

## **Report of the Chief Executive to the meeting of the Executive to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020.**

**BO**

---

### **Subject:**

**The response to Covid 19 and the forecast financial impact on the Council including decisions taken using emergency powers.**

### **Summary statement:**

This report provides Members with an overview of the response to Covid 19, and the financial impacts of both government decisions, and the decisions taken locally using emergency powers.

---

Kersten England  
Chief Executive

### **Portfolio:**

**Leader of the Council and Corporate**

Report Contact: Nigel Smith,  
Principal Executive Officer  
(07582103578)  
[nigel.smith@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.smith@bradford.gov.uk)

**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**  
**Corporate**

Andrew Cross, Head of Budgeting,  
Management Accounting & Projects (  
(07870 386523)  
[andrew.cross@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.cross@bradford.gov.uk)

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council (CBMDC) is the democratically accountable body for the Bradford District. The Council is the lead agency in co-ordinating a multi-agency, District wide response to the COVID-19 emergency ensuring that critical services and support are being delivered.

This report sets out the significant actions and decisions taken by the Council to date in response to COVID-19, the governance arrangements within which those actions and decisions have been taken and the financial impact on the Council of its response.

### 1 Background

- 1.1 On 24 March 2020 the Executive considered a report on the Council's approach, working alongside partners, to tackling the Covid-19 crisis across Bradford District. That report acknowledged the fast moving nature of the situation. Since that time events have continued to move at pace, emergency legislation has been passed and the country remains in lockdown.
- 1.2 The nature and scale of the COVID-19 emergency is unprecedented. Local Government is critical to the effective leadership, co-ordination and implementation of the response. Bradford Council has moved swiftly to establish plans and arrangements that are making sure that vulnerable people get the health and care that they need, supporting our communities, helping business to stay resilient, maintaining essential services and keeping people informed about what to do and where to go for help. Council resources have been entirely focussed on dealing with the crisis and planning ahead for the recovery and staff have displayed remarkable flexibility and resourcefulness, using local knowledge and intelligence to deliver action on the ground.
- 1.3 Governance arrangements have been established in order to coordinate and implement District wide and Council activity and to agree decisions on services, resources and action. Arrangements are in place to ensure that the Council's political leadership is engaged wherever possible in making significant decisions.
- 1.4 The response has required a series of important and urgent decisions to be made about Council services, the deployment of staff and resources and the co-ordination of work across a range of services and organisations. Those decisions include service closures for example, household waste and recycling centres, libraries, museums and galleries and leisure centres; the redeployment and re-training of staff for example, to support waste collections; changes to services such as bereavement; the supply and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on behalf of Government or where it cannot be provided by Government and food and the provision of a testing station.

- 1.5 Where possible decisions have been taken in line with Government guidance. Where that guidance has been absent or unclear, decision making has been undertaken with a view to aligning with neighbouring and regional local authorities. Local circumstances however have required a number of urgent decisions to be taken at the Council's discretion.
- 1.6 Delivering an effective response to the emergency has significant and on-going financial implications which include the costs of Personal Protective Equipment, where it has not been supplied by Government, support for care providers and support for social care service users. Significant costs are also associated with the provision of food, the loss of commercial income and sales fees and charges, management of increased mortality and the need to increase capacity for vital communications.
- 1.7 The council is also anticipating large deficits on Collection Funds for both Council tax and Business rates in 2020-21 which will have a significant impact in 2021-22. The position will worsen with a protracted lockdown and as recession and economic downturn increases.
- 1.8 The Government has provided an allocation of £15.76m in unring-fenced funding to support the Council's response. A second wave of funding for local government has since been announced, to date we do not know if this will result in an equivalent £15.76m payment for Bradford.. If it does, it is expected that the total additional grants of approximately £31m in total, would cover additional costs and income losses for approximately 6 months based on current best estimates. The Leader of the Council has supported national calls for the Government to ensure that the financial impact on local authorities is neutral.

## **2 Governance and decision making**

- 2.1 The District's arrangements for tackling the Covid-19 emergency and prioritising action and the deployment of resources are configured around five key themes:
  - Ensuring vulnerable people get the health and care that they need.
  - Supporting our communities
  - Helping business and workforces to stay resilient
  - Maintaining essential services
  - Keeping people informed.
- 2.2 As reported to the 24 March meeting of Executive in order to ensure an appropriate response a new command structure has been established in order to oversee decision making and to shape and respond to key issues across Council services and across the Bradford District:

**West Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum** meets daily and undertakes regional coordination of actions and arrangements across partners including the Emergency Services, Local Authorities, Government agencies, utilities, rail industry and voluntary sector. Includes working with military planners.

**District Gold Command** is a multi-agency body of senior leaders that is chaired by the Council's Chief Executive. It meets weekly to undertake Bradford District wide coordination and information sharing.

**Council Gold Command** is comprised of the Council's senior management team. It meets twice a day on most days and sets overall policy & strategy for dealing with COVID-19. Council Gold is responsible for decision-making and the release of resources and the coordination of risks and issues. It informs regional and national bodies as appropriate of the situation on the ground and its members liaise closely with the Council's political leadership.

**District Silver Command** is a multi-agency body meeting twice weekly to support District wide activity and sharing of intelligence. It is chaired by the Council's Strategic Director for Place.

**Council Silver Command** meets twice a week and is responsible for tactical management of the incident, including operational overview and identification. It is responsible for bringing important decisions and issues to Council Gold command and for ensuring that Gold strategy is followed.

**Bronze** is a multi-agency approach to resolving operational issues relating to each priority theme, identification of decisions for agreement at Silver or to Gold for awareness and the implementation of decisions.

- 2.3 Arrangements are in place to ensure that the Council's political leadership is involved in significant decisions, kept informed of emerging issues, can share information and intelligence and is supported to undertake effective political management of sensitive issues.

The Leader of Council meets daily with the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources, to review decisions and their implementation, update on issues and share information.

Portfolio holders are involved as far as possible in decisions in their areas of responsibility and kept briefed and updated in this fast moving situation.

