

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET – 21 SEPTEMBER 2020
SUBJECT:	Croydon Together: Update on our ongoing response to COVID-19
LEAD OFFICER:	Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Tony Newman, Leader of the Council
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON: The COVID-19 pandemic continues across the globe. Whilst our focus is on recovery and ‘unlocking’, we remain alert to the risks of a resurgence in infection rates. The impact of the pandemic has been global and unprecedented. Our response has been wide ranging, covering all aspects of the Corporate Plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People live long, healthy, happy and independent lives: through our public health messaging, adult social care and support for vulnerable residents• Our children and young people thrive and reach their full potential: through our support for schools and families, particularly the most vulnerable• Business moves here and invests, our existing businesses grow: by paying government grants and support with business rates	
FINANCIAL IMPACT: There are no direct financial impacts arising from this report, which is for information. However, as previously reported, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the Council’s financial position.	
KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: Not a key decision	
1. RECOMMENDATIONS 1.1. That the Cabinet note the report and the activities of the Council working with partners to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 across Croydon	

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report follows previous reports to Cabinet, detailing the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had in Croydon, and how the Council and our partners were responding to support residents and businesses across the borough.
- 2.2 Since the previous report, daily cases of coronavirus have risen slightly, both nationally and locally. Focus remains on supporting Croydon to reopen safely as part of the national roadmap, the safe reopening of schools, and to ensure that effective control plans are in place should there be any localised outbreak.

- 2.3 This report provides updates on key activities, including support and preparation for schools to reopen safely on 1 September, and continued advice and guidance for businesses to operate safely. The report also provides an update on the local response to protecting the vulnerable population, following the government's decision to stop shielding at the end of July.
- 2.4 Local authorities are required to develop local outbreak control plans and this report provides a summary update of the approach at Croydon.
- 2.5 COVID-19 has had a significant financial impact on local government. This has been outlined in previous reports and highlighted regularly by the Local Government Association at a national level. Whilst this report makes reference to financial pressures created by the pandemic, it is covered by a separate report on this agenda.

3. LOCAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Cabinet meeting has received regular comprehensive reports providing updates on the response to the COVID-19 virus. These reports provided background information on the pandemic, including the latest information on infections across the UK and locally in Croydon.
- 3.2 Figures released on 27 August show the number of daily UK cases of coronavirus having risen to 1,522 – the highest tally since mid-June. Numbers of confirmed cases to date in Croydon (identified through pillar 1 and 2 of the government's mass testing programme) increased from 47 in July to 61 so far in August (as of 25 August)
- 3.3 In the two-week period from August 14-27, there were 58 new cases of COVID-19 reported in Croydon.
- 3.4 As these figures show, the virus is still circulating, and there has been a rise in number of cases per day at a national and local level. It is vital that residents and businesses continue to follow guidance carefully and protect themselves and others.

4. CROYDON RESPONSE - UPDATE

- 4.1 This section of the report provides brief updates on the key elements of the Croydon response. Croydon Council and partners within the Local Strategic Partnership (which is chaired by the Leader of the Council), have worked together to respond to the impact of COVID-19 in Croydon.
- 4.2 The Council's emergency response structure remain in place, including Gold and Silver coordination groups. The Borough Emergency Control Centre continues to support these structures, collecting, collating and disseminating information to support quick and informed decisions and to / from London structures. Dashboards maintained within the latest information across a range of indicators.

4.3 As the government has eased lockdown restrictions, we have moved from the emergency response to the recovery phase (whilst still ensuring that vulnerable residents are fully supported). This has included a strong focus on reopening our town district centres and schools safely, and supporting those that have been financially impacted by COVID-19.

Preparation for safe reopening of schools on 1 September

4.4 The Education Directorate has supported schools in following the updated guidance issued by the DfE on the return of all pupils to schools in September. This includes:

- Weekly contact with headteachers from School Effectiveness Partners & feedback of need discussed at the weekly Officers' and Advisers' Meetings.
- A toolkit for transition to September published in July relevant to Croydon schools with checklist of need and risk assessment. This document also sets out the offer of support that the Education Directorate hope to offer over the coming weeks and months.
- Chairs of Governors briefed on 16 July by Interim Head of Standards, Safeguarding & Inclusion.
- Consultative meetings with a cross section of headteachers - all headteachers based by locality and Professional Associations and Trade Unions.
- Clear communication lines with parents and support for schools in developing these.
- Continuing the family support programme for vulnerable families or those without recourse to public funds.
- Review of school risk register and support in risk mitigation.
- Acting as a conduit between Schools and the Regional Schools Commissioner
- Internal Action Plan and Risk Mitigation to support advice to schools.
- Year Group Transition planning support into Year R, Year 3, Year 7 and Year 12
- Regular meetings with the Regional Schools Commissioner on this topic.
- Meetings with TfL to discuss transport for pupils.

4.5 A task and finish group consisting of key officers and advisers has been coordinated. The possible spikes and support are below.

