections. The Council has a duty of care to keep its residents safe and under the Highways Act, a statutory duty to ensure the safety of road and pavement users. The Team have been making the most of the reduced traffic on many otherwise busy roads to carry out necessary tree works without causing the usual disruption. In addition, they are also using the time to carry out work in schools and outdoor education centres which are also quiet at the moment.

- b. **Landscape and Grounds**
The Landscape and Grounds Teams are continuing their rounds and landscape construction projects. Play area inspection responsibilities continue as usual despite these facilities being closed to the public to ensure everything is in good order as restrictions begin to be lifted.
- c. **Greenspace**
Facilities at Avon Heath, Durlston and Moors Valley Country Parks, Potterne Park and the Hardy's Visitor Centre at Thorncombe Woods are closed. However, people who live close by can access these areas for daily exercise purposes.
Highway verge cutting continues with a focus on visibility splays and main routes. Sealed surface weed spraying will start soon. Rangers continue to do maintenance tasks on our Rights of Way and at our parks and open spaces. Conservation work, improving the habitats on our nature reserves is continuing.
- d. **Gypsy and Traveller Liaison**
Officers are liaising with Dorset Police over new unauthorised encampments and have opened the transit site at Piddlehinton to provide an alternative location for travellers to be moved too which has toilets and running water. For unauthorised sites which existed at the beginning of the lockdown, we are following government guidance and not pursuing evictions.
- e. **Environmental Advice**
The Historic Environment Team continues to provide planning guidance and respond to Historic Environment Record enquiries. Site visits are being done where safe to do so. Ecological planning advice is still being delivered by the Natural Environment Team along with site surveys. Rights of Way, Section 106 and Landscape design advice continues to be provided by the Green Infrastructure Team.
- f. **Sustainability**
Work continues on developing a draft Dorset Council climate and ecological emergency action plan and taking forward some key quick win actions. The Low Carbon Dorset Programme which provides

grants to small businesses and community groups for carbon reduction initiatives is operating within the restrictions of COVID-19, but current enquiries have significantly reduced and there are some concerns about economic climate going forward. Any spare capacity has been diverted on the Climate Emergency work.

14.40 Leisure Services

a. Leisure Centres

Following the government directive on the 20 March, all in house operated and contracted leisure facilities were closed with immediate effect. QE Leisure Centre, Verwood Hub and Purbeck Sports Centre are currently operating with 'skeleton staff' carrying out only essential works such as swimming pool maintenance.

The remaining staff are working at home, where possible, and are awaiting confirmation of any redeployment requirements.

Membership and swimming direct debits have been frozen to ensure that no further payments are taken from customers.

There has been continued engagement with external contractors operating council facilities, and they too are ensuring that facilities remain, safe, secure and maintained. Contractors have been making requests for the Council to provide financial support to cover their losses.

b. Outdoor Education

All centres are now closed with minimal staff on site. Staff who are at work in centres are generally working on outdoor projects. The remaining staff are working at home, where possible. One to one activities with special needs children are ongoing at Carey Camp and staff are helping with children of key workers. Leeson House has been deep cleaned and may be utilised for accommodation by children's services.

c. Sports Development/Arts +

All sports+ and arts+ programmes have been cancelled. The team are exploring options for delivering some activity sessions online so that users can still engage with some familiar faces.

d. Arts and Culture

There has been regular contact with partnering arts and cultural organisations, assuring them that performance monitoring will be relaxed during the period of uncertainty. Support grants for 20/21 are being processed promptly to help provide some financial security to grant recipients.

14.41 Harbours

- a. Weymouth
Weymouth Harbour has remained open for commercial operations throughout the lockdown with a reduced number of staff present. Local fishermen are still working whenever possible dependent on the market demand and operations of the fish markets. The harbour staff have increased the number of checks on boats as customers are unable to travel to visit their boats. The leisure side of the harbour is in total lockdown with no movements of vessels. The harbour staff continue to complete maintenance of the infrastructure to be in the best position possible to start the season whenever permitted.

- b. Bridport and Lyme Regis
Bridport and Lyme Regis harbours have also been shut down to all leisure activities. Harbour officers are continuing to fulfil maintenance operations which are proving to be a little easier with significantly reduced footfall around the harbours. With the slipway at Lyme Regis being closed some repairs are being carried out by contractors. Dredging at both harbours is normally required at this time of the year. Existing contractors are from the Netherlands and are unable to start work because of travel restrictions. Lyme Regis will need to have the harbour entrance dredged as commercial fishing vessels are now finding it difficult to put to sea with the build-up of sediment. Alternative contractors have been brought in and dredging activity will start at the beginning of May. Marine engineering work in the boatyard at West Bay continues but is much slower because of the Covid-19 situation.

Public Health

- 14.42 The public health response has focused on ensuring Dorset Council and partners in the Integrated Care System are responding to the local outbreak effectively. The Director of Public Health links regularly with Public Health England to ensure critical Council and health services are able to respond in a timely and effective manner. This includes being a member of the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) of the Local Resilience Forum to ensure that the multi-agency response to the COVID-19 emergency is being led well and in accordance with an appropriate strategy, and adequately resourced. The Director of Public Health, Sam Crowe and Assistant Director of Public Health, Rachel Partridge attend Dorset Council's Corporate Incident Management Team to provide advice and guidance where required to Directors and members working on the response.

- 14.43 Public Health consultants are supporting the Director to provide health protection advice working closely with PHE South West. This involves the

tactical level groups in health and care, supporting Dorset Council's community response work, and working closely with Dorset CCG colleagues in responding to outbreaks in complex settings such as care homes. The response is 7 days a week organised on a rota basis to cover the BCP Council and Dorset Council area, particularly where outbreak control meetings are required at weekends.

- 14.44 Key activities in the past few weeks have included ensuring safe access in line with national guidance to essential public health services such as sexual health, drug and alcohol treatment and children and young people's public health nursing. The team has also developed local advice and guidance on using personal protective equipment for council and community facing roles, based on national guidance, and providing a significant communications effort to reinforce key Government messages and support the Warning and Informing cell of the SCG. Public Health intelligence specialists are supporting an epidemiology cell through the SCG to support the development of planning assumptions for groups considering excess death planning, the likely impact of the outbreak on local health services, and timescales for recovery. Public health is also leading a group with Dorset CCG to develop additional mental health and wellbeing support during and beyond the outbreak.

ICT

- 14.45 The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a shift in working style which has involved 2,500 employees working remotely. This is a significant undertaking which has required an intense package of support during the early weeks of the crisis. In addition, ICT services was stepped up to offer a guaranteed 'out of hours' offer to support critical services and their key workers.
- 14.46 Several activities have been undertaken to support colleagues with the equipment and help needed to work in this new way:
- Enhanced helpdesk to support a significant increase in call demand over first weeks of remote working
 - Deployed c.200 laptops to replace Citrix desktop devices and other fixed desk computers.
 - Enabled former-district customer services and Library Service employees to support Dorset Direct.
 - Provided 200 Surface Pros and 10 smart phones to help vulnerable people stay in touch including Dorset care leavers and looked after children.
 - Direct Access deployed to 60+ CAD type PC's to allow home working.
 - Developed new infrastructure monitoring.
 - Increased resilience of remote working solutions used now as a primary means of access to systems.

- Worked to deliver consistent experience of Teams across the different legacy ICT infrastructures.

14.47 Additional development of applications has taken place to support colleagues during this critical time:

- Developed processes in DES (which is the council's IT system that support finance and human resource) to enable payment of government support grants to Dorset businesses.
- DES changes to enable employees in Dorset Council to record their status regarding COVID-19.
- The GIS team have been providing new data layers on Dorset explorer including Community groups, spoke locations and catchment areas, shielded people, looked after children, vulnerable people, Free school meals, deprivation and food banks.
- Changes in MOSAIC (the council's social care IT system) to deal with family visits.
- Significant permissions and team changes in Mosaic to aid staff redeployment.
- And, significant and whilst not COVID-19 related not to be forgotten, the conclusion of the hard work by a few to manage our exit from the Christchurch data centre.

HR and Employee wellbeing

14.48 Maintaining organisational health and effectiveness during COVID-19 is important. To help maintain a focus the people priorities, five organisational principles have been introduced which have helped form a 6 month Organisational Development (OD) plan:

- Leadership visibility
- Supporting wellbeing
- Increasing engagement
- Keeping an eye on culture
- Staying motivated

14.49 A key principle of this work is supporting wellbeing during a time when employees have experienced a significant change in the way that they work. With very little notice, over 2,500 employees are working remotely, with many front line employees working hard to maintain critical services with some dealing with traumatic situations. To help support employee wellbeing the partnership with Steps to Wellbeing has been renewed which means employees can access talking therapies like Cognitive Behavioural therapy, alongside the existing Counselling service. In addition, a wellbeing package is being put together for employees in frontline roles.

14.50 Building on existing coaching and mentoring offer to employees, an executive coaching offer has been introduced for senior leaders,

considering the long hours and challenging work that many are facing. This allows senior leaders some time to reflect and think about their role as a leader in the present circumstances. Coaching for frontline employees is being launched in the coming weeks.

- 14.51 Four toolkits have been released to support employees and managers during COVID-19:
- Looking after your wellbeing
 - Leading and managing during COVID-19
 - Looking after yourself in a frontline role
 - Working from home
- 14.52 Within HR services, work is ongoing to maintain important services such as payroll to make sure employees are paid as normal. The internal HR system, DES has been adapted to capture important data relating to the impact of COVID-19. Maintaining positive working relationships with trade unions is important as ever, and so meetings have increased to twice weekly to support this.
- 14.53 For many weeks a COVID-19 helpline and email inbox has been in operation for employees and managers. These have also helped enable the development of a series of FAQ's to provide clarity to employees and managers and make sure management practices are consistent across the organisation. It's important to support managers at this time too, so a fortnightly manager newsletter has been introduced, as well as the weekly all employee newsletters.
- 14.54 To help maintain business as usual activity, grievance and investigation meetings are being held via Skype, where possible and appropriate.
- 14.55 Although COVID-19 has required a quick reaction in making changes to policies and processes with little time to prepare, consideration is being given to how the positives can be taken from this situation; to influence how the council works in the future. For example, electronic P60's have been produced for the first time, this is an opportunity to review and redesign processes and within the next six months our recruitment processes will be reviewed. Many employees can, and are working remotely, and colleagues in Digital and ICT are working with HR to put together a proposal to review how to make best use of technology and the office estate.

Legal and Democratic

- 14.56 The pandemic has impacted on internal democratic services across the council with cabinet and committees suspended from mid-March until end April. New guidance has been issued to enable the democratic process to continue virtually.