The Council's Executive meets weekly with its management team to discuss the situation. The executive meet informally every other day to discuss progress.

All Councillors receive regular written updates.

A number of Council meetings have been cancelled as the Council, like many others across the country and the region, seeks to identify a technical solution that enables meetings to be held remotely in ways that meet legal requirements and support full public participation. Protocols for remote meetings and key meetings of the Council have now been developed and a meeting of the Executive has been scheduled for 30 April.

- 2.4 The 24 March meeting of Executive was held remotely via teleconference. The Executive discussed the contents of each report and recommendations and were happy for the recommendations as set out to be enacted by the Chief Executive under delegated powers contained in Article 14.20 of the Constitution.

- 2.5 The Council is democratically accountable to local people and organisations and attaches highest priority to ensuring that decision making is open and transparent and able to be subject to public scrutiny. This report therefore sets out the significant decisions that have been taken since the onset of the emergency in each of the priority themes outlined at para 2.1.

### 3 The local impact of COVID 19

- 3.1 COVID 19 was first identified in the UK on 27<sup>th</sup> February and because of the increasing number of cases went into lockdown on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. COVID-19 has continued to spread, with national and local government working hard to limit the spread of the infection and save lives by putting different measures in place.

- 3.2 The number of confirmed cases is:

#### Confirmed cases of COVID 19 in Bradford District

	Cases up to 12 <sup>th</sup> April	13/04	14/04	15/04	16/04	17/04	Total
Reported cases	477	13	17	39	15	25	563

- 3.3 This is likely to be an under estimate of how much COVID 19 there is in Bradford because it only captures those that were tested and confirmed as positive for COVID 19. Across the District very low numbers of people with symptoms of Covid-19 have been tested. It is widely acknowledged that testing is important and steps are now being taken to increase the numbers tested across the country.
- 3.4 One of the biggest areas of concern both nationally and locally is the number of cases we are seeing in our care homes. In Bradford 23% of care homes are dealing with outbreaks (2 or more cases) of COVID 19, as of the 20<sup>th</sup> April there have been a total of 117 suspected cases and 43 confirmed cases.
- 3.5 While the majority of people recover from a relatively short lived but unpleasant illness others, more vulnerable to the virus, have become seriously ill and do not recover. The number of deaths that have occurred in the Bradford District according to registrar data is:

#### Location of death in relation to COVID 19 recorded via Bradford Registrar's

Place of death	Deaths up to 16 <sup>th</sup> April	17/04	18/04	19/04	20/04	21/04	Total	% deaths per place of death
Hospital	141	5	9	11	8	4	178	79%
Nursing Home	23	1	3	2	4	0	33	15%
Home	9	0	0	0	1	0	10	4%
Hospice	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	1.7%
Not recorded	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1%
<b>Total deaths</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>226</b>	

- 3.6 The majority of deaths of COVID 19 happened in hospital (79%) with approximately 15% happening in care homes. Whilst any death is a tragedy the number of cases, hospitalisations and deaths has been much lower than was anticipated both nationally and locally. This has been because actions taken to limit the spread of the virus, such as self isolation of vulnerable groups, lockdown and social distancing have proved very effective. In spite of this improving picture Government advice is that people should continue to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.
- 3.7 We know that older people (particularly those over 70yrs old) are particularly vulnerable to the COVID 19 virus. This means that they are more likely to become more seriously ill if they get the virus, require hospital admission and some will unfortunately lose their life because of the impact the virus has had on them. Care homes are the setting for many vulnerable older people and as a result it is not surprising that they have been more adversely affected by the COVID 19 virus. So far 28 out of our 109 care homes have experienced outbreaks (2 or more cases) of COVID 19, some have been much more severely affected than others. Sadly, 33 of our care home residents have so far died as a result.
- 3.8 Older people are not the only vulnerable group. People with a range of different long term conditions can also be more affected by the COVID virus. Interestingly, they are not just vulnerable because of COVID but could also be more likely to suffer poorer health and premature death because they are not accessing help from our health services when they need it. On average Bradford registers 80 deaths per week and during the pandemic period total deaths have increased, not just for COVID related deaths but also from other causes. Compared to the same period last year we are seeing more deaths from respiratory illness and frailty and less deaths than we would normally see from Cardiovascular disease (heart disease and stroke). An increase in respiratory deaths could indicate a connection to COVID 19 and less deaths from Cardiovascular Disease could be because people with these conditions are more susceptible to COVID 19 and that has been their cause of death.
- 3.9 The whole of the health system is pushing a strong message, #StillHereTo Help, that if you are feeling ill, then you should contact your GP or contact 999 immediately. The health services want people with sudden, serious illness to contact services and not be deterred because of the Coronavirus epidemic.

#### 4 **Supporting Vulnerable People to get the health and care they need**

##### THEME PRIORITIES

To manage the Hospital Discharge and re-ablement process ensuring that there is a streamlined process involving all stakeholders and that people are supported in residential / nursing care settings

To manage community interface, ensuring individuals are supported in their own homes and non residential care provision

To ensure statutory functions including payments to providers, managing contracts with providers, managing resource/ capacity and Housing needs. To review redeployment tool to support identification of workforce to respond to capacity gaps

To ensure children and families are supported, minimise risk of isolation, ensure child and family wellbeing and safety, while ensuring statutory functions are maintained

- 4.1 Adult social care commissioning is increasing its focus on supporting the care sector by reviewing their business continuity plans, enhancing communication and undertaking capacity tracking of residential and nursing provision. Hospital discharge is being supported through support options and a process being developed for rapid recruitment of additional workforce for care sector.
- 4.2 Adult social care support is maintained for those who meet the eligibility criteria under the Care Act. ASC have differentiated between Care Act Easements and social distancing guidelines during Covid-19 therefore have not withdrawn any services fully. A prioritisation process has been implemented to ensure support and resources are deployed based on need.
- 4.3 Adult safeguarding continues to be provided as do disability services and aids and adaptations with the latter prioritising those people discharged from hospital.
- 4.4 Council Care facilities continue to operate – some are experiencing increased demand due to a reluctance of some independent providers to take people with COVID-19.
- 4.5 Day care centres have been closed and staff redeployed to other areas of social care. As soon as social distancing was introduced, we moved the individuals out of communal settings and offered families support in their own homes, this is more flexible and fluid and changes in response to families' needs and secondly we wanted the Health and Well Being charging team to focus on getting payments to providers as quickly as possible to ensure stability in the sector. This was not an easement of the Care Act as we haven't stopped financial assessments although there are some delays.
- 4.6 Public Health services continue to be operational and Environmental Health continue to provide the majority of their services.
- 4.7 Children's social care services, including safeguarding arrangements continue to operate and statutory duties are being delivered for vulnerable children. Operational guidance has been issued to staff setting out arrangements for home visiting, including guidance for safe distancing and remote working.