Spikes set against recent dips

- Emotional Behavioural need – separation anxiety; reaching out and reassure; Elective Home Education (continuing with home learning)
- Educational Health & Care Plan – pent up demand not anticipated, though spike in holidays usual – can SENCOs evidence? Deferred to autumn term?
- Assessment places – will pupils secure EHCP? Size of cohort?
- Not in Education Employment or Training – 6th form/colleges – will people go? Will college cases be viable?
- Post-lockdown safeguarding risks – teenage pregnancy, drugs
- Unhealthy lifestyles – food, exercise, obesity
- Post-lockdown trauma – raising awareness; bereavement; mental health; Domestic Abuse;
- Educational Psychology assessments – creative ways of assessing, unlikely to be in school soon, remote consultations
- Exclusions – unofficial exclusions; re-establishing routine an issue; re-teaching routines; alternatives;
- Impact of missed work - School refusal; catch up anxiety; behaviour
- **A key flowchart of action and guidance documents should there be any suspected or confirmed cases of SARS-CoV-2 in educational settings has been published to schools in July.**
- **All headteachers briefed by Public Health Consultants and the Director of Public Health.**

Public Health

4.6 Public Health refresh a weekly dashboard every Tuesday to coincide with the weekly release of the ONS registered death data. For council staff, the report is also published in Power BI allowing more interaction with the data and allowing users to change dates as required.

4.7 We are working to manipulate the new national data to allow for infection rate comparisons with other boroughs. PHE is planning a new weekly report of situations / outbreaks starting in September which will be added to this dashboard once available.

4.8 New Cases: Confirmed infections to date

** Confirmed cases in Croydon residents identified through pillar 1 and pillar 2 of the Government's mass testing programme. The most recent five days of data are provisional and subject to change*

Month	Number of confirmed cases
March	515
April	1058
May	229
June	44
July	47
August	61
TOTAL	1954

4.9 Registered deaths to date

* These figures represent the monthly number of deaths registered in Croydon residents which had any mention of COVID-19 on the death certificate by the date this occurred.

Month	Number of deaths
March	85
April	325
May	72
June	10
TOTAL	492

4.10 Health partners are working towards four phases in response to the pandemic. Phase 1: Response formerly began in March, moving to Phase 2: Restart Safely by the end of April and now Phase 3: Refresh and Reshape which began at the end of July. Phase 4 will be the post COVID response.

4.11 During Phase 2 health partners have been working to increase the COVID aftercare and support in community health services, primary care, and mental health, as well as restarting urgent services. Some examples of the services in place include:

- Community health services have been supporting the increase in patients who have recovered from COVID and who having been discharged from hospital need ongoing health support. This includes integrating a GP within the Rapid Response Team, the continuation of the strengthened discharge pathway, the piloting of a telehealth solution to support recovery and ensuring sufficient Intermediate Care capacity in the community. The Integrated Community Networks Plus (ICN+) Early Adopter has also gone live in Croydon North East (Thornton Heath), bringing together a multidisciplinary team with an integrated manager, proactive support around long term conditions and links into the local VCS and mental health services.
- Mental Health services have established all-age open access crisis services and helplines and promoted them locally. For existing patients known to mental health services community teams and voluntary sector have provided support on a regular basis with face to face appointments made available based on patient's needs. Children and Young people services offer online, skype and phone sessions, with access to information on the CCG and LA websites and shared with social care colleagues. Psychological support is available for all Croydon NHS and social care staff via IAPT with a dedicated number for quick access by NHS staff with targeted supported, advice and therapy.
- General practice continues to restore activity with an aim to return to usual levels where clinically appropriate. Practices are proactively contacting their vulnerable and high-risk patients with ongoing care needs and those whose care may have been delayed ensuring they are accessing needed care and treatment. They have adapted their premises to ensure social distancing and isolation areas are achieved. They are providing care via online and virtual consultation but also Face to Face where clinically

necessary. Practices are ensuring all people with learning disabilities have their annual health check and are addressing the backlog of childhood immunisations and cervical screening by using their capacity differently including the use of extended access appointment. Further support to care homes with complex care pharmacist within the Care Home multidisciplinary meeting (MDT) and Learning Disability pharmacist to support medication reviews of LD residents. Care home links with Primary Care have been strengthened to ensure care homes have use of digital tools to make referrals and manage digital consultations (e.g. Video, Phone, Email, Message, Face to Face) and care home access to records e.g. the Airedale service is in place.

Entering Phase 3 health colleagues are now redoubling its focus on the needs of all other patients too, while recognising the new challenges of overcoming our current COVID-related capacity constraints. This includes delivering the same or more elective activity than pre COVID in order to reduce the backlog. CHS is working collaboratively with other acute South West London Trusts to develop specific pathways; with CHS leading on the development of the gynaecology clinical network. The focus is:

- a. Accelerating the return to near-normal levels of non-COVID health services, making full use of the capacity available in the 'window of opportunity' between now and winter
- b. Preparation for winter demand pressures, alongside continuing vigilance in the light of further probable COVID spikes locally and possibly nationally.
- c. Doing the above in a way that takes account of lessons learned during the first COVID peak; locks in beneficial changes; and explicitly tackles fundamental challenges including: support for our staff, and action on inequalities and prevention.

An STP/ICS plan setting out priorities for the rest of 2020/21 is currently in development.

Health Inequalities

4.12 Prior to the outbreak the One Croydon planning included discussion about increasing scale and pace of all activities. COVID has however provided greater focus about where to focus and put in place activities that target some of the most vulnerable. Since the outbreak:

- Local Strategic Partnership is leading on an inequality's strategy, due by October 2020, which will reflect the learning from COVID 19. A draft plan is currently in review with short and long-term priorities. Whilst finalising the strategy actions being taken forward by organisations including communication and engagement, particularly with 'hard-to-reach' groups, and an emphasis on immunisation, diabetes control and weight loss.
- The Prevention Framework is also in development and will explicitly define our vulnerable and complex groups. It will also set out the focus of wider determinants of health as key driver of health inequalities.