- 14.57 Elections have been suspended including the cancellation of the Weymouth by-election the day before it was due to be held. The election of for the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner have been postponed until 2021.
- 14.58 The cases in adults and children's social care have increased and there is an expectation that this will continue to rise in children's services in line with what's happening nationally in respect of domestic abuse.
- 14.59 The emergency planning service is operating at maximum capacity, operating across the LRF and coordinate internal operations. This is as expected during a major incident.

15. Learning from the impact of COVID and Organisational Reset

- 15.1 There was no time to plan new ways of working adopted by employees in order to comply with the Government regulations imposed on the council during the pandemic. Nevertheless, new service offerings and ways of working have been adopted and approximately 2,500 employees are now working, daily, out of their homes in a distributed, virtual way.
- 15.2 Before the pandemic, work within the transformation programme was seeking to support the workforce to adopt more flexible, agile and distributed ways of working in order to deliver improvements to work-life balance, reduced travel costs, savings through rationalisation of assets and support our desire to be an employer of choice.
- 15.3 In many ways these new ways of working, whilst difficult for some employees, have challenged all our previous assumptions about how we might work in a fully digital and distributed way. Rather than drift back to where things were before the pandemic, the transformation board, chaired by the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Flower will oversee the process of Organisational Reset. The organisational reset will make sure a planned and deliberate approach is taken to transforming services and ways of working, building on the learning we have from COVID-19 and previous ambitions to change.
- 15.4 The development of a plan for Reset will be a standing item on the Transformation Board, the board will in turn engage with the relevant cabinet members as appropriate to develop a plan that can be shared with all members and scrutinised through the most appropriate process in place at that time. This will be an iterative process where, as an organisation, we will need agility to respond to the national announcements made and the impact these will have on us as an organisation and most importantly on the individuals, communities and local economy we serve. The Reset plan will also need to connect with the

wider public sector system within Dorset, capturing the spirit of collaboration and innovation seen during the current crisis.

16. Role of Councillors during the response

- 16.1 During the response period, the Leader has maintained oversight and communications with the Chief Executive.
- 16.2 Cabinet have continued to work closely with Executive and Corporate Directors and Councillors have continued to represent the views of their communities.
- 16.3 Weekly webinars have been held throughout April to enable Councillors to raise issues via Q&A's and including presentations from at least three portfolio holders at each session. This arrangement maintains their assurance role on behalf of their ward. The webinars have received positive feedback and engagement levels have been good.
- 16.4 It is expected that the role of councillors will increase during the transition to the recovery phase with longer-term decisions to be taken in respect of the organisational 'reset' and allocation of resources and as the democratic process re-starts in a virtual environment for now.
- 16.5 It is of note that Councillors have remained focussed on their commitment to climate and ecological change. Activity is ongoing and Climate Change and Ecological Emergency EAP meetings, led by Cllr Ray Bryan, are planned to reconvene as a priority in May 2020. To date, work continues to create a robust and ambitious strategy and action plan for the council to adopt, building on past and current successful initiatives as well as looking at challenges and long-term opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This will now include consideration and response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. Joint Working

- 17.1 The quality of joint working and willingness of statutory and non-statutory partners to work collaboratively has been exceptional. It is of significant note that without this commitment by partners, it would have been challenging to provide support to our residents in the same way – thank you.
- 17.2 It is also important to celebrate the collaboration that has taken place with individuals and groups in the voluntary and community sector. Without their generosity of time and support over the past 6 weeks, the response to our residents would not have been, and continue to be so positive – thank you.

- 17.3 Other specific examples of support include:
- Dorset and Wiltshire Fire Service and Poole Port in supporting the council with their mortality management function – thank you.
 - The many examples of local businesses providing resource, supplies and support including Hall and Woodhouse who provided 120 meals to Dorset County Hospital employees over the Easter weekend – thank you.

18. Compliments and complaints

18.1 Dorset Council has received positive feedback on services from residents during this time of crisis. These include:

- Support for waste collection operatives
- Home care support
- Support for schools and academies
- Equipment for children and families
- Grounds maintenance
- Assistance with Business Rates Support services to children

18.2 It is important to note that individuals and services have received a significant number of informal compliments on how their service is being delivered during this crisis. These include contact via direct phone calls and via social media. The Council is focussed on celebrating these with employees at a time when many are working under significant pressure, juggling their family and work life and health, and working over a longer working week – thank you.

18.3 Formal compliments are now being received via a new email address and are being shared with colleagues on a weekly basis following liaison with managers.

18.4 Emails can be sent to Compliments@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

18.5 The number of complaints reduced during the initial outbreak of COVID-19 and during April, these have slowly started to increase towards the levels usually experienced. Any complaints received continue to be managed as a priority with clear expectations on timescales provided to complainants as the delivery of frontline, critical services is prioritised during this emergency.

19. Equalities Impact

19.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public bodies must adhere to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 19.2 An Equality Impact assessment is a process of assessing the impact that a policy/project/service is likely to have on different groups of people within Dorset. The assessment helps to:
- Take an evidence based approach
 - Ensure that any negative impact is removed or clearly justified and appropriately mitigated for
 - Explore ways to improve services (positive impacts)
 - Increase public trust by being transparent in how decisions are made
- 19.3 A robust EqIA will ensure that Dorset Council are meeting duties outlined in the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 19.4 The Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) recently produced a document [Local Government and COVID-19 issues for disadvantaged groups](#), at the same time colleagues in Public Health and Dorset Council have been working on an equality impact assessment which considers how COVID-19 is affecting people with protected characteristics and the potential issues they may be facing and the mitigating actions being taken by either Dorset Council, the Government or other partners. This impact assessment is currently being finalised and will be considered by key contributors.
- 19.5 Members of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion committee formed of previous Executive Advisory Panel members and Portfolio Holders for Children, Education and Early Help, Adult Social Care and Health including Public Health are due to meet on 28 April to discuss the equality impacts of COVID-19 in Dorset.

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

Dorset Council

COVID 19 strategy and update

First presented 26 March 2020



Dorset Councils COVID 19 Plan

Our Strategic Aim:

“During the COVID 19 Crisis, Dorset Council will work to maintain critical services, sustain care, support the vulnerable and support our economy.”



COVID19 Plan

1. Critical Services
 - Core Critical Services (Internal)
 - Core Critical Services (External)
2. Sustaining Care
3. Support the Vulnerable
4. Support the Economy



COVID19 Plan

In order to bring clarity we need to map out our “offers and asks” against the four broad headings shown in the previous slide.

This will help us to determine gaps in provision, any over supply, redeployment and physical/technical resourcing needs.

It will also underpin our ability to request help through the LRF/SCG and also in dialogue with professional bodies, the LGA, MPs and government departments.



COVID19 Plan

Underlying Principles, for our decisions/messaging:

- will seek to support our communities and businesses to respond positively to Public Health & Government messages
- will be based on keeping our employees safe and well
- will support the change in culture we want for Dorset Council post the crisis (ways of working; behaviours etc.) – driving the use of digital services whilst maintaining effective communication to all.
- #socialdistancing
- #stayathomesavelives
- #selfisolation
- #shieldthevulnerable



COVID19 Plan

Core Critical Services (internal):

“Services that allow the organisation to function effectively during the crisis”

- IT
- Finance
- HR & OD
- Emergency Planning
- Facilities
- Communications
- Leadership
- Data and mapping



COVID19 Plan

Core Critical Services (external):

“Services that we will work to maintain during the crisis”

- Social Care – Adults & Children, Fostering, Safeguarding, Education
- Regulatory Services – Planning, Licensing, land charges
- Waste & Street Cleansing
- Highways
- Housing
- Community Safety
- Environmental & Port Health
- Revenues & Benefits
- Advice Services to individuals, communities & businesses
- Communication
- Community Leadership



COVID19 Plan

Sustaining Care:

“Services that we will continue to resource in order to sustain the care of our residents”

- Adult social care
 - Supporting NHS colleagues
 - Care packages
- Children’s social care
 - Safeguarding
 - Fostering Service
 - Education
- Regulatory Services
 - Environmental Health (food take-aways)
 - Port Health
 - Registration services and bereavement services
 - Licensing (Taxi’s, premises etc)
 - Planning (relaxation of planning rules advice to business)



COVID19 Plan

Supporting the Vulnerable:

“Services that we will support the care of our vulnerable residents and communities”

- Co-ordinated community response
- Operation Community Shield
- Housing & Homelessness
- Vulnerable communities e.g. travellers
- Signposting help and advice



COVID19 Plan

Supporting the Economy:

“Services that we will support the workforce of Dorset and businesses during the crisis and into recovery”

- Business Rates
- Advice services for businesses– HMRC and Government grants etc.
- Council tax guidance
- Response as Landlord
- Planning (advice and guidance on short-term changes to rules)
- Tourism – support whilst restricting access to Dorset
- Leisure – how to move services on-line whilst no physical access