A subgroup of the safeguarding partnership chaired by Jane Booth is meeting weekly to consider key safeguarding risks and/or challenges across all key agencies working with children and to confirm the arrangements they have in place to ensure that professionals continue to have oversight of children across the district.

- 4.8 Main stream children's homes continue to operate as normal, although a small number of vacancies (3) are being maintained across the service as a contingency in the event that children are returned from out of district placements. Disability respite units have stopped overnight provision due to the vulnerability of children with significant underlying health issues but continue to provide a respite resource through outreach or daytime provision.

- 4.9 Fostering and adoption services continue as normal and remote working arrangements are in place.
- 4.10 SEND services are still being provided with greater emphasis on the use of remote technology where possible.
- 4.11 Education services, including Safeguarding and Sufficiency teams are focussed on coordinating and supporting 216 schools and 606 PVI providers to deliver educational placements for children of essential workers and vulnerable children as per the DfE guidance.
- 4.12 School admission work continues as normal and all school placements for the academic year 2020/21 have been confirmed following the national offer day. Staff are working remotely from home. We await guidance from the DfE about the operation of schools appeals process during the lockdown
- 4.13 The Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education teams continue to operate as normal and are using doorstep visits to identify and support vulnerable children.

4.14 **Supporting the Care Sector**

Residential, Nursing, Home Care, and other care providers have been severely impacted by Covid-19, both through staffing shortages caused by additional staff illness and absence; amended working practices and the need to provide additional PPE.

It is recommended that the Executive approve a temporary one off payment covering a 7 week period based on a 10% increase on the base fee rate for Residential and Nursing Homes, and Home Care, and a 5% increase on the base fee rate for Supported Living and Extra Care. Costs amount to £1.31m with a review to follow if the crisis persists into phase 3 of lockdown and any potential easing of current restrictions.

4.15 **Providing PPE**

The Council has so far procured £5m of additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all Council Services, Bradford and Craven Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and external partners in the Bradford District such as care providers. PPE provided to external parties will be recharged.

4.16 **Supporting Service Users**

Recipients of community based Social Care services make contributions towards the cost of their care based on a means tested assessment of their ability to contribute taking account of the cost of their care package.

Full year invoices are normally sent to service users prior to the start of the new financial year. A decision has been taken to suspend the issuing of invoices, and only start charging for the remainder of the year. This is due to a number of factors including the administrative burden of dealing with other Covid 19 related issues (for example making payments to Care providers to help them remain solvent), the administration associated with amendments to care packages necessitated by Covid-19 e.g. Day care provision to be



reflected in those invoices, and a desire to support service users financially.

The impact of this decision equates to approximately. £175k per week (£770k per month).

Charges are expected to resume as normal when the administration can be resumed.

#### **4.17 Supporting Early Years and Schools.**

There are 606 Private Voluntary and Independent (PVI) providers who deliver the early years' entitlement and receive monthly payments from the Dedicated Schools Grant. These include nurseries, children's centres, childminders etc. Following the normal payment process for the summer term, 40% of the total payment would be made in April and the remaining 60% across May, June and July.

The remaining summer term payments have been brought forward and additional payments totalling 60% (rather than 20%) were included in the 2 April payment schedule. Treasury management have confirmed that the proposals meet necessary financial procedures.

The LA is required to ensure sufficiency of places for vulnerable children and children of essential workers. This includes supporting the continuation of provision delivered by the PVI sector. A similar approach has been taken in respect of school finances and this is consistent with a number of other local authorities.

The change in spend profile has meant paying £4.12m rather than £1.375m in April with the additional amount being recovered across the summer term. The net impact to the local authority is neutral and the approach supports our PVI providers to remain open and supports the local authority's duty to ensure sufficiency of places.

At the time of writing, 252 of 606 providers were open which at 41% is higher than the national rate. The current emergency is placing the long-term sustainability of all PVI providers at potential risk.

#### **4.18 Rough Sleeping & Homelessness**

In order to protect rough sleepers and reduce the number of people on the streets in line with Government guidance, empty hotel rooms have been block booked.

Customers that present to Housing Options that are homeless but are deemed not in priority need or not eligible for assistance are not entitled to temporary accommodation under the legislation (Housing Act and Homelessness Reduction Act). Ordinarily these customers would not be placed into temporary accommodation by the council. A decision has been taken to offer temporary accommodation to all those that are homeless regardless of whether a) they are rough sleeping and b) they are eligible and in priority need. This reduces the risk that people may eventually become rough sleepers and require accommodation.

There are also wider safeguarding concerns of customers' sofa surfing between various addresses, which could increase the spread of the virus. The decision followed the Government's announcement that all rough sleepers should be accommodated. 33 rough sleepers have now been temporarily housed, and efforts to find permanent arrangements that are eligible for housing benefit have commenced. The additional costs to the Council is approximately £50k per month for 33 sleepers but this should be a relatively short arrangement as their permanent housing is being sought which attracts Housing Benefit.

## 5 Supporting Our Communities

### THEME PRIORITIES

To ensure a volunteer coordination that responds to non-essential and non-critical needs

To ensure the safety of communities by monitoring tensions and providing reassurance and engagement. To ensure communications reflects efforts across the theme and is timely, consistent with government guidelines and central communications, accessible and reaches all communities.