- The strategy and framework will be underpinned by a review of Croydon's health inequalities which looks at who acquired and succumbed to COVID-19. It exposes the inequalities faced by local people and our staff.
- In addition, a mortality review has been undertaken demonstrating COVID-19 deaths through April and considering those areas to focus on. In addition, CHS has engaged with staff and will be refreshing its EDI Delivery Plan by September.
- The Croydon Local Out Break Control Plan sets out the learning from the pandemic and targets action for those identified as at increased risk.
- Work is underway to with the voluntary sector to review the VS offer and how to support resilience, to enable the scaling up of voluntary sector services in the community, support the most vulnerable groups as well as those - December 2020

Economic support

- 4.13 The Council has been quick to respond to the crisis. We have worked with our partners to instigate a number of steps to support our businesses and residents. The Council has engaged with London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP) and Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships; the GLA; Transport for London (TfL); London Councils; and South London Partnership about our response. We have spoken to more than 3,000 local businesses and have convened a business taskforce to understand the impact of the crisis, coordinate emergency interventions, and inform the initial development of a medium and long-term recovery plan. The taskforce comprises leading stakeholders from Croydon and London, including Croydon, Purley and Central Parade BIDs, the Federation of Small Businesses, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, London Growth Hub, Coast to Capital and LEAP.
- 4.14 5,898 Croydon businesses are being supported through 100% business rates relief in 2020-21 and/or a business grant of £10,000 or £25,000. 383 of these are businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors operating from properties with a rateable value of above £51,000, who are receiving the 100% rate relief but are not receiving a business grant. As at 26th August, 3,639 businesses (90.5% of eligible businesses) had received a total of £49.44m in business grants. 540 businesses have so far been supported through the Discretionary Grant fund, with grants of £1,000, £2,500, £5,000 and £25,000, totalling £2,336,000. Both schemes closed to applications on the 28th August 2020

Council funding and debt management

- 4.15 Loans: Croydon Enterprise Loan Fund enables businesses to access loans of up to £50,000. We are in the process of repurposing this loan fund and using the funding to deliver restart and resilience packages for local businesses.
- 4.16 Grants programmes were quickly established: as at 14 July 2020 Croydon Cultural Relief Fund has given £129,246 in grants to 38 organisations and the Emergency COVID Fund for voluntary and community sector groups has given grants to 39 groups totalling £205,661.
- 4.17 The Council as landlord has offered the option of rent deferment for a set period to qualifying tenants of its commercial property portfolio. The terms offered were as follows:

- All tenants will have the ability to pay on a monthly basis for an agreed term
- The Council will defer any enforcement action for late payment and not charge interest in respect of the March quarters rental payments and this will be reviewed for the June quarter
- Deferment of rent payment for an initial period of 3 months may be available to eligible businesses on a case by case basis and will require the completion of the attached application form. We will require payment by the end of the financial year of any agreed deferred rent.

Business Support

- 4.18 Information, advice and guidance on how to respond to the crisis and access government support has been provided by the Council through dedicated webpages, telephone support and newsletters; and through Croydon Business Network and the Cultural Business Network. Businesses have also been signposted to further support from business advice hubs, Local Enterprise Partnerships and the borough's three Business Improvement Districts.

External funding

- 4.19 We are recalibrating and refocussing existing external grants and funding to respond more effectively to the crisis and support recovery.
- 4.20 We are working with the GLA Pay it Forward team to facilitate free fundraising to help local businesses to secure trade by pre-selling vouchers, goods and services.

Employment support

- 4.21 We know that nationally low earners are seven times, under-25s are two-and-a-half times and women are a third more likely to work in a shutdown sector. A rise in precarious forms of employment is likely, including casual, short/fixed term and zero hour contracts. Self-employment is likely to grow due to the contraction of employment opportunities. These workers might have to suffer a significant reduction in income. Young people will require focussed interventions to prevent long term damage to this generation's prospects.
- 4.22 Croydon Works, the job brokerage service, has been getting in touch with all 3,600 registrants on its database to find out how they are faring and identify any employment needs. Additionally, Croydon Works has brokered new job opportunities to meet gaps in resources in health and social care, the police force and supermarkets, often supporting those who have lost their jobs due to the impact of COVID-19. Alongside the Council's Gateway Service, Croydon Works has given targeted individual support to prepare residents for the workplace and help them into work by collaborating with Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT) to deliver online sessions on employment skills.
- 4.23 CALAT delivers pre-entry level courses, qualifications at levels 1-4, and apprenticeships and work based training for employers. It provides courses suitable for all residents including people in disadvantaged groups, such as care leavers, people who are aged over 50 or long-term unemployed, and ex-offenders who may face additional barriers to access education, training and employment. CALAT is providing training in skills to enable people to apply for

jobs in growing sectors of the economy. We have brought together education providers from across Croydon who met to look at addressing the challenges and opportunities.

