



Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel

Scrutiny of the Council's COVID-19 Response

Date: 21 July 2020

Key decision: No

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Chief Executive

Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to provide an update and assurance to the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel about the Council's response to COVID-19. The report provides a summary of the overall local response to COVID-19, with a focus on critical services.

The Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel is recommended to:

- Note this update on the Council's response to COVID-19.
- Consider how they might wish Overview and Scrutiny to take forward the work to receive updates and assurances about the Council's response to COVID-19 in the light of the Select committees restarting from September.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

- **30 April 2020:** Council Urgency Committee agreed a programme of Council meetings in light of the Council's focus on responding to the immediate challenges of COVID-19.
- **5 May 2020:** Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel (OSBP) agrees an approach to receive a monthly COVID-19 update item that provides a high-level strategic overview of the Council's response to COVID-19
- **26 May 2020:** [OSBP discusses the first update paper of the Council's response to COVID-19.](#)
- **23 June 2020:** [OSBP discusses the second update paper of the Council's response to COVID-19.](#)
- **September 2020:** Select Committees resume, agreeing work programmes for the rest of the municipal year.

1. Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update and assurance for the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel (OSBP) about the Council's response to COVID-19. The report provides a summary of the overall local response to COVID-19, with a focus on critical services. The report also responds to member requests for additional specific information as provided by OSBP Members to the Overview and Scrutiny Manager.
- 1.2. Since the last update report to OSBP in June, critical services have remained stable. This report provides background information about the Council's critical services and summarises any key updates or changes to services since the last report.
- 1.3. The Council's critical services in the context of COVID-19 are:
 - [Shielding](#)
 - [Public Health](#)
 - [Adult Social Care](#)
 - [Children and Young People's Services](#)
 - [Bereavement](#)
 - [Environmental Services](#)
 - [Housing](#)
 - [Finance](#)
 - [Corporate and other essential support services.](#)
- 1.4. All Business Panel members were given an opportunity to put forward points of particular strategic interest in relation to this item which have been considered and addressed in writing this report.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel is recommended to:
 - Note this update on the Council's response to COVID-19
 - Consider how they might wish Overview and Scrutiny to take forward the work to receive updates and assurances about the Council's response to COVID-19 in the light of the Select committees restarting from September.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The content of this report is consistent with all the Council's corporate priorities (as outlined in the Corporate Strategy 2018-22) as the need to protect the health and wellbeing of all our residents (particularly the most vulnerable) at the current time underpins the delivery of every commitment within the strategy. However, the recommendations are particularly relevant under the priority of:
 - *Delivering and defending: health, social care and support* – ensuring everyone receives the health, mental health, social care and support services they need
- 3.2. The Coronavirus Act (2020) sets out the temporary emergency measures that enable public bodies, such as local authorities, the NHS and police to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. These measures are wide-ranging and involve the establishment of new powers and duties as well as changes to existing powers and duties.

4. Background

- 4.1. On 5 May, OSBP agreed that all formal scrutiny activity be channelled through the

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Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel, which will receive a standing item at each meeting to provide members and the public with a high-level strategic overview and assurance about the Council's response to COVID-19. The committee's approach to this item was agreed as being focused on:

- How can our intervention have a tangible, positive outcome
- How can we provide immediate support to the Council's operational response
- How can we illuminate and improve decision making.

4.2. [On 26 May, an update paper was presented to OSBP providing an overview of the Council's response to COVID-19 to date.](#)

4.3. [On 23 June, a follow-up paper was presented to OSBP providing an update on critical services and the Council's overall response to COVID-19.](#)

4.4. This paper follows on from the paper presented to OSBP on 23 June, and provides an update on critical services and addresses strategic areas of interest as put forward by members of OSBP in advance of the meeting.

4.5. In September, Overview and Scrutiny Select Committees are due to resume. Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel will continue to exercise its function to handle call-in of executive decisions and coordinate and approve the work programmes of select committees.

5. Lewisham Council's response to COVID-19

5.1. On 11 March, the Council activated emergency measures to respond to COVID-19. Council Gold and a borough-wide COVID Committee Groups were established, both working to a shared strategy and objectives as set out in the May and June reports to OSBP.