To ensure there is a consistent and reliable food supply chain for those who need it and food banks can be scaled up in operation when required with our volunteer coordination response

To identify, prepare and mobilise hubs and centres across the district which will deploy our volunteer coordination, support services and social isolation services.

To ensure support reaches those who have become socially isolated due to COVID-19 and mechanisms are in place to meet their needs either through our volunteer coordination response or through alternative support mechanisms.

- 5.1 The key initial focus of activity has been ensuring effective networks for food distribution so that people get the help they need and supporting the recruitment and deployment of volunteers. The Council has enhanced services to support engagement with the creation of five Area Hubs supported by Neighbourhood Support Centres at a more local level in the main by led by and integrated with voluntary and community sector providers. Work to meet the emerging social and emotional needs of vulnerable residents has also been coordinated through the Hubs. Work on community cohesion and tackling hate crime is maintained. Youth Services and wardens continue to operate as part of Area Hubs.

### 5.2 Hardship Fund

The Government has allocated £5.85m to the Council to create a Hardship fund. This has been allocated based on an assumed level of 'hardship', with funding of £150 to be allocated to Council Tax Reduction (also called Council Tax Support) claimants. Approximately £4.1m will be incurred on the current 27,000 recipients, with the remainder expected to be used up by higher claimant numbers linked to higher expected unemployment. However, the cost of awarding additional Council Tax Reduction to newly unemployed residents will have an on-going cost to the Council's Collection Fund. The number of applications has started to increase as has the number for free school meals.

### 5.3 Support for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations (VCS).

Bradford District has a vibrant and thriving Voluntary and Community Sector. Many VCS organisations are currently supporting efforts on the ground to respond to Covid-19. As is the case with organisations in other sectors the VCS also faces potentially significant financial impacts as a result of the emergency. In order to support and sustain the sector, VCS

organisations who are integral to the COIVd-19 response have been supported by receiving payment in advance – where they have a 2-month contract or longer, advance funding will be provided of up to 12-months. Where the contract is shorter, advance funding will be provided for the duration of the contract. Spending will be monitored on a quarterly basis to ensure contractual fulfilment.

#### 5.4 **District Wide Befriending Scheme**

Hubs are currently connecting referrals for loneliness to established ‘befriending services’ that pre-existed in district and these have been supported through the addition of ‘trained volunteers’ to help build resilience. However, a district wide befriending scheme (platform) is being developed that will provide the means of connecting people who are socially isolated to befriending support. The cost of this is £28k

#### 5.5 **Food Supply Chain.**

Having quickly become evident that food supply networks, largely within the voluntary sector cannot meet the emerging demands that are coming out of the impacts of social isolation for vulnerable people and the closing down of businesses across the district a decision was taken to fund the supply of food an initial £200K has been released. This includes the provision of a newly established food distribution centre for residents to access emergency food parcels via the Council 431000 number.

To help reduce the impact on ‘free’ food deliveries the Council has also mobilised a ‘Home Shopper’ project providing shopping support to those people who are self isolating but can afford to shop, without the means to access shopping services.

Additional support of £0.6m is required to provide additional support to foodbanks, and the food distribution centre to the end of May 2020.

### 6 **Helping businesses to stay resilient**

A multi-agency approach to supporting business led by the Council and closely with the Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Business, WYCA, BID, Economic Partnership to Business Support sections as key stakeholders has focused on the following priorities:

THEME PRIORITIES
Ensuring businesses have the right advice and access to government funding to maintain resilience during crisis
Utilising our business intelligence to identify priority sectors and those businesses vulnerable to going out of business
Enabling Business Shift and Recovery
Supporting the workforce to stay resilient and sign post to the appropriate welfare offer

6.1 Business advice services alongside others have been working hard to ensure that businesses have access to information, advice and support that they need and to identify businesses at risk.

6.2 Business, investment and enterprise team, strategic programmes team and Enterprise Europe Network are running as normal.

6.3 Skills and training and Adult education services are being extended to support redeployment of staff into essential services.

6.4 Markets are supporting the continuation of fresh food distribution.

### 6.5 Supplier relief

Procurement services continue to be provided with all payments changed to immediate in order to support business. Procurement contracts have been extended and supplier relief processes implemented. Due diligence is being applied to avoid clawback and ensure that the Council does not breach state aid rules.

### 6.6 Business support grants £136m.

The government has allocated £136m to the Council to providing support to businesses. Every eligible business will receive funding as soon as is possible however it may not be the case that all the £136m is allocated and some businesses may be ineligible. £52m has been paid out to 4,600 businesses to date, with more to be paid in the next few weeks. Payments will be made as soon after receiving bank details and proof of eligibility as possible. Business support grants will not have an impact on Council finances, as they are received from government.

### 6.7 Waiving Market rents

A decision has been taken to keep open fresh foods sales given the priority attached to accessing food supplies safely. Other traders have closed due to the difficulty of implementing social distancing at the District's markets however their rent and service charge payments have been suspended. The income foregone by the Council is £300K for each three-month period.

## 7 Maintaining Essential Services

THEME PRIORITIES
<b>Bereavement:</b> to coordinate response to changing demand and capacity requirements and guidance for bereavement
<b>Supplies &amp; Services:</b> monitor impact of COVID-19 on suppliers, VCS and partners on keeping essential services flowing
<b>IT:</b> facilitating home working for priority groups and as many staff in the council as possible, including technical solutions for meetings & committees
<b>Workforce:</b> to ensure essential services both within the Council and across the District are maintained during COVID-19 crisis, creating swift redeployment and rapid recruitment processes and supporting & promoting workforce health & wellbeing.

7.1 Domestic Refuse collections and recycling collections services are running as normal with cars hired to follow wagons and ensure safe working. Business refuse collections continue with big reductions in the numbers of businesses served. Fly tipping and street cleaning are reduced, Household Waste and recycling sites are currently closed and any plans for re-opening will follow Government guidance on essential journeys; bulk waste collection has ceased.