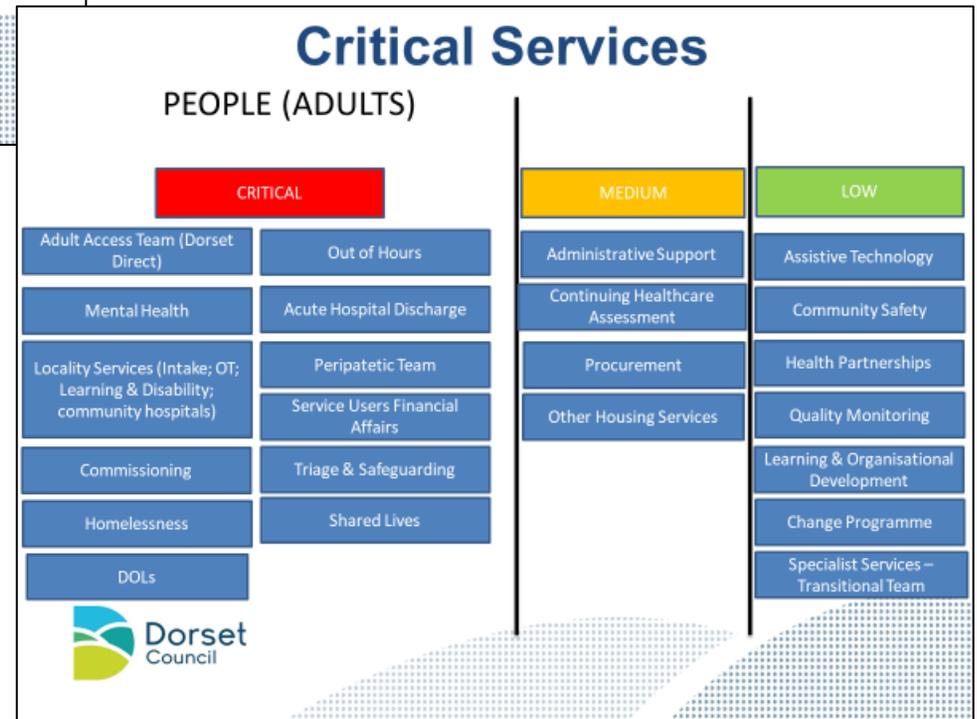
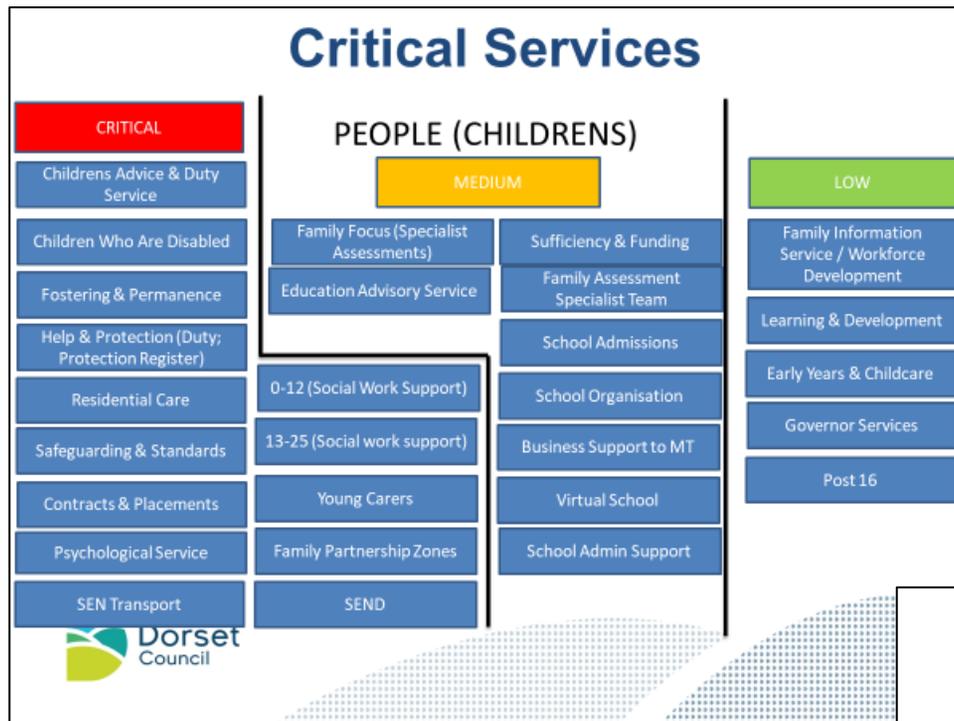
COVID19 Plan



Critical Services

CRITICAL	PEOPLE (CHILDRENS)		LOW
Childrens Advice & Duty Service	MEDIUM		Family Information Service / Workforce Development
Children Who Are Disabled	Family Focus (Specialist Assessments)	Sufficiency & Funding	Learning & Development
Fostering & Permanence	Education Advisory Service	Family Assessment Specialist Team	Early Years & Childcare
Help & Protection (Duty; Protection Register)	0-12 (Social Work Support)	School Admissions	Governor Services
Residential Care	13-25 (Social work support)	School Organisation	Post 16
Safeguarding & Standards	Young Carers	Business Support to MT	
Contracts & Placements	Family Partnership Zones	Virtual School	
Psychological Service	Family Partnership Zones	School Admin Support	
SEN Transport	SEND		





Critical Services

CRITICAL		PLACE	MEDIUM	LOW
Customer Contact	Environmental Advice (Urban)			Coast & Countryside
Engineering & Special Projects	Countryside Management 4x4		Aboriginal Services	Dorset History Centre
Traffic Control Centre	Environmental Protection		Building & Construction (R&M)	Building & Construction (Programme)
Registration Services	Building Control (Unsafe Buildings)		Highways: Bridges & Structures; Network Opps	Highways (Other)
Highways Emergency Call Outs	Licensing, Community Safety, CCTV		Winter Service	Planning (Mineral & Waste Policy)
Dorset Travel (Fleet Ops; DBS; Travel Ops)	Food Safety & Port Health		Licensing	Economy
Bereavement Services	Vehicle Fuelling		Outdoor Education Advisory	Parking Services
Waste Collection, Disposal and Depots	Facilities Management		Fleet Services	Definitive Map
Harbour Services	Trading Standards (Animal Health; Food Standards; Product Safety)			Libraries
				Leisure Services

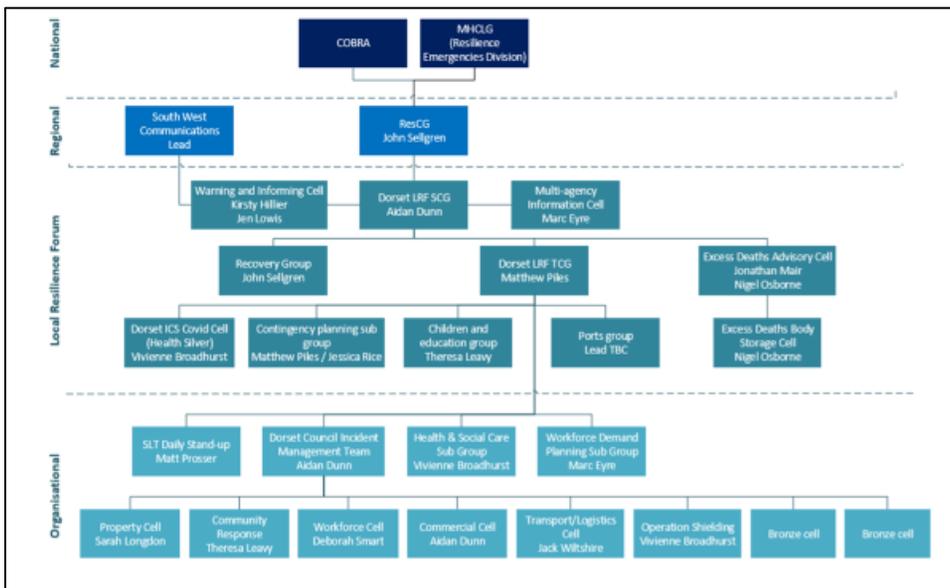


Critical Services

CORPORATE SERVICES

CRITICAL		MEDIUM	LOW
Budget Preparation; Final Accounts Preparation	ICT Continuity	Credit Control	Programme Office
Revs and Benefits	ICT Operations; Service Desk	Insurance	Accounts Receivable
Direct Payments	Emergency Planning	Procurement (Purchasing)	Welfare Benefits Advice
Financial Assessments	Communications	HR & OD (Advice; H&S; Customers)	Procurement (Tendering)
Pensions	Democratic Services (Elections only)	ICT Applications Management	Internal Audit
Treasury & Investments	Legal (Child/Adult Protection; Monitoring Officer)	Assurance (Complaints; Information Governance etc)	Information Management
HR & OD (Payroll)	Business Intelligence	Legal (Other)	Lord Lieutenantcy
Website		Democratic (Other)	





COVID19 Plan

Operation Community Shield

- Lead: Theresa Leavy
- Hub and spoke shielding model for:
 - People deemed to need super shielding
 - Over 70 and don't have family support
 - Vulnerable children and adults in need of additional support
- Call centre and locality bases



COVID19 Plan

Community Response

- Lead: Theresa Leavy and Laura Miller
- Harnessing goodwill in community
- Coordination of community resource
- Website live



COVID19 Plan

The Workforce Cell

- Lead: Deborah Smart
- Monitoring absence
- Mapping to critical services
- Skills agency



COVID19 Plan

The Commercial Cell

- Lead: Aidan Dunn
- Business Rates
- Council Tax
- Our Suppliers
- Our Customers



COVID19 Plan

The Property Cell

- Lead: Sarah Longdon
- Managing buildings
- Safe access
- Coordinating closures, cleaning etc
- Repurposing



COVID19 Plan

The Transport / Logistics Cell

- Lead: Jack Wiltshire
- Maintaining critical services e.g. waste
- Redeploying vehicles
- Supporting shielding



Our values and principles

Our values

- We are an advocate for Dorset on a local, national and global stage
- We work together with our communities and our partners to make things happen
- We put people first and design services around their needs now and in future
- We are open, accessible and accountable
- We use time and money wisely
- We value people and build on their strengths