5.2. The Council established an incident response team, engaging the entire senior leadership and appointing a single point of contact – a 'Gold Director' – to lead on the Council's operational response to COVID-19. Three working groups were established to coordinate the response to Coronavirus in Lewisham:

- **Council Gold:** focused on strategic direction of the Council's response
- **Council Silver:** focused on the operational delivery of this response
- **COVID Committee:** focused on ensuring a coordinated borough-wide response with our key partners.

5.3. In addition to the Council's own emergency response reporting and decision-making arrangements, the Chief Executive has been participating in London-wide arrangements to respond to emergencies which is coordinated by London Resilience.

5.4. Lewisham has taken a "One Council" approach in responding to challenges posed by COVID-19. The entire Senior Leadership Team, that is Executive Directors and Directors, has been involved with the coordination and delivery of our response which has been essential to the effectiveness and continued smooth running of our critical services.

Emerging recovery plans

5.5. Governance arrangements for the coordination and delivery of 'Recovery' from COVID-19 are in development.

5.6. It is proposed that the recovery approach will focus on: the Council's internal recovery with a focus on ways of working, resources and service redesign, and on the borough, focusing on local economic recovery, place-shaping and community resilience.

5.7. At the June meeting of OSBP, members discussed the anchoring principles

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underpinning the Council's recovery and a fifth principle has been added to reflect Members' views.

5.8. Our recovery will be underpinned by the following principles:

- Tackling widening social, economic and health inequalities
- Protecting and empowering our most vulnerable residents
- Ensuring the Council's continued resilience, stability and sustainability
- Enabling residents to make the most of Lewisham the place
- **Collaborating and working together with our communities and partners across the borough**

5.9. Officers' emerging thoughts on recovery is that recovery will be staggered over three phases.

1. Easing Lockdown : Spring/Summer
2. Transition : Autumn/Winter
3. Reinvention : Autumn/Winter onwards

5.10. These phases are likely to overlap and, given the uncertainty of the ongoing situation, it is probable that timescales will need revision as we move forwards, especially if there is a further spike in infections or local lockdowns are needed.

Phase One - Easing Lockdown

5.11. The aims of phase one are:

- To deliver a collective and coordinated return to a new normal
- To protect critical services
- To retain agile working practices and prepare the Council for longer-term change
- To understand and effectively manage changes in demand and risk as a result of lockdown
- To promote good public health and minimise spread of infection
- To continue to respond and prepare for to future waves of COVID-19
- To support staff and promote staff wellbeing

5.12. The immediate focus of recovery is managing a coordinated easing of lockdown to ensure Council services remain safe for residents and for staff.

5.13. To date, officers have focused on implementing robust and consistent social distancing measures in Council sites that are still in use, and to provide practical and wellbeing support for staff. A review has been carried out of non-critical services to assess capacity, anticipated impact on demand and working arrangements as lockdown eases. Active Council buildings have undergone thorough a risk assessment and adaptation to ensure that critical workers who are sometimes or always required in the office can work in a safe environment, compliant with government guidance.

5.14. Officers are also focused on ensuring that both critical and non-critical services that have been running at a reduced operation during lockdown are gradually and safely reopened where it is appropriate to following a thorough COVID-specific risk assessment and in accordance with the aims and principles of our recovery approach.

5.15. We are still in Phase One of our recovery from COVID-19, preparing to move to Phase Two – Transition.

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Phase Two - Transition

5.16. The high-level aims of Phase Two are:

- To understand the lived experiences of COVID-19 on our residents
- To strengthen and embed our connection with residents
- To understand and respond to direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on our communities, services, local economy and the Council
- To engage and work together with our residents and partners to develop a long term vision for Lewisham, the place
- To stabilise and reset budget and service plans for 20/21
- To use insight from our residents and local intelligence to identify and scope service redesign to meet the needs of our communities
- To inform, engage and support staff through transition, using their insights and experiences to develop our recovery planning
- To ensure ongoing resilience and capacity to respond to ongoing or additional public health issues

5.17. Officers have conducted an internal, interim review of the response to COVID-19 so far and identified a number of lessons learned which will inform and shape ongoing recovery development as well as inform our response to future waves of COVID-19.

5.18. The table below provides a summary of the initial lessons learned from our response to COVID-19. It should be noted that this is internally-focused, interim and isn't a complete review. Further work is needed to consult more widely with staff, Members and the community.