- 7.2 Housing services including homelessness, temporary accommodation, enforcement and advice and guidance remain open.
- 7.3 Libraries, museums and galleries, sport and leisure services have closed with some staff redeployed to other services. Lost revenue from the closures amounts to an estimated £2m over a three-month period. Parks remain open.
- 7.4 Grounds maintenance and street cleansing services continue to operate, albeit with a reduced level of resource.
- 7.5 Transport and highways. Highways maintenance is undertaking essential works. Parking services has stopped – with a loss of parking and enforcement income of £1.5m over three months. Street lighting and gullies and drainage are delivering essential work only. The Council's Planning functions continue in accordance with Governments clear guidance.
- 7.6 ICT support to services is maintained and working from home has been significantly enabled at pace for 3000 staff with no degradation in service levels.
- 7.7 Property, asset management and facility management teams have continued to operate and continue to deliver meals to over 100 schools for Key staff's and vulnerable children, including a number of evening meals. FM have also been leading on the distribution of PPE to the District and the built environment leading the delivery of a temporary body storage facility at the former Richard Dunn site and supported the delivery of the NHS testing centre at Marley Fields, dealing with emergencies.
- 7.8 Office of the Chief Executive services continue to provide strategic and business support and programme management to the priority themes.
- Press and communications services have been enhanced with additional capacity to support district wide community and business communications.
- 7.8 Legal and democratic, strategic support and regulatory services continue to operate as do registrars services supporting the interpretation of legislation and guidance as well as ensuring death registrations are completed in a timely and respectful way. The City Solicitor continues to lead and support the mortuary facility for the district.
- 7.9 The Emergency Planning Team is at the heart of coordinating and implementing the response to Covid-19 and keeping people safe and supplied and able to access help.
- 7.10 Human Resources and redeployment. - The Council has redeployed hundreds of existing staff from services temporarily closed into different Council roles across Social Care, Waste, and in support of Shielding and the new hubs to ensure the provision of essential services. A system wide deployment and rapid recruitment approach has been established through Skills House, involving partners to support essential services across the District. Opportunities for redeployment and for those in our communities looking for work are available through a job matching and appointment process, supported by a Memorandum of Understanding with partners to allow for straightforward deployment of our people resources across organisations.

Human Resources has expanded the staff wellbeing offer, developing a wellbeing guide for all staff, extending counselling support for employees to include overnight access 24/7 for an initial period of 6 months. An employee helpline has been set up to provide support and advice to our employees for the pressures they face every day during this global health emergency.

We are currently considering the implications of the Job Retention Scheme on our workforce.

#### **7.11 Enabling Social Distancing for Waste Collection operatives.**

Redeployed staff from Sports Facilities and other Services have helped keep the Waste collection services running as normal (with the exception of bulk collections), however additional operational measures were needed to be put in place to enable social distancing. This included the hiring of additional vehicles, so that waste collection operatives could drive separate vehicles behind the main Waste Collection wagons at a cost of £500K for a three-month period.

The marginal cost to the Council (the cost after redeployment) has been kept down to training and additional hire vehicles only.

#### **7.12 Bereavements, Mortuaries and Coroners**

Difficult decisions have had to be taken about Bereavement services. Bereavement Services offices in Bradford and Keighley are closed for visitors. Unfortunately, the number of mourners who can attend both burials and cremation has had to be reduced to 10 mourners so that a safe distance of at least 2 metres (6 ft) can be maintained between individual. Additional support is being received from Sport and Leisure staff who's substantive duties have been stood down assisting the Bereavement Services team with both crematoria and administration duties. We are making provision for services outside both cremations and burials and families will be supported to hold memorials at a later date.

Some additional changes to Bereavement Services have also been made:

##### **Bereavement**

- 1) Waived planned increases in charges
- 2) Direct cremations

##### **Mortuary**

- 1) The vacant Richard Dunn leisure centre has been used to create a temporary body storage facility
- 2) Due to the increase in workload, additional resources as necessary in the mortuary service have been approved and will be kept under close review.

Further information on funeral policy changes is

at: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/emergencies/council-service-disruptions/important-updates-and-guidance-about-coronavirus/#funerals>

#### **7.13 ICT additional costs of equipment and home working support.**

ICT have made configuration changes to increase the ability to support

remote workers from 1200 concurrent users to in excess of 3500 concurrent users. Over 1200 additional employees have been enabled to work from home, over 600 laptops have been configured and rolled out and over 220 mobile phones have been provided.

## **8 Keeping People Informed**

### **8.1 Communications support**

Keeping people informed on how to stay safe at home and where to get help if they need it is critical at this time. In order to support and help coordinate those efforts additional resources have been provided to support District Gold communications, strengthen communications in our communities and adopt innovative approaches such as the iVan to reach all our communities including those with high numbers of people who do not have English as their first language.

In addition, the Council has developed a Covid-19 specific section on its website to keep the public updated on a range of issues such as health advice, how vulnerable people can access support, which services have been disrupted, how businesses can access support and council tax advice. Email bulletins are being sent on a regular basis to around 21,000 residents and businesses. Anyone can sign up for these bulletins via the Council's websites. Social media platforms are also being used to share and reinforce messages. Information and advice pages have also been developed for schools.

All service changes and policy changes have been published on the council's web site and can be found at: <https://www.bradford.gov.uk/emergencies/council-service-disruptions/important-updates-and-guidance-about-coronavirus/>

## **9 Financial Impacts**

- 9.1 In addition to the decisions that have been taken under emergency powers, there have been many other Council service areas that have been financially impacted by Covid 19 as a result of government decisions (for example closing leisure facilities), or the indirect impacts of government decisions (e.g reduced car parking income).
- 9.2 The government has recognised the perilous potential that Covid 19 has for Council finances across the country, and has provided £3.2bn of Emergency un-ring-fenced grants in two tranches. Bradford's share of the first tranche was £15.75m and estimates in this report are based on securing an equivalent level of funding from tranche 2.
- 9.3 The table below outlines the current best estimates of the financial impact of Covid 19 on the Council resulting from both decisions taken through emergency powers; government decisions, and the wider impact of Covid 19.
- 9.4 Given the uncertainty about the length of time of lockdown measures, and the time it could take to return to normal, and the consequent impacts on the economy, the estimated impact gets significantly less robust the longer the time period, and should consequently be treated as reflecting different scenarios.