Our principles

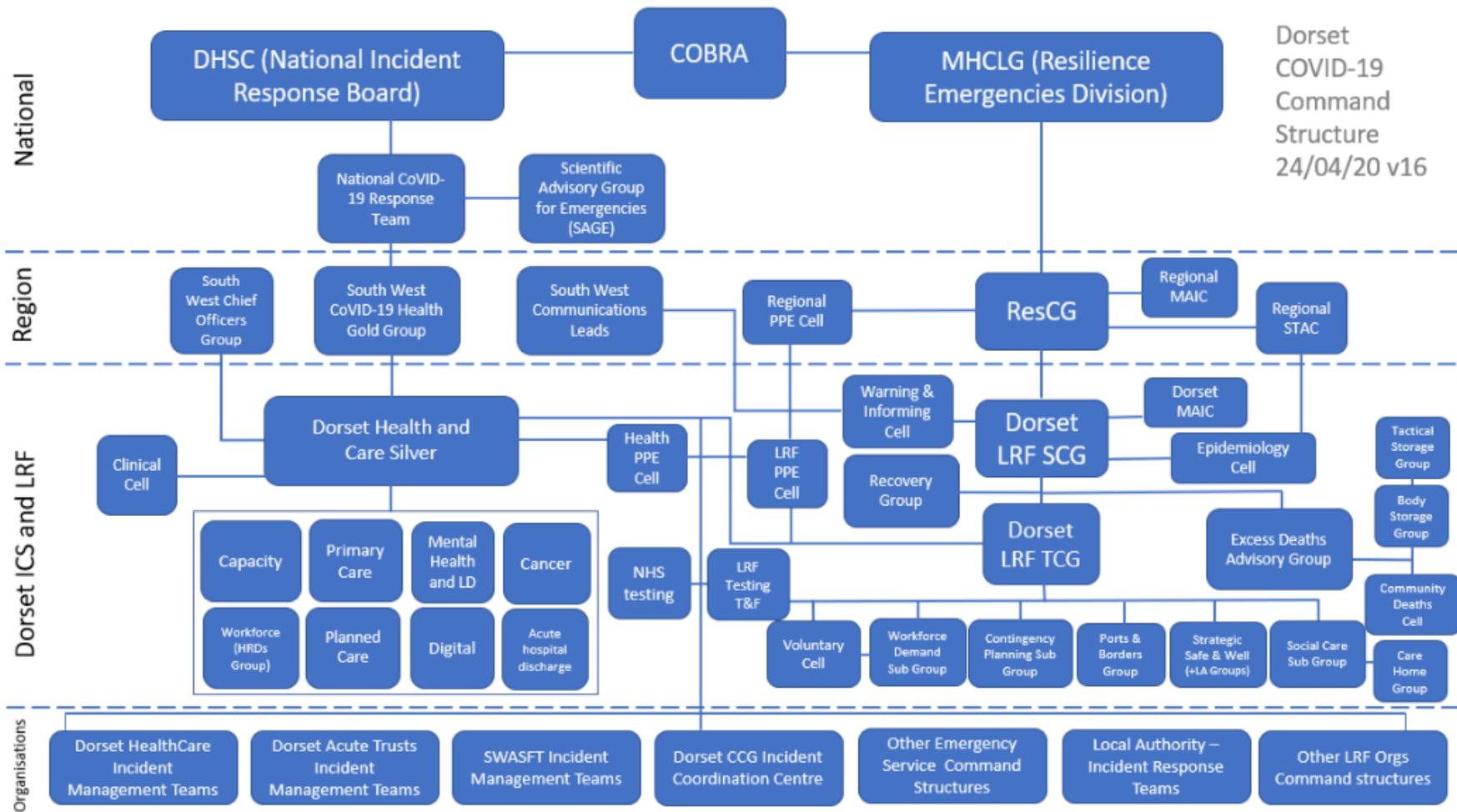


Some things we're proud of

- One team – right across the council
- Good joint working with partners – BCP, voluntary sector, contractors
- Offers of support from private sector, towns and parishes, voluntary sector, individuals
- Rapid response and effective working
- Providers feel supported by the council
- Organisation responding like a mature organisation – not even a year old
- Responding with kindness
- Keeping on delivering essential services
- Colleagues going above and beyond, stepping into new roles, new ways of working
- Supporting people and businesses
- New ways of working and new uses of IT- working well now and will be important in the future too

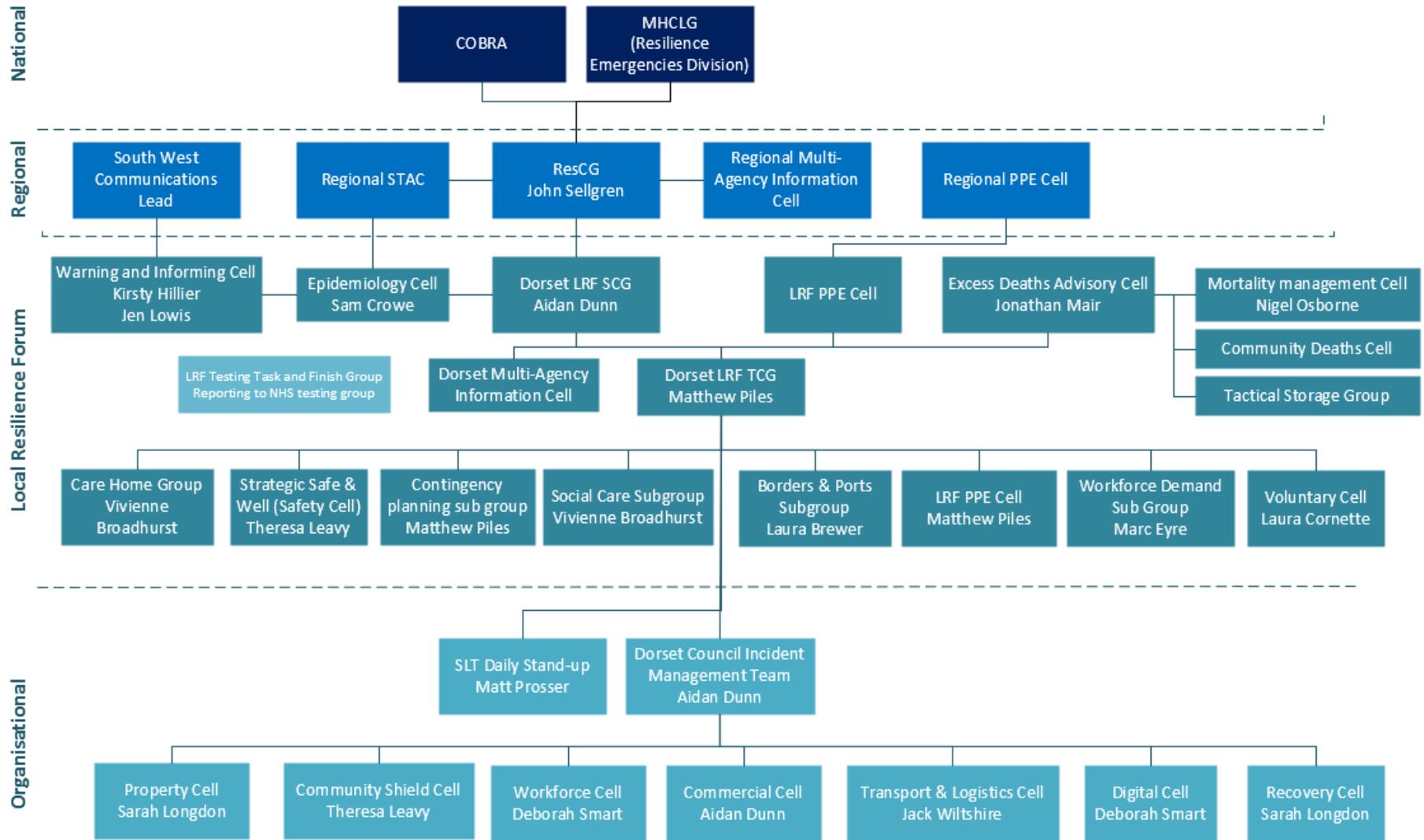


Cabinet Report Appendix 2: Local Resilience Forum Battle Structure



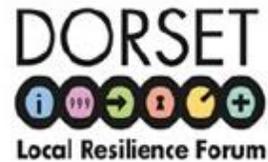
Cabinet Report Appendix 3: Dorset Council Battle Structure

Page 80



Cabinet Report Appendix 4: Warning and Informing Dashboard

Dorset Warning and Informing communications dashboard



Recent key campaign activities

14/04/20



Stay home this Bank Holiday weekend
Amplifying the national campaign with messaging internally and externally.

We also focused on messaging for teenagers and parents.



Don't travel this Easter

Dorset is closed come another time messages for tourists and exercise close to home for local people.



Act like you've got it

Messages for residents from local celebrities. We've got messages from a range of local celebrities reinforcing the message to stay at home as anyone can spread the virus.



GP and pharmacy services still running

Reminding people services are still operating over the Easter Bank Holiday and to call your GP in advance not turn up at the surgery.

Other messaging over the last week included...

- Respect neighbours and don't have a bonfire
- Help is available for people experiencing domestic violence
- Exercise and activity ideas while you are at home
- Look after your mental and emotional wellbeing

Top Facebook posts

Dorset County Hospital

We're extremely grateful to Beaminster School for the donations 

Reach 22.7k Reactions 832

Public Health Dorset

We've loved seeing the creative ways you are looking after your wellbeing at home. 

Reach 5.1k Reactions 81

Dorset Council

Residents from across Dorset are being urged to stay at home over the Easter break. 

Reach 6.7k Reactions 175

Dorset HealthCare

For those of you needing a good dance and pick me up Quayside Music Festival is here to help! 

Reach 1.4k Reactions 71

Dorset Police

We lit up the Royal Bournemouth Hospital in blue this evening at 8pm #ClapforNHS 

Reach 434k Reactions

Top tweets

Public Health Dorset

Many pharmacies are open over the Easter weekend. For opening times see... 

Reach 88.5k Reactions 49

Dorset County Hospital

Our Children's Centre took on the #BabySharkHandWashHandsChallenge 

Reach 5.4k Reactions 132

Dorset Council

Ourselves, @BCPCouncil and @dorsetpolice are urging Dorset residents to stay home over the Easter break 

Reach 7.1k Reactions 190

Dorset HealthCare

Thank you to everyone who is supporting our fantastic staff in these difficult times #StayHome #ProtectTheNHS. 

Reach 1.6k Reactions 51

Dorset Police

Dorset is closed. Please do not visit us now, come back when the time is right. 

Reach 91k Reactions

Latest press releases issued:

- Don't travel this Easter (LRF wide release)
- Changes to Public Health services (PHD)
- Stay fire safe this Easter (DWFRS)
- What is PPE and who should be wearing it (Dorset Council and PHD)
- Dorset Council distributes 9.1m to help small businesses (Dorset Council)
- Together We Can - over 2000 volunteers register to help local vulnerable people (BCP Council)
- All BCP Council cremations to be held at Bournemouth crematorium (BCP Council)
- Pharmacy opening times over Easter Bank Holiday (Dorset CCG)
- New dental services in Dorset (Dorset CCG)
- Better access to GP surgeries over Easter weekend (Dorset CCG)
- MacMillian unit and specialist palliative care service has been relocated to the Royal Bournemouth Hospital (RBCH)

Media interviews

- Chief Constable James Vaughan - Don't travel this Easter
 - Dorset Council Leader Spencer Flower - community support and Stay at Home
 - RBCH and Poole Hospital Chief Executive Debbie Flemming talking about ITU and hospital provisions
-

Upcoming campaigns and key messages

- #Unacceptable - support for key workers and abuse is unacceptable
- #QuitforCovid - encouraging people to give up smoking, linked to offer from LiveWell Dorset
- Domestic violence and where to get help
- Use NHS services if you need them - reminder to people GP, 111, emergency departments and some clinics for non-COVID related issues are still running
- Support from local authorities and CCG to care homes