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<i>What went well:</i>	<i>What didn't go as expected:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our staff and residents can respond well to change at pace when there is a common goal and shared purpose. • Visible, empathetic leadership, making clear and well communicated decisions, was important both externally and internally • Clear, consistent and regular communications support staff, Members and residents to feel reassured, well-informed and safer. • Working as a strong, collective and collaborative team leads to better decision making and better outcomes. • Agreeing principles and strategic objectives for how we work has led to a more coordinated and strategic response. • Staff have benefitted from volunteering and closer working with residents. • It is possible, and in our shared interests, to work together across organisational boundaries with key partners and organisations in the borough. • The Council's involvement in London-wide planning and discussions has benefitted decision making and horizon scanning. • Some elements of service delivery has worked effectively through remote channels. • Working from home arrangements have largely worked well. • We continued to deliver all of our critical services through the peak of the pandemic. • Our residents have had to stay in the borough, to make the most of their space and local environment. • Residents have found ways to stay active using bikes, parks and open spaces. • Our communities are largely empowered and self-sufficient - they have pulled together to support each other. Yet we know existing inequalities will be widening. • The voluntary sector has worked in unprecedented partnership, delivering vital services to our most at-risk residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping all Members informed and involved in the ongoing response was initially challenging due to the sheer scale and pace in the first couple of weeks • Our data management and reporting was not always consistent across the Council. • Our initial communications plan was not fit for purpose in a crisis situation. • We often felt on the back-foot and/or in the dark when it came to government announcements. • Not all staff were equipped to work from home at short notice. • There are still technical issues with our IT. • Our relationship with local businesses was not as established as it needed to be. • Not all areas of the Council responded with the pace and urgency needed in the situation. • Business continuity plans were not consistently used across services. • Unnecessary bureaucracy and lack of streamlined processes is still an issue.

Broadly, we have met the objectives of our response strategy:

- We have focused our resources on critical services which support our most vulnerable residents.
- We have reduced or stopped our non-critical services, redeploying hundreds of staff to support critical services.
- We have worked in close partnership with our partner agencies in the borough as well as with other local authorities across London.
- We have worked in collaboration with our voluntary and community partners to provide support to our communities. We have administered government funding to businesses in the borough, but we know there is more we can and need to do to support our local businesses and the local economy.
- Our initial communications strategy was not fit for purpose, but we have since developed and implemented a stronger, more confident communications plan.
- Our ward members have played a key role in the response to COVID-19, providing reassurance and confident community leadership to support residents.
- While COVID-19 has had a huge impact on the Council's usual operations, we have as best as possible minimised disruption to infrastructure and business.
- We are now looking to facilitate recovery and the return to normality.

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- 5.19. Using these lessons learned, officers have identified key, immediate tasks that the Council will need to undertake, at pace, in the short to medium term, in order to be fully equipped and prepared to tackle the serious long-term impacts that COVID-19 has had in Lewisham. It will be necessary to review our budget position for 2020-21 and put in place transition service plans for the short to medium term. We will need to conduct a thorough analysis of the impact of COVID-19 both on the borough and the Council. Officers are currently developing this analysis, working with partners across the borough to produce one clear impact assessment for Lewisham. As part of this impact assessment, it will be necessary to engage widely with our residents to further understand their unique and varied experience of COVID-19. It is also important to continue to consult, engage and empower staff to capture their insights, learning and experiences of COVID-19.
- 5.20. This data and insight from our communities, staff, Members and partners will provide a robust evidence base which will inform and shape the delivery of recovery in Phase Three – Reinvention.

Phase Three – Reinvention

- 5.21. The findings from the assessment and consultation stages of Phase Two will inform a longer term phase of service redesign according to the anchoring principles as set out above.

Council staff redeployment and community volunteering

- 5.22. Community volunteering programmes and the Council's own staff redeployment scheme have played a critical role in the borough's response to COVID-19. The Council's internal staff scheme has been essential in maintaining the delivery of critical services and ensuring organisational resilience. Likewise, members of the community have displayed enormous goodwill and generosity, with thousands of people signing up to volunteer to support vulnerable people across the borough.
- 5.23. Community volunteering efforts are led by Lewisham Local, working with the Council, Voluntary Services Lewisham, AGE UK Lewisham & Southwark and Lewisham Food bank to coordinate a support offer for vulnerable people who are isolated due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Lewisham Local continues to provide food parcels alongside other support such as befriending.