9.5 In most instances, values shown are an extrapolation, as applying any assumptions about the timing of recovery/ end of lockdown at this stage would inevitably be spurious.

<b>Estimated Financial Impacts £ms</b>	<b>3 Months</b>	<b>6 Months</b>	<b>12 Months</b>
<b>Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>			
Supporting Care providers	2.2	4.3	8.6
Additional PPE	2.0	3.0	4.0
Fairer Charging income reduction	2.3	2.3	2.3
Additional costs to provide care in different ways	0.5	1.0	2.0
Other Support	0.2	0.4	0.8
<b>Total Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>17.70</b>
<b>Department of Place</b>			
Parking Services: reduced car parking & enforcement revenues	1.5	3	5.5
Leisure: lost revenue from closure of Leisure facilities, Sports development swimming development	1.4	2.7	5.5
Planning & Building Control Fee Income	0.5	1.0	2.0
Museums / Theatres / Libraries: lost revenue from activities within these facilities	0.3	0.7	1.4
Markets – rent foregone	0.3	0.6	1.2
Waste Services – Additional costs to enable social distancing for operatives, and loss of Bulk Collection income	0.25	0.5	1.0
Bereavement Services – reduced income levels and additional costs.	0.2	0.4	0.7
Lower Licensing and Land charge income	0.1	0.2	0.4
Other	0.3	0.5	0.7
<b>Total Department of Place</b>	<b>4.86</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>17.9</b>
<b>Children's Services</b>			
School Closures impacting on Outdoor Centres, Music Services, Psychology, Governor, Clerking service and others.	1.1	2.2	4.4
Additional payments to Care providers	0.6	1.3	2.3
Additional PPE for Childrens homes	0.3	0.6	1.2
Schools – loss of income from wrap around care, lettings and others – parts may be funded from a DfE Exceptional costs claim and job retention scheme.	1.6	2.6	2.6
Other	0.1	0.2	0.3
<b>Total Children's Services</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>10.8</b>
<b>Corporate Resources</b>			
School (& other) catering and cleaning activity. Predominantly driven through lost revenue due to school closures, but also includes additional costs of deep cleaning and provision of free meals.	0.6	1.2	2.4
Estates and Facilities Management – Closure of ISG, additional building cleaning costs, lost catering income, other income losses	0.5	1.0	2.0
Revenues and benefits – higher debts, reduction in overpayment recovery	0.5	1.0	1.9
Legal & Democratic Services – additional Forensic science centre costs, lower registrars income (marriages)	0.2	0.4	0.9
Additional ICT to support home working and other	0.2	0.3	0.4
Other	0.41	0.42	0.5
<b>Total Corporate Resources</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>4.85</b>	<b>7.9</b>
<b>Total of above</b>	<b>18.7</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>54.2</b>
Less Emergency Section 31 Grant	<b>-31.5</b>	<b>-31.5</b>	<b>-31.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>-12.8</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>22.8</b>



- 9.6 Service managers are undertaking measures to mitigate the additional Covid 19 related costs and income losses by for example, redeploying staff where possible, reducing expenditure to essentials, asking providers of affected services to deliver services in a different way (e.g day care), and reducing agency staff amongst others. The Council is also looking at furloughing staff as part of the governments Job Retention scheme, however this is likely to apply in only a very limited circumstance in line with the advice from the Local Government association - <https://www.local.gov.uk/lga-workforce-update-job-retention-scheme>

## **9.7 Impact on Council Tax and Business Rates Collection, and the medium term impact of Council finances.**

Covid 19 is also likely to impact on the Council Tax and Business Rates collection resulting from a recession which is predicted by the International Monetary Fund to be the worst since the Great Depression.

### **Council Tax**

The Council is budgeted to receive a £206m precept from the Council Tax collection for the 2020-21 financial year. The Council is guaranteed to receive its precept in 2020-21, as are the other preceptors such as Police, Fire and Town Councils. Any deficit arising between the £206m budgeted and the actual amount of Council Tax collected will result in a Collection fund deficit that will have to be recovered in the 2021-22 financial year.

The actual Council Tax collection could be adversely impacted as a result of Covid-19 due to:

- An increase in the non-collection of 2020-21 Council Tax bills.
- An increase in the levels of provisions required to be held against outstanding Council Tax debt from prior years.
- More residents meeting the criteria to access the Council Tax Reduction scheme due to higher unemployment.

The impact of Covid-19 on a reduced Council Tax Collection in 2020-21 is potentially significant. To indicate the magnitude, if the numbers of working age Council Tax Reduction Scheme claimants' doubles, this alone would reduce the Council Tax collection by £15m.

Further, a sustained period of increased unemployment and a poor economic outlook, could have an adverse impact on the Council Tax collection beyond 2021-22.

## **9.8 Business Rates**

The Council is budgeted to receive £66.4m in Business Rates for the 2020-21 financial year. Like Council Tax, any current downturn will be repaid in 2021-22. The Council's Business Rates collection is already underwritten by a safety net mechanism so that the maximum loss is £5.2m. However, the Council is a member of the Leeds City Region Pool. The Pool has agreed to self-fund the safety net mechanism of all members up to the value of each Council's individual safety net. This means the Government is only required to provide funding once all the Councils' safety nets have been overreached.

Other reasons why Bradford Council could reach the safety net are:

- An increased non collection of 2020-21 bills

- A requirement for increased provisions for bad debts in prior years.
- An increase in empty rates

Further, the expected distributions from the Leeds City Pool for 2020-21 will also be at risk.

The longer term impacts of a reduction in Business Rates beyond 2020-21 are uncertain. However, these results will be interconnected with the funding formula review, which resets Council's overall level of need.

## 9.9 Cash flow Management

A number of temporary amendments to the Treasury Management policy were made:

- The Council was able to hold large sums of money with its main bank account in order to assist with the distribution of £136m of grants to businesses.
- A very small reduction in the quality of credit ratings was allowed, in case of a general market decline.
- The Treasury Management Officer was given greater scope to borrow, in order to respond quickly to all scenarios.