Cabinet Report Appendix 5: Compliments received during COVID-19

Date	Subject	Directorate	Compliment
24/03/20	Advice provided	Libraries and Archives	I would like to thank Sharon Frampton in Customer Services for her assistance / advice around businesses affected by COVID-19. Sharon has signposted me to useful documents, sites and resources which has really reassured me during this difficult time. Thank you.
24/03/20	Use of Purbeck Leisure Centre		Thank you for being an awesome sports centre, I wish to thank the staff for being professional and friendly. I shall miss you all and likewise with my family who have used the sports centre for various activities over the past 20 years. We will look forward to seeing you all as and when these challenging times calm down. Keel safe and enjoy the good weather, something positive.
25/03/20	Refuse collection – Christchurch	Dorset Waste Partnership	Really big thank you to our bin men. They always do a good job and are polite and helpful but wanted to make sure they know how much we appreciate them for going to work in these difficult times and keeping our country going. Thank you.
25/03/20	Refuse collection – Wimborne	Dorset Waste Partnership	Thank you so much for managing to collect both our normal waste and food waste today. Fantastic that you are still able to offer this service, we were concerned what we, would do if you could not and at best, we thought you would only take food waste. Please pass our thanks on to all involved in maintaining this service it is really appreciated
25/03/20	Communication from the council to Schools/ Academies	Education Services	Can you tell John that Dorset are doing a great job on the updates. Keep up the good work!
26/03/20	Help regarding care home	Adults Services	Thank you, Simon, too for your help and assistance and responsiveness, it has been very helpful and has eased what has been a difficult transition.
26/03/20	Refuse collection – Shaftesbury	Dorset Waste Partnership	Please thank the team that collected the waste from Savoy Court, Bimport, Shaftesbury despite it not being put outside the shed as it usually is. Our cleaner, who was not able to work, has always done this and this time the team did it. Thank you. We are all very grateful.
26/03/20	Communication from Dorset Council to Schools/Academies	Children’s Services	Many thanks for the update messages Theresa and for all that you and the team are doing across the many different areas you are dealing with. When this is all done working relationships across different sectors are going to be stronger for sure. Best wishes from all at Budmouth
26/03/20	Refuse collection – Ringwood	Dorset Waste Partnership	You guys are really efficient, and we are very happy with the bin service
26/03/20	Key Worker feedback	Adults Services	The workers of social care are all fantastic and even in these times there is someone at the end of the phone – even if they are working from their homes.
27/03/20	Support services to children	Children’s Services	“Thank you so much for all of your hard work too, we have felt so cared for and supported by Dorset Council and feel that this model of working will only seek to reflect on the impact with our children and families”

27/03/20	Refuse collection - Portland	Dorset Waste Partnership	Just two words passed on to all of your operatives: THANK YOU
27/03/20	Communication from Dorset Council to Schools/Academies	Children's Services	Thank you for this Theresa. I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your leadership. Things have been tough for all of us, but these daily meetings have just given me a sense of the scale of what you are dealing with. The time you have given schools in those morning sessions has been greatly appreciated and really helped keep people in the loop. I know some of what has been raised is sometimes a bit trivial in the circumstances, but you have dealt with it all with good grace and patience when I know you have so many other things to think about. So, nothing else to say other than 'thank you'. And as someone else who spends a lot of my life telling others to 'rest well and stay safe' but not always putting it into practice brilliantly myself, I hope you can find some time to do that this weekend – you must!
31/03/20	Refuse collection – Blandford	Dorset Waste Partnership	There was a lady who came out her house and had a go at the poor man who was just trying to do his job as he had left behind something she deemed as 'must be collected' I think it must have been an extra bag or something. He was really polite and respectful to her (difficult customer) and he dealt with the situation perfectly. So, thank you for doing your job even when this worldwide pandemic is making everyone crazy.
31/03/20	Grounds maintenance	Place (Highways)	Wareham Wall Walk. The grass has been mown and it looks good, but it also allows more space on the walkway area for social distancing when out on an exercise walk. Many thanks for that. A nice surprise in this hard time.
31/03/20	Dorset Council and CAFCASS working in partnership	Children's Services	I wanted to get in touch to say how much I have really appreciated and valued the calm; thoughtful and generous approach Dorset CC and you both specifically have taken with this case. Your communication has always been excellent and your decision making on point
01/04/20	Food waste collection - Ringwood	Dorset Waste Partnership	I reported that my and several other neighbour's food waste bin was not emptied on Tuesday. Luckily, we left them out overnight and they were emptied this morning. This note is to say thankyou
02/04/20	Assistance with Business Rates	Corporate Development	Miss Dawson in Revenue for help- with business rate direct debits. A very helpful and understanding person to talk to in these dire times
02/04/20	Refuse collection – Swanage	Dorset Waste Partnership	Just to say thank you for still collecting our rubbish
03/04/20	History Centre	Place	Wow! Thank you so much for all your help and so promptly too. That is really helpful and hopefully, when life is back to normal, I will be able to visit
03/04/20	History Centre	Place	Thank you very much for your detailed and informative reply. I do appreciate the difficult circumstances and appreciate your efforts
03/04/20	History Centre	Place	Thank you and your team for all of your help, it has been invaluable. I understand the difficulties whilst things are closed, I will do what I can remotely and hopefully, re-visit once you are open once again.
03/04/20	History Centre	Place	Thank you very much for this reply which, given the current circumstances, I had not expected to receive until life had returned to some semblance of normality

03/04/20	Adult Care - Dorchester	Adults	It is often the case in our social care system whereby people are not recognised for their outstanding work to support others which is why I felt the need to write to you, it is the staff who actually work on the front line and not hide in offices who need to be supported and recognised for their efforts as we are seeing and experiencing in the world at present.
03/04/20	Thanks, from Diocese to Children's Services	Children's Services	Thank you for the depth and quality of your leadership; from Anglican Bishops to the leaders in our schools, and all folk in between, I hear nothing but praise for your work. DCC is making such a difference for children and young people at this time.
04/04/20	Thanks to DC	All	I just want to say how much I appreciate the Council as a whole for the many services they provide, particularly during this difficult time with very limited budgets. We are going to owe many people a huge debt of thanks after this pandemic is over and that includes the dedicated Council staff. I don't always think people realise how many services the Council provide and actually what good value the Council tax is. Keep up the good work.
04/04/20	Thanks to Financial Assessment team	Corporate	A member of my household works for the Financial Assessment team. I have seen how hard she works in a team that often gets a bad press when people aren't happy that they may have to contribute something to their care. I know what a difficult task it must be to provide the funding for care with such reduced budgets. I know how important the team is in order for the Council to meet its financial obligations to those that need care. From what I understand of the team it is a supportive and hardworking team who are still working hard through the current Corona crisis. I hope I will never need to have care and therefore no need of a Financial Assessment but if I do, I will have confidence that it will be dealt with fairly and professionally.
07/04/20	Waste Collection - Dorchester	Dorset Waste Partnership	I wanted to message to say how amazing the staff that collect our bins are. My children love to wave at them, and they always wave and smile back whilst doing the best job possible. They are so professional and kind. Please let them know how grateful we are for their hard work, kindness and good spirit.
07/04/20	Waste Collection - Dorchester	Dorset Waste Partnership	Please can you tell me how many lads are on general waste collection and food waste collection. Need to get correct number of Easter eggs!! Thank you.
07/04/20	Thanks to Shielding team	Adults	You spoke to us a couple of days ago and you arranged to send a parcel food for us. We received it last night. Thank you very very much. It's fantastic we couldn't believe our eyes and I was very, very grateful so thank you very much Greg you saved the day. Bye. Best of luck. Bye.
07/04/20	Thanks, from a young carer Help North	Children's Services	Vanessa, Kathryn, and Ruth are really friendly and approachable. It's clear that they will be willing to listen and help in any situation, and the fact that have increased their working hours over this time period, in order to aid those who need some support, shows this irrefutably.
08/04/20	Thanks for business grant	Corporate	I see Dorset Council starting to send grants out to small businesses, we have applied and hopefully will receive, I just wanted to say as a small business this is a lifeline and am grateful.
08/04/20	Thanks for information updates from a Dorset School	Children's Services	Thank you for all the information that you provide. Thank you for being there and sticking your neck out. Thank you for trying to coordinate what must be an incredibly difficult situation. I think of how I am having to manage my team of 20 staff and 160 children, all the little nuances, personalities and things that I could never predict and then think how magnified that must be for you. I hope that you have been receiving plenty of thanks from other people as it is massively appreciated.

08/04/20	Waste collection - Dorchester	Dorset Waste Partnership	Just to say a big thank you to all the people continuing to collect our rubbish during the current crisis. we rarely get to speak directly
09/04/20	Waste Collection – Wareham	Dorset Waste Partnership	I would like to thank all operatives and staff at all services at the council. You are all very much appreciated. Many thanks.
09/04/20	Care & Protection	Children's	Many thanks for looking into the bike, we are having to take turns in the bikes at present for some exercise. Would be lovely if we could all go out together. We are all well thank you.
09/04/20	Care & Protection	Children's	X from Dorset Police who attends the conferences wanted to feedback that Skyping with county is magnificent. That the quality of audio is much better.
10/04/20	Waste Collection – Wareham	Dorset Waste Partnership	Please pass on my thanks to the refuse collectors who did our bin today (10 April). They were both working fast and efficiently and even waved at our daughter. Thank you, they are doing fantastic work!
12/04/20	Waste Collection – Shaftesbury	Dorset Waste Partnership	You guys are amazing. I'm so impressed with your professionalism and cheerfulness during this time. Thoughtful, helpful, caring and respectful. Thank you. Your efforts are much appreciated.
13/04/20	Waste Collection – Lyme Regis	Dorset Waste Partnership	I would like to record my appreciation of the 3 bin men that I saw this morning collecting our landfill waste. They are always friendly and cheerful. I made a point this morning of thanking them for their efforts in these extremely difficult times.
13/04/20	Waste Collection – Portland	Dorset Waste Partnership	I would like to congratulate ALL of the waste operatives for carrying on during these tough times, you all do a great job!! I feel sure that the sincere thanks in this message would be amplified by everyone, just felt I had to do this, it's a thankless task... So, many thanks.
14/04/20	Education & Learning	Children's	Hi X has made you an Easter picture on her new computer using the Paint app just to say a big thank you. She is very pleased with it.
14/04/20	Waste – Shaftesbury	Dorset Waste Partnership	JUST LIKE TO THANK THOSE IN THE WASTE DEPARTMENT FOR REPLACING MY STOLEN GREEN RECYCLE BIN SO QUICKLY. I REPORTED IT STOLEN LAST WEDNESDAY AND I HAVE JUST RECEIVED A REPLACEMENT THIS MORNING. CONSIDERING EASTER HOLIDAYS AND THE OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES THAT COVID-19 MUST BE PRESENTING YOU WITH, I AM AMAZED AND VERY APPRECIATIVE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MANAGE THIS SO QUICKLY. THANKYOU.
14/04/20	Waste Collection - Weymouth	Dorset Waste Partnership	I want to thank all the refuse men for continuing to provide their normal excellent service during these difficult times.
14/04/20	Waste Collection - Weymouth	Dorset Waste Partnership	Thank you for continuing to empty dog waste bins. Lots of bags just being dropped on the ground by some people who don't normally walk their dogs in the countryside. I pick these up and it is such a relief to be able to get rid of them at the earliest opportunity. Also, I know the problem would be far worse if the bins were full. This is much appreciated at such a difficult time.
16/04/20	Waste Collection – Weymouth	Dorset Waste Partnership	Just want to say, the driver of the bin lorry is wonderful who comes to our area. I sit my 2 year old boy in the window and watch the bins being collected. He gets very excited, but every time we see the driver he is always waving when he gets there, when he's sorting then bins and again when they're leaving and sometimes even a little beep on the horn! Makes a little boy very happy. Especially at this crappy time. So big big thank you to him! :-)
16/04/20	Housing Services and Community Safety	Place	Just an email to say thank you for being so efficient in your reply It means a lot to know you have received my information and that I know I've not missed the deadline Thank you for all you and your team are doing at these very challenging times Take care of yourselves and be safe and thanks again