Supporting the safe reopening of our town and district centres

- 4.24 In line with Government guidelines, a number of non-essential retail outlets began opening from the 15 June with a further wave of openings of food service providers, pubs, bars and hotels opening from the 4 July. To prepare for this, Croydon Council worked in a cross-disciplinary way with a range of external partners to ensure the town and district centres are prepared and ready to welcome this reactivation in a safe and managed way.
- 4.25 For the town centre, weekly coordination meetings are held between key Council officers, the local Business Improvement District and the Police. Reporting into this group are wider meetings held with key stakeholders and partners, including Transport for London, Govia Thameslink Railways and other members of the Police.
- 4.26 Weekly coordination meetings are also held for the borough's district centres and high streets. As this area coverage is so wide, external partners are not invited to this meeting at the current time but meetings held with the BIDs, business and community networks and groups and ward members are fed into the discussions.
- 4.27 A weekly meeting focussed on licensing and enforcement also takes place to review the specific issues around supporting and enforcing businesses to follow the government's guidance; and to operate in a safe way, advised by the Police.
- 4.28 Updates on these activation plans are provided to the Council's Senior Leadership Team on a weekly basis with escalation of any key issues to the Council's Gold Coordination Group.
- 4.29 Through early consultation with our partners, the key themes for the activation plan were agreed as follows:
- Intelligence Gathering
 - Travel & Transport
 - Social Distancing Arrangements
 - Communications & Signage
 - PPE
 - Business Support
 - Street Cleansing & Waste Removal
 - Culture, Museum & Libraries
 - Community Safety
- 4.30 A number of work streams sit underneath these themes with clear ownership and timelines of each action established. A number of key activities have been undertaken to prepare for each stage of the re-openings, including analysis of the town centre and each district centre to identify key areas of concern or issues to be addressed.

- 4.31 We continue to work with the BIDs, local business networks and ward members to liaise with the stores open and planning to reopen to advise them on their roles and responsibilities with managing the government guidance on social distancing.
- 4.32 Meetings were held with transport providers (Transport for London; Govia Thameslink) to map out the measures needed to manage ingress and egress points to the town centre and district centres. This included looking at: potential re-routing of buses/trams around and within the town/district centre areas; possible closure of bus stops where social distancing will be challenging; speaking to GTR to understand the management of the pedestrian movements coming from/to East Croydon station; speaking to TfL about the management of the pedestrian movements coming from/to West Croydon Overground station; closure of some traffic lanes and movement of bus lanes to accommodate pavement widening. We are coordinating a communications campaign to share the key messages around social distancing with the messaging coming from TfL which will include a focus around our public transport nodes.
- 4.33 We have mapped the pedestrian routes between public transport nodes and 'anchor' stores to develop a routing and signposting strategy to manage pedestrian flow. This included understanding where ASB hotspots currently are/have the potential to be to ensure we can route pedestrian flows to avoid these.
- 4.34 The government guidance encourages people to walk or cycle wherever possible. This reduces the pressure on public transport and traffic, whilst also offering health benefits from exercise. We are therefore ensuring there is sufficient cycling access and cycle parking within and around the town centre to encourage more cycle access.
- 4.35 We know that some people will still travel by car, and we have therefore modelled traffic flow and potential congestion hotspots to consider traffic management interventions. This includes working with our construction logistics traffic management process to monitor vehicle access to construction sites and key gateway entry /exit points within the town centre at times of heavy traffic. We are reviewing parking capacity across the town centre in light of the need to reduce some on-street parking to make room for pedestrians.
- 4.36 We are working with Croydon BID and Croydon Voluntary Action to explore the opportunity to mobilise a team of volunteers to act as 'hosts' in the town centre (following the Olympic games makers model) to support the social distancing messages. This will give added assurance that people can visit the town centre safely.
- 4.37 Strong communications and engagement with businesses has been, and continues to be, critical. We have utilised regular Business newsletters to communicate and signpost to emerging government guidance and help businesses understand what changes they need to implement for safe opening and operation. In relation to licensed premises, Pubwatch meetings were held to explore specific issues for public houses reopening safely.
- 4.38 With the COVID-19 situation still unfolding, weekly monitoring of these action plans takes place through the Coordination Group to ensure flexibility and

adaptability of the key work streams should government guidance change over the weeks to come. Feedback will be used to identify any critical areas where levels of support may need to be reviewed

Adult services, care homes and shielding

Care Homes

- 4.39 Care homes remain a key focus in our pandemic response, whose vulnerable residents are at greater risk if they contract COVID-19. Croydon has the largest care home market in London, 50% larger than any other borough with 126 care homes (63 of whom support older people). Care Homes are reporting greater confidence in managing the impact of COVID-19 with increased availability of PPE and testing, roll out of more training via the CCG and greater staff expertise. Our support work for care homes is continuing with risk of localised outbreaks and the challenges of winter pressures. Our [care home support plan](#) published at the end of May is being updated taking into account [good practice](#) across the country. A report has also published by London Councils on [lessons learnt](#) on Care Homes
- 4.40 The increased testing in July and August has resulted in some positive results for residents and staff members. There has not been more than one positive case in an individual care home over the last three months suggesting that residents are being effectively isolated and infection control practice is being followed. Community transmissions have slowly increased in Croydon in mid-August so care homes are being reminded about the importance of sustaining infection prevention and control practice. The council are working with the Department of Health and Social Care to improve the national testing approach to ensure care homes have enough swab tests for residents and staff.
- 4.41 The council continues to monitor key data reported by homes daily and make regular calls to homes to see where extra support may be needed. The Care Home Information session still convenes weekly with a Public Health Consultant providing regular updates and answering questions, care homes sharing good practice around visiting, testing and use of the Infection Control Fund. Over £3 million has been distributed to all care homes in Croydon via this fund. This is in addition to sustainability funding and paying four weeks in advance.
- 4.42 Most care homes in Croydon have re-opened to visitors using outside space and separate rooms to do this safely. The council and health partners are supplying care homes with local information to help determine their local visitor policy.
- 4.43 **Croydon Care Home Comparison**
- Croydon has the 18th largest care home market (number of beds) in country and largest in London*
 - Croydon had the 35th highest number of excess care home deaths but 41st lowest proportion of excess deaths
 - Only one council with a larger care home market has better average CQC ratings
 - Croydon has third lowest rate of excess deaths in London