These amendments were made in order to prepare for all eventualities for a crisis in which the impacts are still unclear.

There have also been a number of Government initiatives which have helped to boost the Council's cash flow on a temporary basis:

- A 3-month payment in advance of Social Care Grants
- A deferment in the collection of the Government's share of Business Rates
- A payment in advance of the grants which reimburse Council's for the cost of reliefs, including the recent extensions to retail relief.

Overall these Government initiatives have substantially improved the Council's cash flow position. However, as this is on a temporary basis, the Council's cash flow will depend on the forecast outcomes in an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

## 10 Impacts on Schools

- 10.1 Since Monday 23 March, all schools and early years' providers (Private, Voluntary and Independent sector) have been closed for all children other than vulnerable children and the children of key workers. With the suspension of the National Curriculum and assessments, their offer has changed from education (being delivered between roughly 9am-3pm) to a mixture of education and childcare (being delivered on an extended basis between roughly 8am-6pm) for a smaller number of eligible pupils. Schools and the PVI sector are using their resources flexibly to remain open where they can to deliver this offer.
- 10.2 The government made a number of announcements early on in the close down period to confirm that the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations to local authorities, as well as formula funding and other grants that schools receive, will not be reduced where schools fully or partially close. The government has confirmed that High Needs Block funding is unaffected. The government also confirmed its expectation that authorities would continue to pass through Early Years Entitlement funding to the PVI sector as if it was 'business as usual', without deduction for partial or full closure. Put together,

this means that DSG-based and other grant-based funding going into schools and the PVI sector will continue as normal, albeit the cancellation of certain data collections will mean that the Authority will need to use an alternative data source and / or fund on a more estimated basis that we would normally.

- 10.3 The DE's expectation then follows that schools will continue to pay their staff and will continue to honour their regular financial commitments.
- 10.4 Although the continuation of funding 'as normal' provides a significant degree of financial protection, this does not protect schools and the PVI sector against:
- a) the impact of additional exceptional costs that are necessary in their management of this situation, and
  - b) the impact of the cessation / reduction in private income streams that are significant to the school's or provider's overall budget. For the PVI sector, parent-based income for childcare is significantly affected. In the case of schools, a number of schools operate substantial before and after school club childcare provision, operate their own catering, and are also in receipt of income from facilities and services.
- 10.5 As an immediate step in response, the Authority (Gold Command) adjusted the April payments made to schools and early years' providers, in support of their short term cash flow requirements.
- 10.6 The government has also made available nationally:
- A number of additional financial measures, for businesses and the self-employed, which apply to support eligible providers and childminders in the PVI sector.
  - The Job Retention Scheme, which is directly applicable to employers in the PVI sector for staff providing independent places.
  - A scheme, which will be opened in June, for schools to claim reimbursement from the DfE for their additional exceptional costs, such as cleaning costs and the cost of Free School Meal vouchers. This scheme appears limited in its scope. The DfE's expectation is that a good proportion of additional costs will be offset by operational savings that will come from the suspension of normal school business. The DfE expects that schools will use their staffing resources flexibly to remain open and to deliver an extended childcare offer, including over school holidays, without incurring additional salaries costs.
- 10.7 At the time of writing this report, there is still uncertainty on these two aspects and these remain important issues to resolve:
- The DfE's expectations of the Local Authority in responding to requests from the PVI sector for additional funding, over and above the existing measures, to support them to remain open. We are aware that some local authorities have chosen to allocate additional funding (over and above Early Years Entitlement funding) from local budget to PVI early years' providers. We have asked the DfE for policy guidance and are currently awaiting their response.

- The extent to which the government will support the budgets of schools for loss of private income. As a rough guide, our maintained schools collected in the region of £2.6m of applicable income between April and September 2019. On 17 April, the government adjusted its guidance to state that schools are permitted to access the Job Retention Scheme for the salaries of staff that would normally be paid through private income. This change in guidance is currently being considered by the Authority and the Authority will need to agree its position, in consultation with the Trades Unions. Its application is not without difficulty. Even where schools are able to furlough staff paid for through private income, the Job Retention Scheme may not provide cover for the loss of income in all circumstances. So this is a matter that is still to be clarified and for the Authority to continue to push government on.

One of the clear financial risks for the Council is that this situation results in deficit balances in maintained schools. We are unlikely to have a clear sense of the overall budget impact on schools until normal business is resumed. In support of managing the burdens on maintained schools, we suspended the Surplus Balances Protocol for March 2020 but we will have conversations with schools at an appropriate time about balances held at the end of the 2019/20 financial year. We have also moved the deadline for the submission of governor approved budgets for 2020/21 from 15 May to 30 June but we have asked that schools that predict deficit budgets to contact us at the earliest opportunity.

## **11.0 RISK MANAGEMENT**

The situation is changing rapidly and assessment of risk and governance arrangements is being kept under on-going review. The approach to risk management when dealing with the consequences of the pandemic has been to follow the Council's plans under Business Continuity Management which is structured around, Bronze, Silver and Gold operational responses. The overarching impact of the crises on Council responsibilities and service delivery will require the Council's Strategic Risk Register to be reviewed once the causes and the consequences of the crisis have been fully understood.

## **12.0 LEGAL APPRAISAL**

The Coronavirus Act 2020 is the government's main legislative change in response to the pandemic. Most of its provisions came into effect on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020, but detailed further legislation in the form of statutory instruments, and government guidance have been issued since that date and continue to be published.

The Act has temporarily modified duties and powers relating social care, mental health, registration of deaths, inquests, the regulation of investigatory powers, gatherings, meeting and events, the postponement of elections, virtual local authority meetings and protection from eviction.

Other changes to existing legislation and statutory guidance continue to be monitored by Legal Services

## **13.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **13.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

In responding to the Coronavirus pandemic the Council needs to continue to have regard to how its emergency decisions and resulting service provision supports and impacts on its different communities and those with protected characteristics. For Bradford Council this also includes consideration of impacts on households with low wage/low income.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission will be contacting local authorities shortly to remind them of their Public Sector Equality Duty

Theme 1 and 2 of the Council response are concerned with supporting vulnerable people and those made vulnerable through the effects of the pandemic. Theme 3 is concerned with supporting local businesses to continue operating after the pandemic has passed and therefore aimed at also supporting local employment.