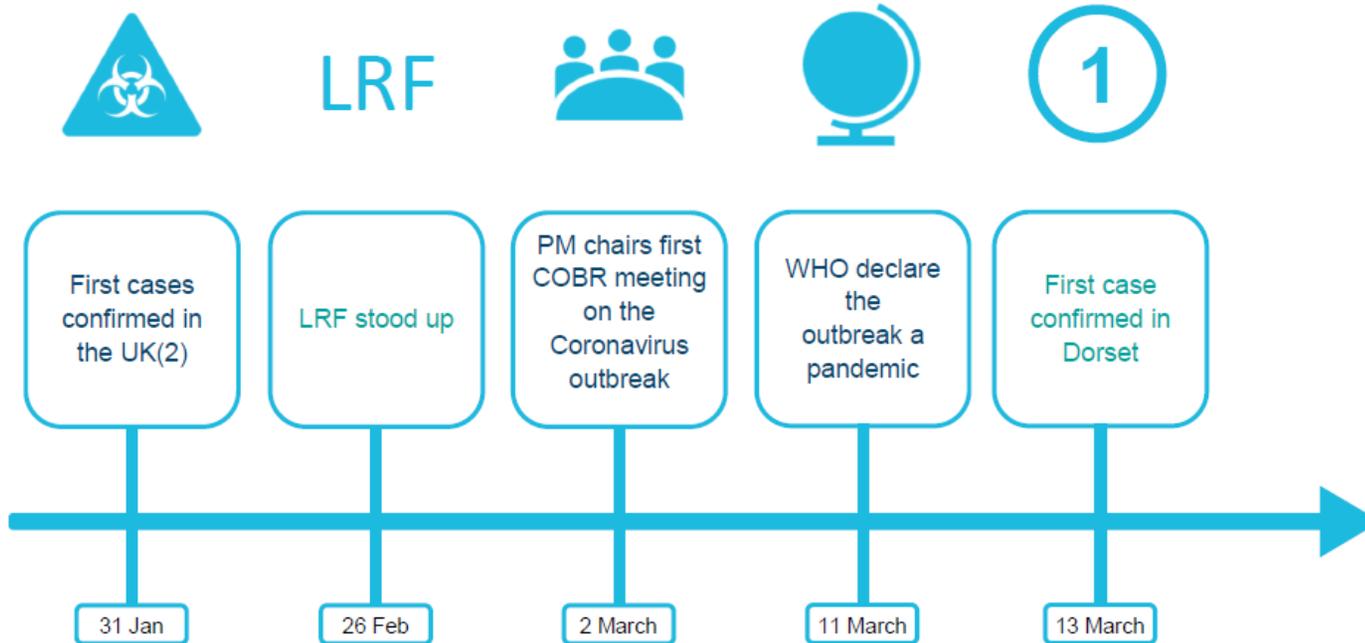
16/04/20	Housing Services and Community Safety	Place	It is clearly a difficult time for us all attempting to conduct 'Business as Usual' during the current crisis, however my dealings in relation to a referral she made for a young person have been exemplary. Throughout our communications she has been extremely responsive, efficient, effective and empathetic to the needs of the applicant and offered full assistance to her and myself and colleagues in our efforts to process and ultimately accommodate the young person. I would like to thank her for an excellent piece of multi - agency working which has resulted in a positive outcome being achieved.
17/04/20	Waste Collection - Weymouth	Dorset Waste Partnership	Our bin collection for our whole street was missed yesterday. I was told on the phone that nothing could be done for 2 weeks until the next collection but this morning all our bins were emptied. Thank you very much to the crew for coming back to our street, given the difficulties at the moment. We are all very grateful!
17/04/20	Feedback from a councillor / volunteer	N/A	The response from those receiving help from Dorset volunteers had been amazing in Upton. One parent of a very young transplant patient tells me how satisfying it is to have a single dedicated volunteer who will look after all of their needs during the Covid-19 emergency. Another, an 84 year-old living on her own in sheltered accommodation who is too weak to get out, says that we are God sent and she says she prays for the good health of the nation every day. As a volunteer, the satisfaction received, and praise given by these very humble people is a great boost to me and my small team here in Lytchett Minster and Upton.
17/04/20	Appreciation from a service user	All	I would like to just say to all departments working within DC at this time. A big thank you for your work and help. Maintaining the collection of bins and keeping myself a high-risk house bound vulnerable person, free of stress or worry. For the department handling the food parcels, which I received today. Thank you. To the department who called me within 48hrs of receiving my vulnerable information to make sure I had any help needed. Thank you. I am not a forgotten person. You made me remember how it is to be cared for again. Thank you. Be safe.
18/04/20	Feedback from a councillor re DC response	All	I have twice now received glowing comments from the Town Clerk, who is extremely impressed with the way SLT are liaising with towns and parishes in Dorset. She said "we all feel so lucky to have Dorset Council to help, lead, and advise us. We couldn't ask for better support and are so impressed with their care and professionalism in this time of crises. It is no wonder that other areas of the country are so envious.
20/04/20	Planning	Place	Thank you for all your help! Stay safe!
21/04/20	Registration Services	Place	I would like to thank you for seeing us yesterday and for coming out to us with your colleague to conclude the Civil Partnership for my Mother and her partner, you and your offices have been so helpful and kind. I have copied in the local MP who I had contacted regarding this, as I am keen for him to know that in these extraordinary times you and your office have been more than prepared to go the extra mile, at pace, to support a request within your community.
22/04/20	Waste Collection - Blandford	Dorset Waste Partnership	A big thank you to all your bin men for their continued efforts to collect our waste materials, household and garden during this Coronavirus lockdown situation

22/04/20	Care & Protection (Fostering)	Children's	<p>Whilst making my weekly telephone calls to foster carers today, I received some positive feedback which I thought I should update you with.</p> <p>One carer shared what a very unexpected but greatly appreciated surprise it was when he and his wife received one week's additional fee and allowance as recognition of their work as foster Carers. He said, how he felt recognition in the early stages of this pandemic was very refreshing and it made them feel very valued as carers. He felt DC did not have to offer this recognition, but by doing so would have lifted a lot of carers in this difficult time.</p>
22/04/20	Planning	Place	Thanks for the update and for all that you, and your colleagues are doing at this difficult time.
23/04/20	Waste - Portland	Dorset Waste Partnership	The fantastic service I have received from the Dorset waste partnership and one of their employees. A gentleman just dropped off a new bin form me, I only put the request in 2 days ago! He was very polite and helpful. Thank you very much.