	Total number beds		Average CQC rating		Excess Care Home deaths	
Croydon / National rank*	3000	18th	2.84	27th	5.91%	41st
London / London rank	1109	1st	2.71	10th	9.32%	3rd
England average	1956		2.71		7.22%	

SOURCE: <http://datalobo.com/carehomes/> *some county councils appear to not be included as only 122 listed.

Shielding

- 4.44 A key area of work during the pandemic has been supporting our most vulnerable residents, including those that have been encouraged to shield and stay home at all times. The Council has used a variety of communication tools to contact them, including letters and written advice sent directly, telephone and text to contact everyone that is identified as needing to shield to confirm what support they require.
- 4.45 Support for vulnerable residents has been a partnership activity, with a network of voluntary and community groups across Croydon providing food, other essential supplies, shopping and befriending. The latter has been particularly important for residents that whose independence has been impacted by the pandemic.
- 4.46 The council put in place a pausing shielding workstream and team following the Government decision to end shielding from 31 July and contacted directly all those in receipt of government food supporting them with alternative arrangements. About 100 people were supported or signposted to other services, supermarket support or adult social care services and gateway services for financial support. Each resident received a letter with details of how to access support and our website was updated. The council received significant positive feedback from local residents about the support offer.
- 4.47 If the government upon advice of the chief medical officer reinstates shielding, the Local Authority will be required to comply with the Local Framework for Shielding, ensuring support to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents is in place in regard to food support, social inclusion and their wellbeing. Partnership working with the NHS and General Practice and direct contact with those asked to shield is required.

Gateway Services

- 4.48 All three existing Food Stops, a partnership between the Council, VCS and faith sector organisations, have continued to operate throughout COVID-19; at The Family Centre in New Addington, St Francis Church in Selsdon and Parchmore Methodist Church and Community Centre in Thornton Heath. A new Food Stop was launched in April at Old Lodge Lane Baptist Church (OLLBC) and they have each tweaked their service delivery in line with guidance such as implementing social distancing measures or introducing a delivery service. All Food Stops are going over and above, supporting over 240 households per week during the

pandemic, and our thanks go to all the staff and volunteers providing these services.

- 4.49 The Council continues to coordinate food deliveries from FareShare. We have scaled up from our pre-COVID-19 service of 2.3 tonnes of food coming in to Croydon per week, distributed to around 18 organisations via two existing Local Collection Points to 6.3 tonnes of food coming in each week, distributed to around 38 organisations via four Local Collection Points.
- 4.50 A local food transition plan is also in place.
- 4.51 Croydon Adult Support (the ASC Front Door) received 7787 contacts in May and June (4341 electronic requests and 3446 telephone calls), of those the team dealt with an average of 94% of them at the first point of contact ensuring that 71% of people received the right advice and information and the number of statutory assessments colleagues in older adults needed to carry out reduced by 40% from 254 to 153 increasing capacity in ASC to enable them to deal with the COVID response.

Registrars and bereavement services

- 4.52 The number of funerals has reduced significantly from the peak week of 11 May where the crematorium was operating at 97%. We are currently operating at 70% capacity which is slightly lower than usual for the time of year, this is likely due to COVID related deaths being brought forward by a few months.
- 4.53 Both Local Mortality Group and Coronial Mortality Group have changed frequency to fortnightly in line with the Excess Deaths Management Groups. Again frequency can be increased immediately as and when the need arises.
- 4.54 Risk assessments and plan has been agreed to make the Registrars section of the Town Hall safe and operate in accordance with government guidelines for the recommencement of birth registrations and notices of marriage. These resumed from 6 July and plans are in place to clear the backlog of approximately 1,200 unregistered births within the Borough over a 12 week period. (As of 16 August over 1000 birth appointments have been completed and 592 births remain outstanding). The same approach has been undertaken to prepare for wedding ceremonies and citizenship ceremonies which both began again in August and to increase the number of mourners at funerals.

Access Croydon and Contact Centre

- 4.55 Access Croydon reopened on 28 July for a limited number of pre-booked appointments. There is no drop in service as we handle all other enquires over the telephone or online as we have done throughout the pandemic and the services determine what the best course of action is and whether a face to face appointment is needed. Opening hours will remain the same (Monday – Friday, 9am – 4pm), and for the limited amount of people returning to the space, there are safety measures in place to reduce the risk of infection.
- 4.56 Whilst shielding came to an end at the beginning of August 2020 the dedicated COVID hotline and email contact remains in place to assist with urgent enquiries and to support residents that need support with food and medical supplies if they are being asked to quarantine under the track and trace scheme or have tested

positive for COVID 19. We have partnered up DEFRA to be able to get residents online supermarket slots if they are able to themselves. Calls to the general contact centre for July were at the same levels as the previous year.