Schemes introduced by the Government to alleviate job losses and loss of earnings will not cover all those who were in employment. Individuals that fall outside the scope for alleviation will likely suffer additional hardship or take risks to continue to earn a wage. We require data to enable us to understand what is happening locally so we can consider how to mitigate this.

Data is being used and developed to help the Council and its partners understand the impacts on different groups. This is partly being informed through work with data analysts and researchers across the district. This key data will be presented in dashboards to support decision-making. An example of how data is being used to identify issues can be seen in the local work that is underway to consider the possible different impacts of the pandemic on BAME individuals and communities. Outputs from this work will be used to inform decisions and provision as appropriate.

Work is underway to produce messaging aimed at specific communities to help individuals to continue to follow social distancing guidance especially during significant religious festivals.

Consideration has been given to funerals and burials so that, as far as possible, requirements of different communities can be met as closely as possible.

The nature of this emergency has meant that action and decisions have had to be fast-paced. Some processes have been reduced as a consequence. New central government policy and guidance is emerging daily which the Council also needs to reflect in its responses and adapted provision.

To acknowledge this change, the process the Council is using to support its strategic, policy and operational decision making supports the capture and reflection of equalities considerations that will be used to inform decisions and provision.

### **13.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

As set out in the report considered by Executive on 24 March establishing a sustainable development action plan, the council is committed to supporting the District to be a fair society within environmental limits. Decisions have been taken with this in mind.

### **13.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

None

### **13.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

The rates of most crime types have fallen since the start of lockdown. However, Police Teams are still experiencing high demand for service due to extra calls relating to Covid-19, including breaches of lockdown. An Inspector led team has been set-up to manage this. The Council is receiving a much smaller number of calls relating to C-19 community safety issues and most of these are dealt with by relevant staff such as Council Wardens and Youth Workers.

On an area basis Police and Council Teams are setting-up joint Whatsapp groups so important issues can be shared in real time, for example, whether to send out Police or Council staff where groups of youths are gathering. In addition, Police Engagement and Council Stronger teams are conducting joint confidence visits to places of worship to engage and explain the lockdown requirements. With very few exceptions, places of worship are complying well and Police and Council colleagues re liaising over plans to support communities during Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr.

#### Community Tensions

Tension level have remained low during lockdown, thanks to large-scale compliance across our communities. There have been some issues with social gathering in parks on warm days that Council and Police Teams manage collectively. In addition, plans have had to be enacted to reduce the numbers visiting Scholemoor Cemetery and attending burials in particular. Communities have generally responded well to this required behaviour change where previously hundreds would regularly attend funerals/burials.

#### Domestic Abuse

Council and Police Teams have been closely monitoring Domestic Abuse figures since the start of the lockdown. The Stay at Home message and the nature of isolation and the financial uncertainty brought by Covid-19 are barriers to victims seeking help. A Communication Plan has been devised to encourage victims of domestic abuse to seek support.

Other countries have experienced a surge in domestic abuse once lockdown started to be removed, and internationally countries are planning for that eventuality. Covid-19 restrictions have provided some issues for accommodation providers and operational issues for some third sector support agencies.

### **13.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

No direct issues arising from this report.

### **13.6 TRADE UNION**

The Council is working in partnership with our trade unions, informing and consulting on workforce matters and the Council's workforce approach to ensure that our staff are supported and safe. We share concerns around the mental, physical and financial health and wellbeing of staff, infection control, social distancing, vulnerable groups and protective personal equipment (PPE) and have worked diligently to address concerns with our wellbeing, public

health, procurement and communications colleagues to provide a safe working environment and communicate clear guidance for all our staff. We continue to progress and communicate health and wellbeing support, and our redeployment approach. We are working through challenges about keeping a small number of services deemed by our trade unions as non-essential, open and running, such as parks and landscapes. Support has been provided and joint guidance agreed to support our Schools and overcome contractual and working arrangements as a result of the impact of School closures and key worker announcements.

### **13.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

All wards are affected by the impact of Coronavirus and the Council and we are working with communities and Councillors at a local level in all parts of the District including allocating financial support to every ward.

### **13.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

Ensuring the health, safety and well-being of children in the Council's care is a key priority. Plans are in place to make sure that these children and children at risk get the care and support that they need.

### **13.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

None

### **13.10 NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS**

None

### **14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **That the Executive**

- 14.1 Thanks all Council staff and everyone involved across all sectors, in the NHS, in statutory services and VCS, in our communities and in our businesses, for their incredible efforts to tackle the emergency.
- 14.2 Note the contents of this report and the actions taken to manage the issues highlighted in the report.
- 14.3 Recognise the on-going financial and resource implications to the Council of tackling the emergency and requests that a monitoring report be brought to each subsequent meeting of the Executive providing details of on-going costs and approvals sought for necessary expenditure.
- 14.4 Approves a temporary one off payment to Support the Care sector at a cost of £1.3m as outlined in Para 4.14, and that decisions regarding the release of further funding are delegated to the Strategic Director of Health & Wellbeing in consultation with the Portfolio holder.
- 14.5 In relation to the to the Food Supply Chain as outlined in Para 5.5, delegates decisions regarding the release of further funding to the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio holder.

14.6 Requests that on-going dialogue be maintained between the Council and the Government in order to make the case to national decision makers for the impact of Covid-19 to be funded nationally with neutral impact on Council budgets.

14.7 Requests the Chief Executive to prepare a further report to the Executive setting out plans and proposals for the recovery of Bradford District from the impact of Covid-19.

## **15.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- Councils Revenue Estimates for 2020-21 Document R – Budget Council February 20<sup>th</sup> 2020.
- Report to Executive 24 March 2020 – Council's response to Covid-19
- Relevant papers from Gold, Silver and Bronze Command calls