Mortality in Lewisham

- 5.24. There are two primary sources of information on COVID-19 mortality in all settings in Lewisham – Office of National Statistics (ONS) and Lewisham Registered Deaths.
- 5.25. ONS data is currently the only official, verified source of COVID-19 deaths registered in the UK that is available down to a local authority level. The data is published fortnightly and the numbers will therefore differ to the local registered deaths data that is available prior to verification by ONS. [This data is publically available from the ONS website.](#)
- 5.26. The Public Health Team now routinely receive details of all deaths registered at Lewisham Registry Office on a weekly basis. This information is considered highly confidential and sensitive. It is also shared before the official data verification process undertaken by ONS and for these reasons it is not for wider publication. Public Health Officers have produced an analysis of the records of deaths associated with COVID-19 in Lewisham. Although it is not possible to share the full detail of the analysis, a summary of the key findings is provided below.

Analysis of Lewisham Registered Deaths Data

- 5.27. The following summary is based on analysis of deaths associated with COVID-19 registered with Lewisham Registration Office between 01/01/2020 –15/05/2020
- 5.28. Demographic analysis confirms that mortality from COVID-19 impacts population

groups in Lewisham disproportionately, matching the patterns that have been identified nationally and internationally:

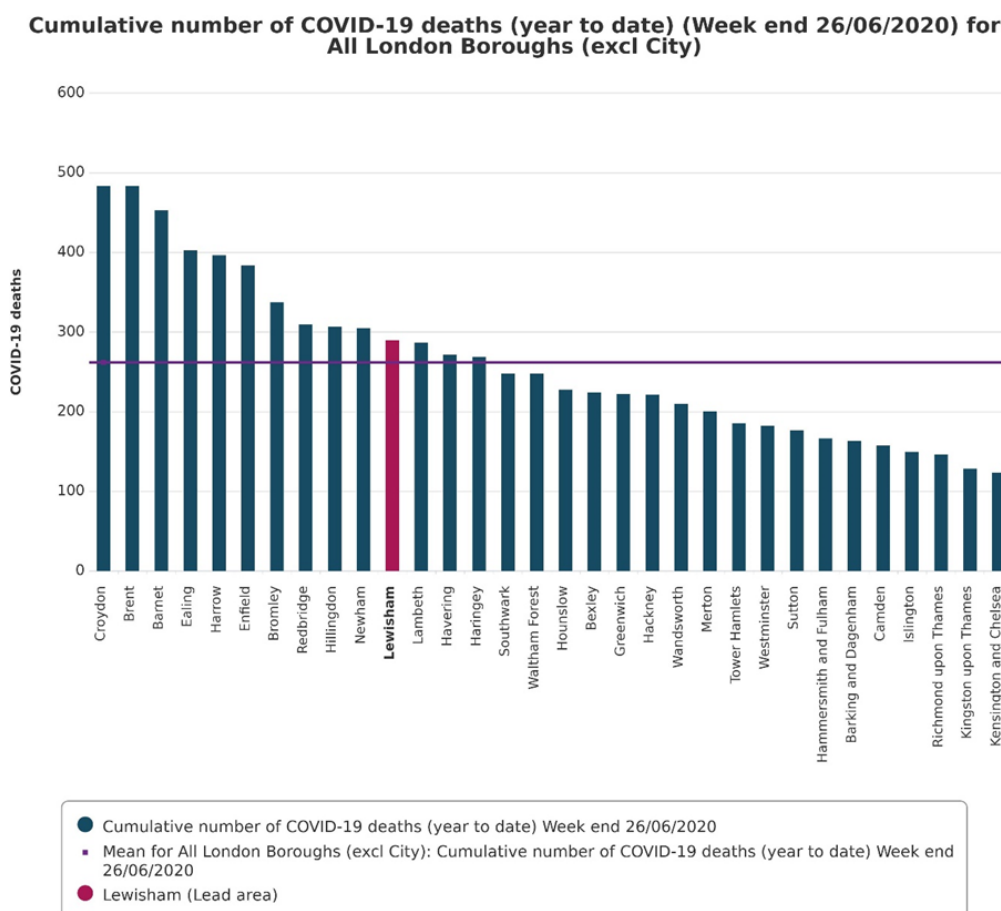
- Men and women aged 50 and above have an increased risk of mortality & the gender difference in mortality risk increases with age
- Lewisham residents born in the Americas and the Caribbean, Africa or the Middle East & Asia have a significantly higher death rate than people born in either the UK or Europe.
- Those living in the most deprived areas of Lewisham have considerably higher rates of death from COVID-19 than those living in the least deprived areas
- 20% of registered COVID-19 deaths in Lewisham were residents who normally live in care homes. Only 9% of registered deaths actually occurred in a care home.