Updated figures for Enablement

- 4.57 In response to these areas of demand we have refocused our resources to offer fast turnaround on the impacts of COVID-19 on residents. From 23 March to 31 July, we have:
- Tripled our resource to meet new requests for free school meals. (3,800 assessments in April to July 2020, compared to 1,030 in same period last year)
 - Doubled our resource to meet the quadrupled demand for food vouchers and amenities. We have provided £49,110 in food vouchers, £10,135 emergency amenities funding, and £103,978 to facilities moves and furniture in new homes.
 - Opened our welfare rights hotline from 3 part days to 5 full days a week. Since doing this they have received 1,158 requests for support.
 - Provided advice and guidance to residents on the options available to them to protect their jobs/income/homes during lockdown. Our discretionary support team have received 2,885 phone calls and emails from residents in need.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- 4.58 The supply of PPE has been a global issue during the pandemic, and subject to significant media coverage. The increased demand for key items such as gloves, face masks and aprons has created problems for suppliers and providers.
- 4.59 The Council has provided advice and guidance on the use of PPE, in accordance with the government guidelines. This has included guidance for our own staff who continue to operate front line services, and key partners and providers (e.g. care homes).
- 4.60 A dedicated PPE team is in place to coordinate orders, secure PPE supplies and distribute stock. The team are also responding to enquiries, offers of donations (e.g. from local businesses) and requests for emergency supplies via a dedicated inbox.
- 4.61 The council continues to have sufficient PPE stocks to meet the needs of council staff and despite significant demand at no stage have services been impacted by a lack of PPE. Additional stocks of face masks have also been sourced for staff who are returning to work and planning to commute using public transport.
- 4.62 In addition, and where required, emergency PPE supplies have also been provided 7 days a week to providers at no cost (including care homes, home care providers, children's residential homes & supported living providers). As at August 3, nearly 290,000 emergency items of PPE had been given to providers (over 150 providers in total). Since July the council has been encouraging care providers to sign up to the national emergency PPE portal where they can access deliveries of emergency PPE at no cost. The portal was established by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) partnered with eBay, Clipper Logistics and Royal Mail.

- 4.63 We have also supported 100 providers to purchase larger stocks of PPE through a pan London procurement route.
- 4.64 In preparation for schools opening more widely in June the council provided mainstream schools with packs of PPE essentials, to use in line with government guidance for education settings. The council has also provided additional support to special schools sourcing and distributing over £20,000 of PPE to special schools and enhanced learning provision settings since April.
- 4.65 The London Resilience Forum (LRF) has drafted a PPE strategy for London, which Croydon responded to on 11 August. The LRF recommends contingency arrangements for accessing emergency PPE across London via LRF route are maintained in the medium term for a minimum period of 12 months to ensure a reserve supply is in place in readiness for a potential a second wave or new pandemic. It also calls upon the government to secure the future of the national emergency PPE portal and reimburse to local authorities for PPE purchased on behalf of care providers.

Business and supplier support

- 4.66 The Council has been working with our contracted suppliers during the COVID-19 outbreak to ensure services and supplies to the Council and people of Croydon are maintained, and that provider failure is avoided where possible. We established a Supplier Relief Framework to respond to requests from providers and to identify the support available according to the individual circumstances of the provider and nature of the service. In total we have supported 55 providers through the Framework, and continue to work with those providers to transition out of the emergency response phase and review service delivery over the coming year. A Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 02/04 was issued at the end of June which updates and builds on provisions contained in PPN 02/20, extending supplier relief to 31 October 2020.
- 4.67 As the lock-down restrictions have started to ease, we have been supporting local businesses by providing information and guidance on sourcing PPE on our Value Croydon website, including tips on what to look out for when buying PPE, and how to assess their requirements

COVID-19 Outbreak Control Plans

- 4.68 With the relaxation of national lockdown restrictions and the implementation of the Government Test and Trace Programme, councils are required to implement measures to prevent, identify and contain COVID–19 outbreaks.
- 4.69 These local measures will build on existing local health protection plans and governance arrangements. The Director of Public Health is responsible for defining the measures and producing Outbreak Control plans but the formulation and delivery of these plans requires effective partnership work and stakeholder engagement.
- 4.70 The Test and Trace Programme is based on the premise that with lower infection rates and increased testing capacity, testing people with symptoms and tracing their contacts is an appropriate way to contain coronavirus without the need for such stringent population wide lockdown restrictions

4.71 The Test and Trace service includes four functions to control the virus: test, trace, contain and enable. People with symptoms will be encouraged to contact the NHS Track and Trace Service and will be sent a home test kit. If the test is positive, they will be required to self-isolate for 7 days. They will also be asked to provide details of significant contacts they have had; these contacts will also be required to self-isolate for 14 days. Local outbreaks will be managed by Public Health England in partnership with Local Authorities.

Croydon's Local Outbreak Control Plan

4.72 The purpose of Croydon's Outbreak Control plan is to save lives and reduce health inequalities by limiting the spread of infection in people living and working in Croydon from COVID-19.