Coronavirus Timeline

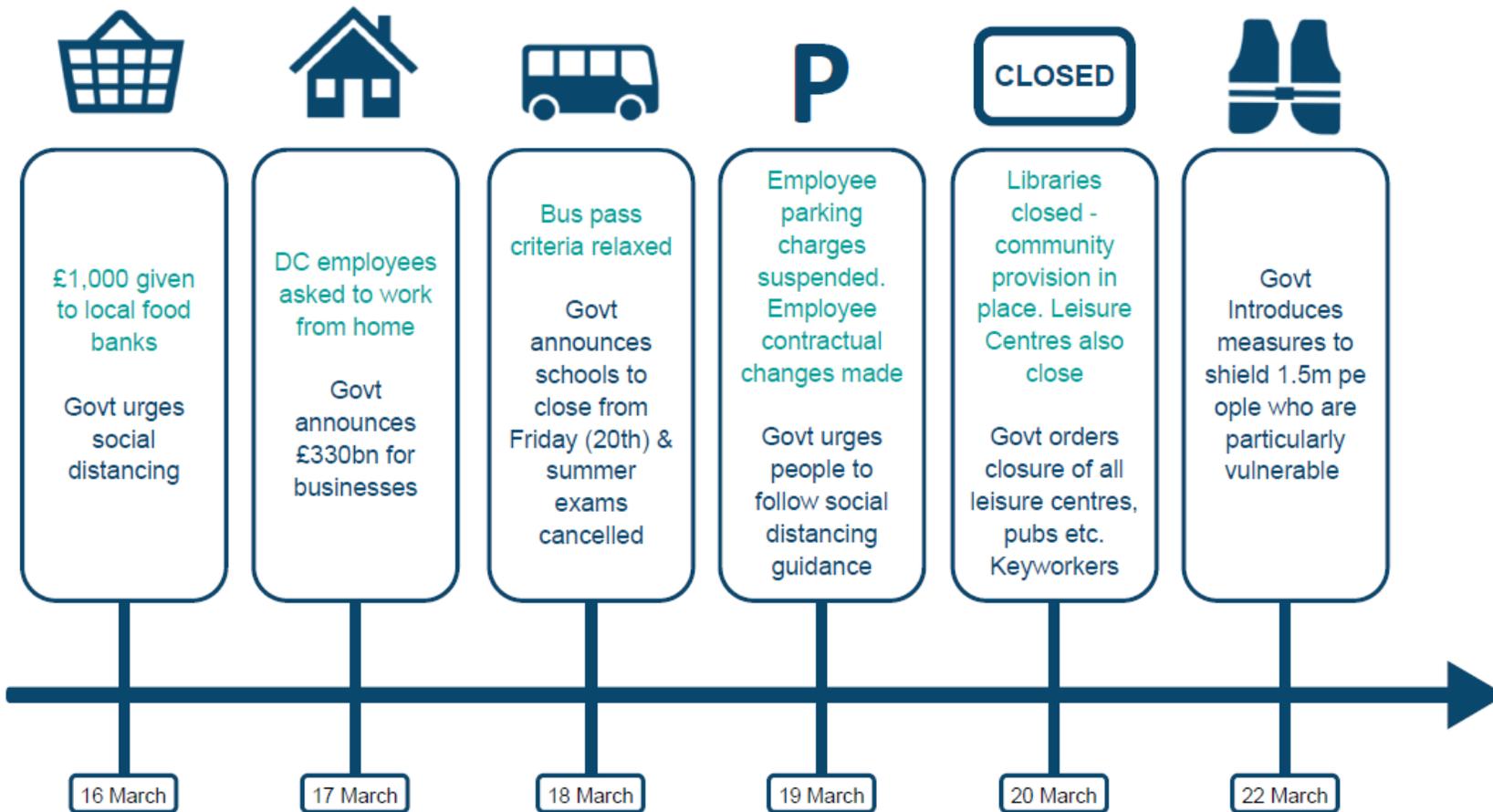
31 Jan-15 March

Page 90



Coronavirus Timeline

16-22 March



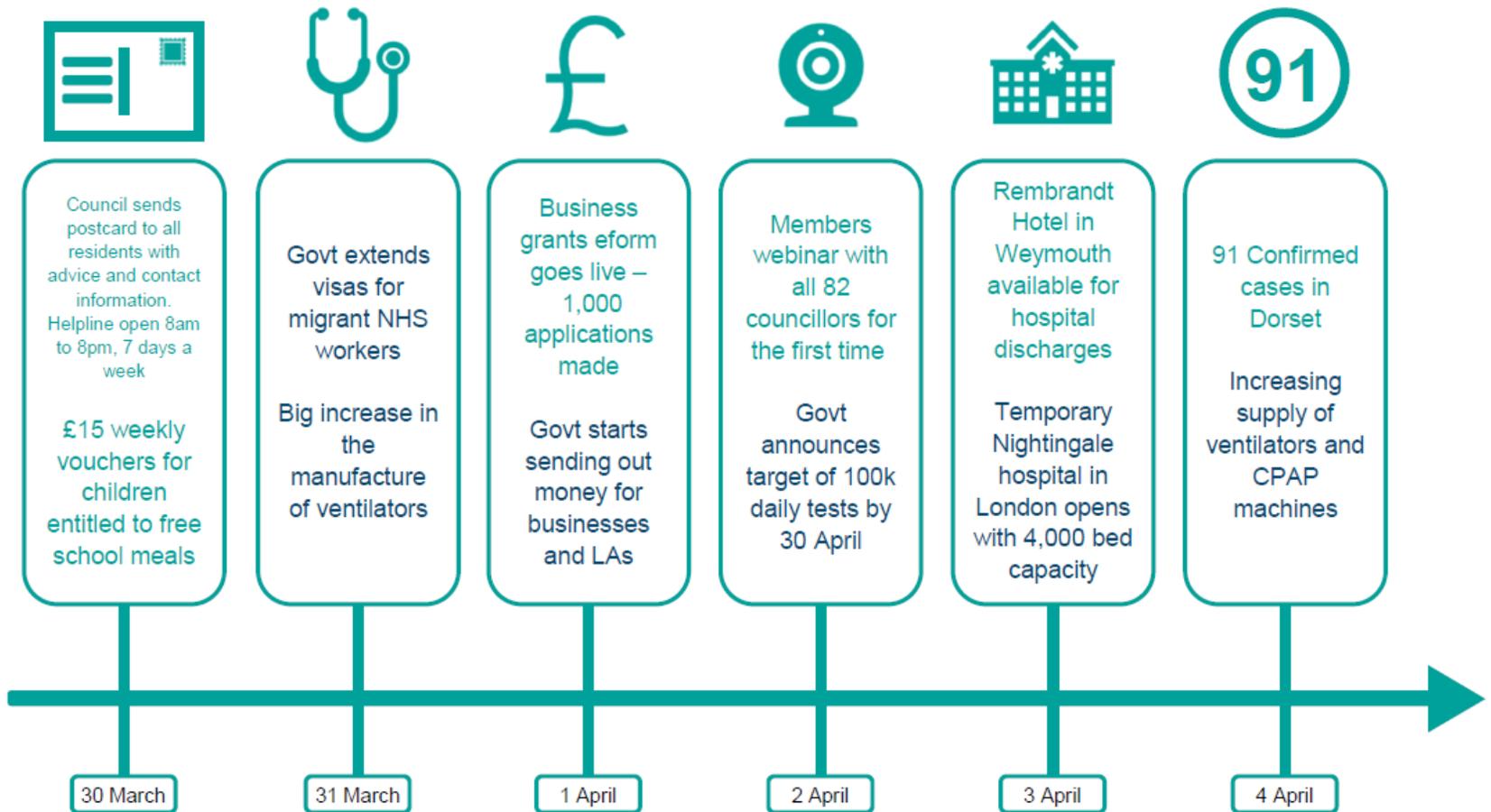
Coronavirus Timeline

23-29 March



Coronavirus Timeline

30 March-05 April



Coronavirus Timeline

06 April-12 April



First business grant payments sent out - 4,000 claims received

PM spends second day in hospital & is transferred to intensive care

6 April



PPE delivery received as part of the Local Resilience Forum's coordinated response

Government pledges £750m for charities sector

8 April



136 Confirmed cases in Dorset

All credit cards, store cards, personal loans and catalogues to offer payment holidays

9 April

OPEN

Good Friday: Dorset's schools remain open over the Easter holiday and bank holidays

10 April



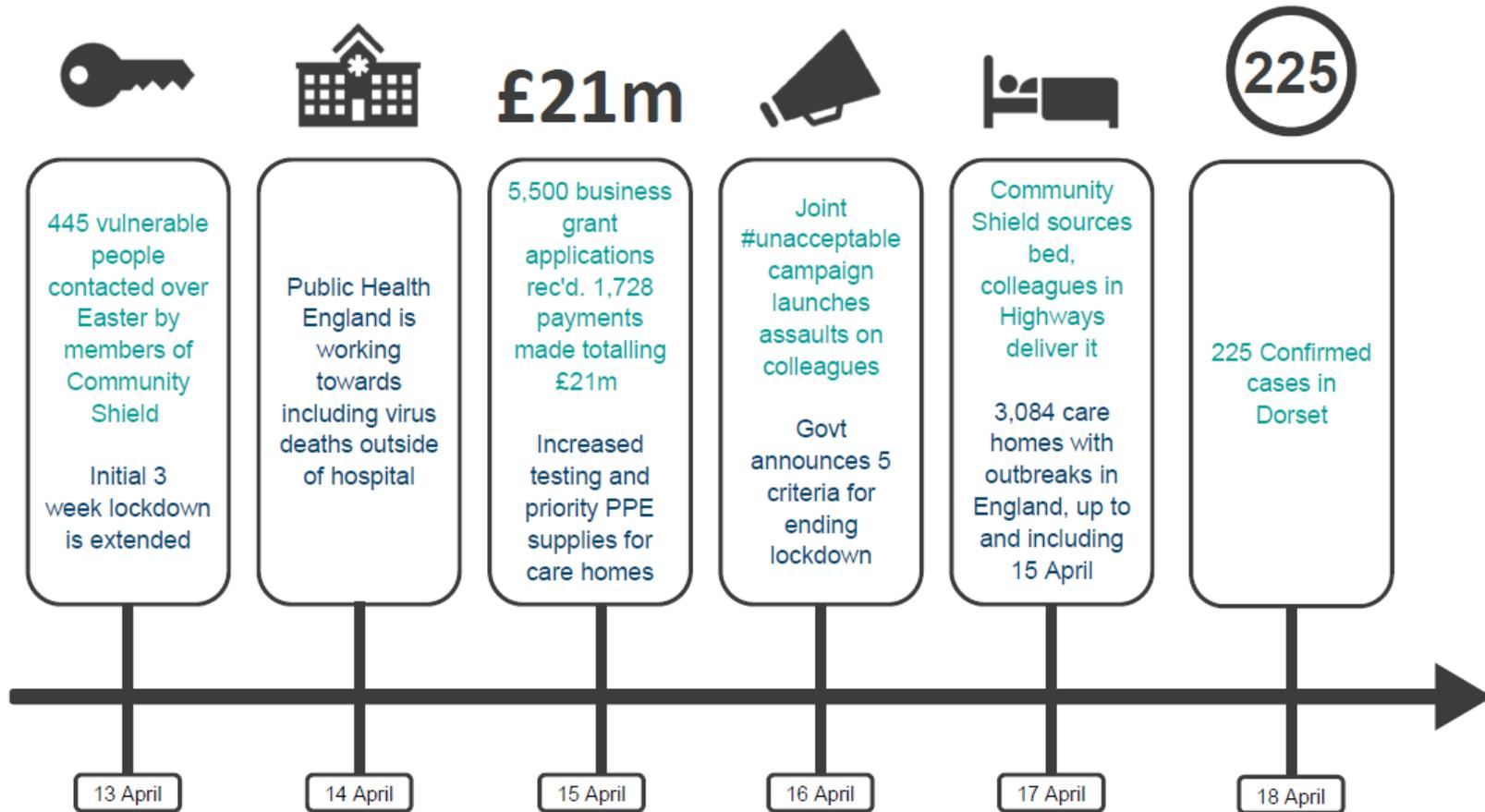
Easter eggs distributed with local food parcels