4.73 The specific objectives of the Croydon Outbreak Control Plan are:

- **Governance:** Provide multi-agency oversight and accountability across Croydon through the appropriate governance structure for the development and delivery of this Outbreak plan.
- **Outbreak management:** Support settings including care homes, schools and high-risk locations to prevent infection and to manage an outbreak to stop onward spread and to mitigate the consequences
- **Vulnerable people:** To help people in our communities who are most vulnerable to protect themselves from infection and to enabling them self-isolation when required.
- **Communications and engagement:** Build public confidence and trust in the track and trace approach and the system's ability to respond appropriately and respectfully to outbreaks of COVID-19.
- **Data and intelligence.** To provide assurance that we can identify cases, outbreaks and hotspots rapidly, monitor their management, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and meet local, regional and national reporting requirements. Further to understand the impact on different communities especially those who are at higher risk.
- **Testing** – To enable those that most need it to access testing through the national offer and the development of a local approach that complements this.
- **Contact tracing** – to supplement the national contact tracing system with local support and capacity drawing on knowledge of our local population.

4.74 A local multi-agency COVID-19 Health Protection Board and a public facing COVID-19 Engagement Board have been established to oversee the delivery of the Local Authority Outbreak Control responsibilities.

4.75 In order to ensure the Council and its partners are prepared to manage any local outbreaks, they have been involved in scenario planning exercises. These have initially focused on outbreaks in Care Homes and Schools and in subsequent weeks will focus on other high risk locations. The aim of scenario planning is to identify the key steps, actions, roles and responsibilities in preventing and managing an outbreak. A support offer for vulnerable residents required to isolate is prepared and scenario testing of this being carried out, alongside any re-instatement of support to the shielded group should these restrictions be reapplied.

- 4.76 This has led to the development of locally agreed Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and flowcharts detailing the steps that will be taken in an outbreak situation.
- 4.77 The key message from the Director of Public Health continues to the importance of good hygiene practices to continue to minimise the risk of COVID-19. Hand washing and social distancing remain key tools in tackling the pandemic.

Travel and transport

- 4.78 Croydon Council responded quickly to the COVID-19 Pandemic with an initial programme of measures implemented on streets in Croydon which included:
- **Low Traffic Streets:** Creating low traffic streets by stopping through traffic on some roads. Access is maintained for residents, deliveries and other essential journeys. This is designed to reduce traffic making it safer for residents to use the road near their homes while maintaining social distancing. Cyclists are exempt from the temporary closures giving them access to quieter streets.
 - **Expanded footways:** Creating more temporary footway space at narrow pinch points giving pedestrians and cyclists more space to help keep a social distance. This involves sections of the carriageway or on-street parking bays being cordoned off to provide more space for pedestrians and or cyclists.
 - **Speed awareness:** New signs reminding drivers to watch their speed put up in streets across the Borough.
- 4.79 At the same time a larger programme was developed (building on the first and responding to TfL's Streetspace Plan for London). The urgency associated with the bidding process for the TfL scheme meant that the Croydon bids totalling £1,720,000 had to be agreed under authority delegated to the Executive Director, Place.
- 4.80 The resulting programme looked to create cycling and walking routes away from the busiest street corridors, where possible. On these busy corridors, the competition for space is greatest. It is also where our district and local centres tend to sit and where space to facilitate social distancing within these centres is a priority. The resulting Programme includes:
- Semi-segregated cycle lanes on the London Road from Thornton Heath Pond to Handcroft Road (supported by a 20mph limit), with a cycle and pedestrian 'bypass' of the very busy southern end of London Road via a Low Traffic Neighbourhood to be achieved by closures (allowing cycle permeability) of Handcroft Road and Parsons Mead.
 - Linked Low Traffic Neighbourhoods from the north east of the Borough (Crystal Palace and South Norwood) to create quieter walking and cycling corridors into the Town Centre. These are to be largely created by means of street closures which allow cycle permeability, but at Auckland Road and Davidson Road they would also permit buses to pass.
 - Semi segregated cycle lanes along much of the Brighton Road from Purley towards the Croydon Town Centre. The proposals include retaining the bus lanes but these operating 24/7, and the introduction of a 20mph speed limit.
 - More social distancing space at local shopping parades

- 4.81 At the time of drafting this £310,000 and had been awarded to Croydon for the majority of the first phase programme and a decision is still awaited regarding the larger second programme and funding request.
- 4.82 In line with our Air Quality Action Plan the Council has brought forward the implementation 10 new School Streets on 1 September 2020, which adds to the pre-existing 11 schemes and now cover 26 schools. This represents some 20% of schools in the borough. It is planned to introduce a further 10 schemes in 2021/22 and 10 schemes in 2022/23, which will by then reach about 40% of schools in the Borough.
- 4.83 The School Street is not an isolated device. It synergistically supports the educational and information efforts of the Council's Road Safety and School Travel Planners, including their coordination with the TfL STARS and Living Street's WOW Travel Tracker initiatives. School survey data indicate that the pilot schemes have contributed to between 15% and 25% reduction in car use and between 23% and 65% uptake in active travel – depending on the prior local prevalence. The car use reduction alleviates traffic and parking pressure on the road network around the schools and thereby benefits all residents.
- 4.84 Unexpectedly, the School Street schemes have coincided with 24% to 47% switch from public transport to active travel. This is assumed to be a transferable effect, from the School Street and associated education setting an active travel trend that indirectly influences public transport use. This is an important contributor in context of the COVID-19 public transport situation.
- 4.85 Walking and cycling to school benefit children's physical and mental health, wellbeing and resilience. A national survey of head teachers at schools with School Street schemes suggests that children who walk or cycle arrive at school more alert, happier and ready to work (UK100, August 2019). In Croydon, the head teachers also report improved punctuality and uptakes in breakfast clubs. There are good indicators that School Streets support health and wellbeing, and that they can further contribute to schooling opportunities for children.

5 FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 COVID-19 has created significant financial pressures for local government, with increased expenditure and reduction in income. The resources required to support our pandemic response has also caused delay in delivering savings within the 2020/21 budget.
- 5.2 Whilst the Government has provided additional grant funding to local authorities, the LGA has indicated that, nationally, the estimated financial impact is four or five times the amounts committed by government so far. As such, Croydon's allocation within this does not cover the anticipated financial impact on the Council.
- 5.3 The financial impact of COVID-19 is set out fully in a separate report to this meeting.

- 5.4 The Council continues to maintain and manage a dedicated COVID-19 risk register, with regular reports to Gold to ensure the risks are well managed and mitigating actions is taken

Approved by: Lisa Taylor, Director of Finance, Investment and Risk

6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The Head of Litigation and Corporate Law makes the following comments on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance.
- 6.2 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 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 to social care, mental health, registration of deaths, inquests, the regulation of investigatory powers, gatherings events and premises, 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 the legal service as the lock down is eased and businesses begin to re-open.

Approved by: Sandra Herbert, Head of Litigation and Corporate Law on behalf of the Director of Law and Governance & Deputy Monitoring Officer.

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 7.1 COVID-19 has had a very direct impact on people across Croydon, including staff.
- 7.2 As well as our responsibilities to residents, we have a duty of care to all staff. The Council has continued to ensure that staff have the guidance and equipment they need to carry out their work safely. This includes PPE.
- 7.3 Since 1 July, the Council has increased the staff operating from Bernard Wetherill House. Every member of staff completed a risk assessment with their line manager to identify those that needed, or would benefit from, returning to the office for work. The building has been redesigned with social distancing, enhanced cleaning and one way systems to minimize risks and support staff safety and wellbeing.
- 7.4 It is anticipated, however, that most staff will continue to work remotely wherever they can, and in line with Government guidance.

Approved by: Sue Moorman, Director of Human Resources

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (the Equality Duty) in designing policies and planning / delivering services.
- 8.2 The three aims of the Equality Duty are to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
 - Advance equality of opportunity
 - Foster good community relations between people who share any of the defined Protected Characteristics and those who do not.
- 8.3 Whilst there is direct and some indirect inequalities emerging in the wider community because of COVID-19, there are none arising from the content of this update report.
- 8.4 As set out in the previous Cabinet reports, the impact of the virus is far reaching. The combined and unprecedented impact on the local economy, on both businesses and the workforce, will continue to exacerbate inequalities in some areas, with some groups disproportionately impacted for the short, medium and long term. Data is increasingly emerging highlighting that younger people are more likely to experience reduced earnings or increased unemployment and furlough due to COVID-19.
- 8.5 Significant actions have been taken to safeguard vulnerable residents and certain population groups. In addition, the new Sustainable Croydon Economic Renewal Board has equality and inclusion as a core element of its remit.
- 8.6 The Government commissioned a review, led by the NHS and Public Health England regarding the disproportionate impact on BAME residents. It is apparent that the reason for the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME residents is the underlying inequalities within our communities. The Council remains committed to tackling inequality. We are in the process of undertaking public engagement and consultation to agree renewed equality objectives for Croydon. We are also working with partners, with a joint equality and inclusion group being established by the Local Strategic Partnership.

Approved by Barbara Grant on behalf of Yvonne Okiyo, Equalities Manager

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 9.1 There has been a noticeable improvement in air quality and pollution levels across Croydon (as well as London, UK and globally). This provides an opportunity to take action in order to maintain the improved environment.
- 9.2 The Council has introduced several low traffic initiatives that temporarily reallocate road space to better reflect the current use patterns and to create safer spaces for walking and cycling. These initiatives included Healthy streets, which closed streets prone to rat running and excessive speeds, and Exercise zones, with closures for part of the day to help residents enjoy traffic free environments. Further details are set out in the report.

9.3 The Croydon Commission for Climate Change has held its first meeting and at the request of the Leader of the Council, will focus its attention on short and medium term actions over the next 3 years.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

10.1 The police have continued to report a reduction in many crime rates during the COVID-19 pandemic.

10.2 Domestic abuse (physical and non-physical) and sexual violence has remained a key concern during the pandemic. The lockdown restrictions, limiting opportunities for people to leave their home also increased the risk that it is harder for victims to report crimes or request help.

10.3 The FJC service has continued to be delivered throughout the lockdown. The service expanded to offer 7 days a week provision, to maximize the opportunity for anyone to contact them for support.

10.3 The Council has worked with partners and issued regular communications to raise awareness of the services available.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

11.1 This report is for information only.

12. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 This report is for information only. Therefore there are no options to consider.

13. DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 WILL THE SUBJECT OF THE REPORT INVOLVE THE PROCESSING OF 'PERSONAL DATA'?

NO

13.2 The Director of Policy & Partnership advises that this report provides updates only, with no decisions that impact on data.

Approved by: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership

CONTACT OFFICER: Gavin Handford, Director of Policy & Partnership

APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT: None

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None