Campaign on domestic abuse launches. £2m provided to support charities

11 April

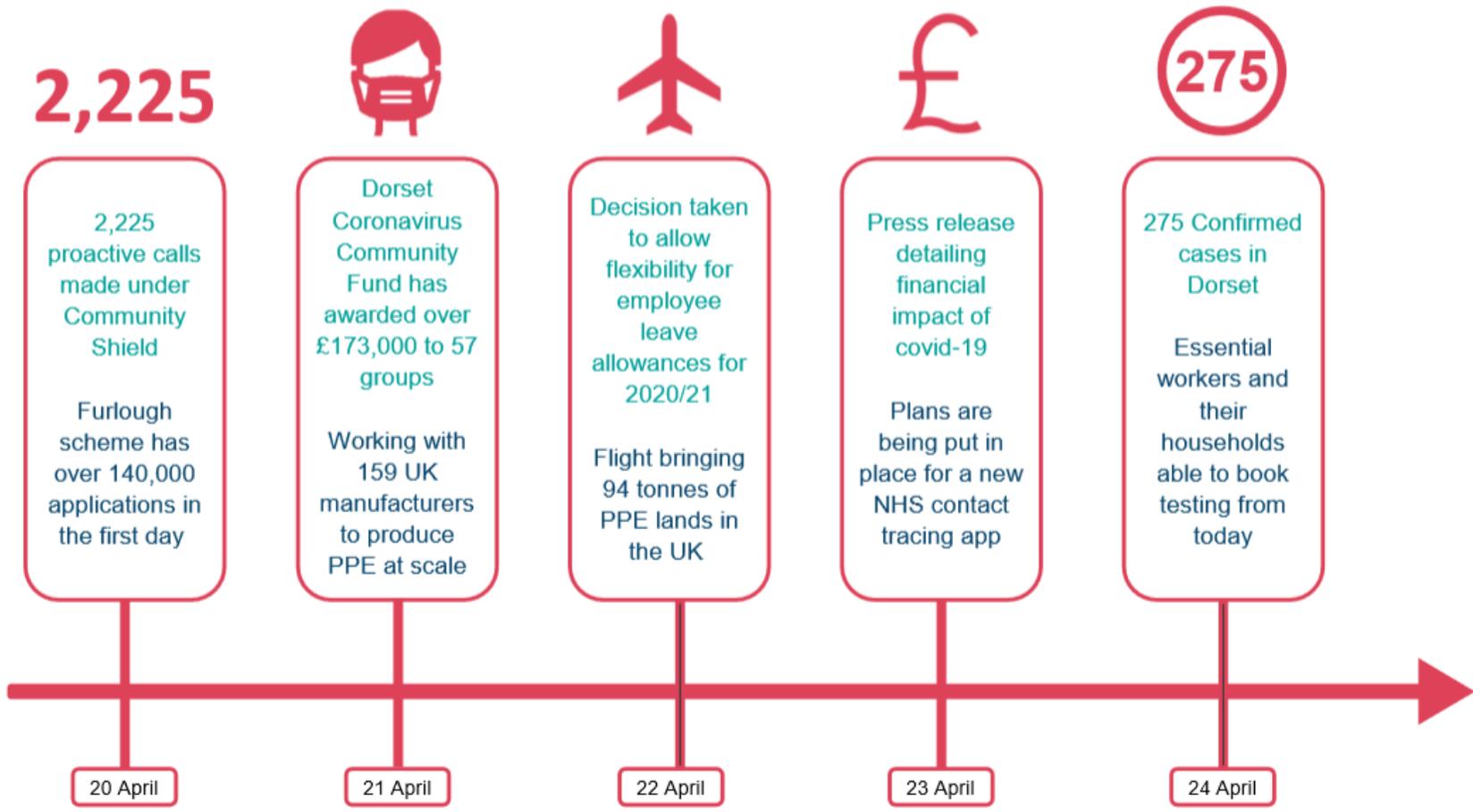
Coronavirus Timeline

13 April-19 April



Coronavirus Timeline

20 April-26 April



Appendix 2: Summary of compliments

- 1.1 In 2019/20, 298 compliments were received into Dorset Council across all services, 33.9% of these were received in Q4 during the ongoing pandemic.

2019/20 Q1	2019/20 Q2	2019/20 Q3	2019/20 Q4	Total
56	68	73	101	298
18.8%	22.8%	24.5%	33.9%	100%

- 1.2 This shows a significant and heartening increase in the number of compliments received across all directorates during the year and into the period impacted by the pandemic.
- 1.3 During the pandemic, 107 compliments have been received in relation to the COVID-19 response delivered by the council between 24 March – 13 May 2020.
- 1.4 These compliments are categorised into the following themes:

Category	Number of compliments received
Continued waste services	35
Information and financial support to businesses	8
Maintenance of safe open and public spaces	3
Provision of information from the History Centre	4
Provision of leisure facilities	1
Support for vulnerable and shielding people	15
Support from bereavement services	1
Support services to adults	8
Support services to children	12
Support to Schools	7
Support with housing needs	2
Support with planning needs	3
Support from registration services	2
Thanks to Dorset Council	6
Total	107

Appendix 3: Summary of complaints

- 1.1 During the COVID-19 pandemic, the complaints service has continued to function in order to respond to complaints from residents be them COVID-19 specific or in relation to wider council services.
- 1.2 The Complaints Team have been reduced in number during the response as part of the team have been redeployed to support critical services. However, a focus has remained on:
 - a) good communication
 - b) managing people's expectations on timescales
 - c) assisting in drafting manager responses
 - d) supporting frontline staff by not unduly burdening them with excess demands during the emergency
- 1.3 Complaints specific to COVID-19 are not easy to define and are open to interpretation. E.g. neighbour noise issues have increased slightly as people are impacted by lockdown and becoming frustrated more easily.
- 1.4 From 24 March – 13 May 2020, 3 complaints have been received in direct relation to council activity during the pandemic.

1.5 Complaint 1: Prescription support

The complainant raised concerns in relation to the eligibility and process for being added to the list of vulnerable people for help with prescriptions and food parcels. The issue was resolved by the service prior to the complaint.

Response:

Cllrs and members should be assured that we are working closely with this customer who has underlying health issues

1.6 Complaint 2: Rough Sleepers

The complainant raised concerns over an incident relating to rehoused rough sleepers that resulted in an investigation by Dorset Police. This was linked to the COVID-19 situation as councils in England have been ordered by the Ministry of Housing to re-home rough sleepers.

Comments were invited regarding related concerns and how Dorset Council is managing this. The view of the complainant was that while the public can be sympathetic to the homeless, we must ensure that the general public are not put at risk.

Response:

The Corporate Director for Housing offered a full response dated 15 April, and the case is currently closed.

1.7 **Complaint 3: Rough sleepers**

Concerns were raised about a hotel next to a complainants home having built a beer garden towards the end of last year. There is an allegation of drug use and inappropriate conduct given the restrictions on social distancing due to COVID-19

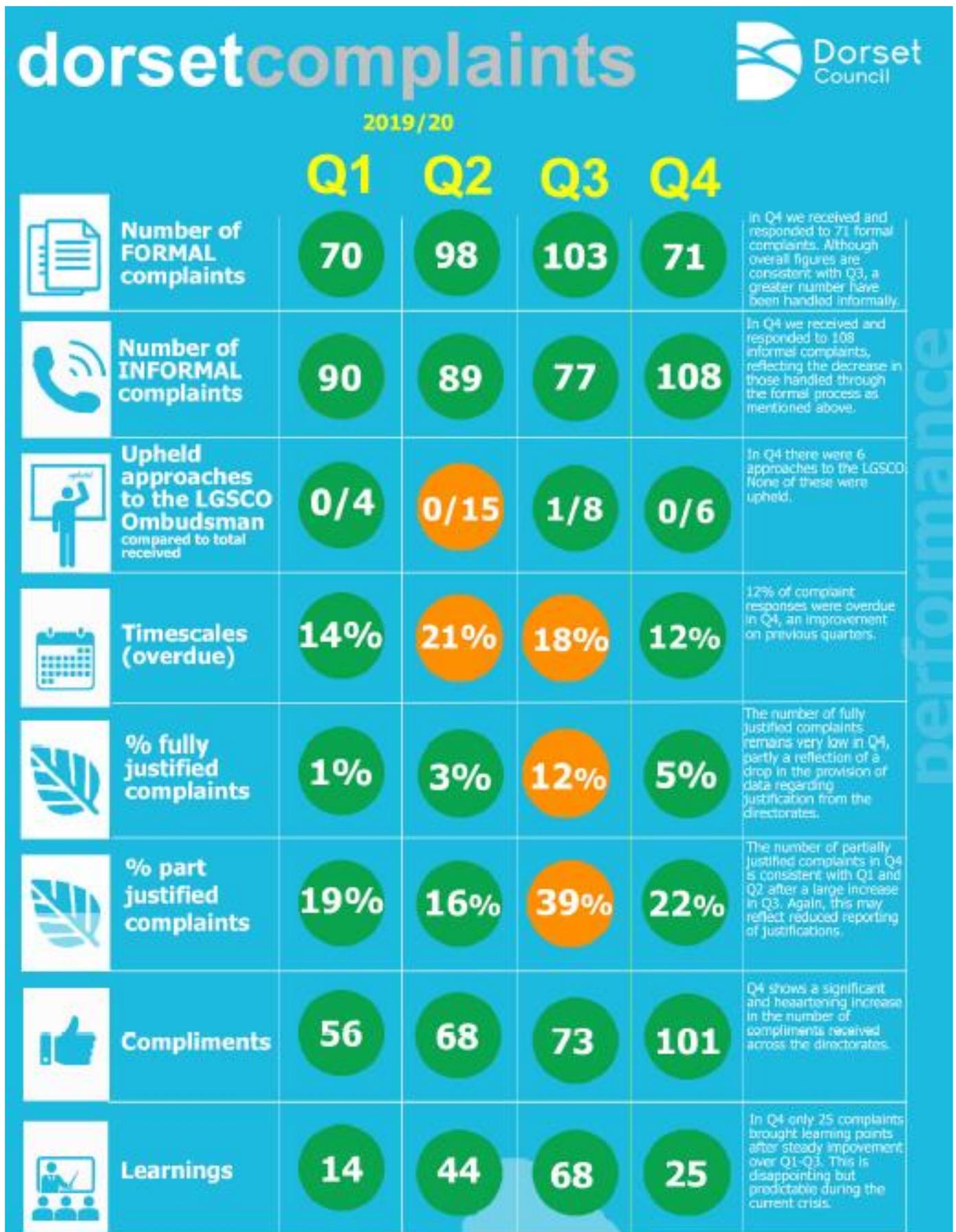
There was a criticism that the council are not doing anything to stop this happening, during unsociable hours, causing the complainant great distress

They specify concerns over one of the residents catching COVID-19 and that the entire hotel will become infected, which also puts the complainant at risk.

Response:

A member of the complaints team worked with a number of teams across the council to provide a robust response dated 20 April 2020.

2. All complaints



2.1 The summary chart above shows the volume of and the council response to complaints and in Q4:

- a) Formal Complaints are down across the Directorates
- b) Informal Complaints are up as the formal process is being discouraged and a culture of patience, understanding and informal resolution promoted. This is expected to change in the coming weeks as public mood changes and the activity from those on the Unreasonable Behaviours list increases.
- c) Compliments are up in Q4
- d) Learnings are down as it is a challenge to reflect on individual cases during the emergency whilst complaints are not considered critical at this time, echoed by the Ombudsman. There will be retrospective work to do at a later time with operational managers.

2.2 184 complaints have been received in relation to all services (not just COVID-19 related) in Q4 across 3 directorates:

People: Children

Category	Number of complaints received
Lack of (or inadequate) Communication	3
Data - Confidentiality	0
Policy/ Procedure - Disagreement with Decision	5
Attitude/Behaviour of Staff	2
Failure to provide service	5
Professional Practice of Staff	10
Quality of Service	7
Failure or Delay in providing service	10
Total	47

People: Adults

Category	Number of complaints received
Finance	12
Disagreement with Decision	2
Communication	2
Inadequate Service	3
Professional Practice of Staff	6
Quality of Service	10
Failure to Deliver Service	5
Attitude	1
Delay in Service	3
Total	44

Place

Category	Number of complaints received
Communication	5
Disagreement with Decision	9
Attitude of Staff	5
Delay in providing services	10
Failure to provide service	15
Inadequate Service	3
Quality of Service	16
Professional Practice of Staff	25
Service Provision - unspecified	5
Total	93

- 2.3 It is of note that the data for 2019/20 cannot be compared with the previous financial year as this is the first full year of converged data following the inception of Dorset Council. The corporate complaints team look forward to providing comparative data as we enter the second financial year since Dorset Council was formed.