5.29. This analysis will be updated at the end of July to incorporate COVID-19 associated deaths registered from mid-May to mid-July. It is unlikely that the findings will be different to those in the original analysis. The additional data should help to clarify and confirm some of the disproportionality in mortality risk for sub-populations in Lewisham.

Analysis of ONS COVID-19 Mortality Data

5.30. A total of 290 deaths from COVID-19 have been registered in Lewisham and verified by ONS up to 26th June.

5.31. The graph below shows how Lewisham numbers of COVID-19 deaths compare to those in London between 20/03/20 and 26/06/20.



Source:
Office for National Statistics

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5.32. Lewisham has the 11th highest cumulative number of deaths from COVID-19 of all

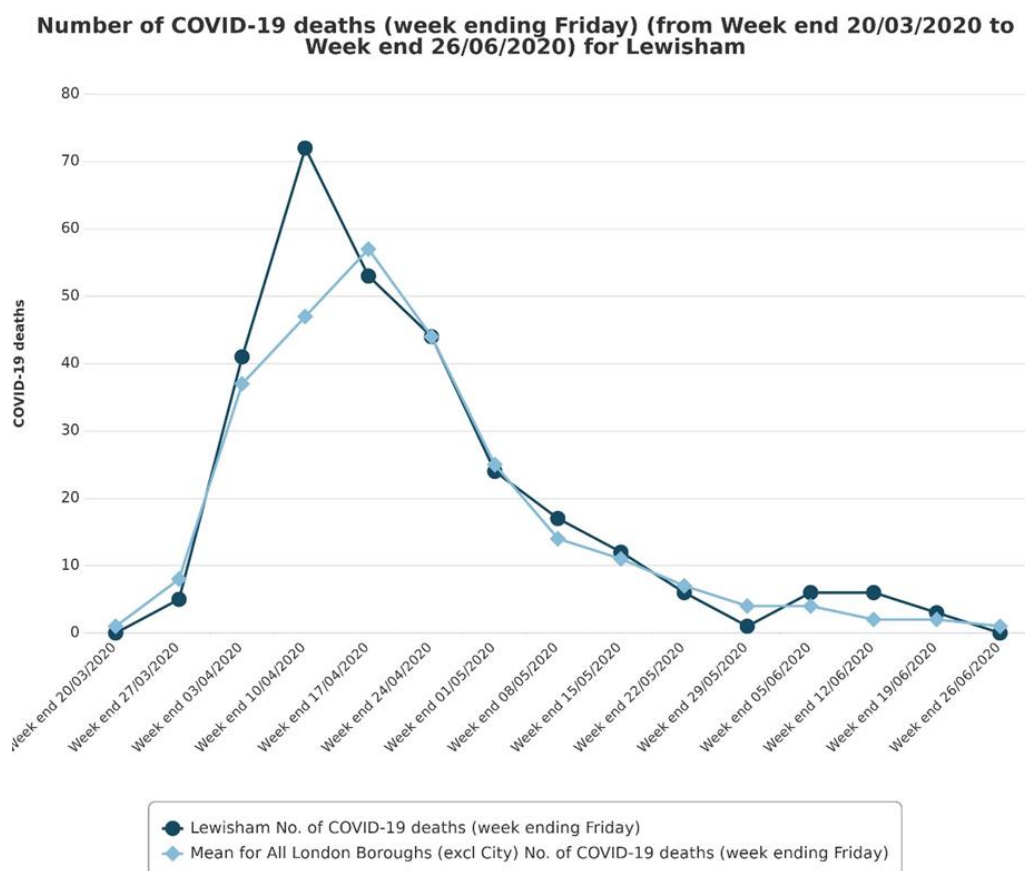
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London boroughs.

- 5.33. The graph below indicates that the peak in COVID-19 deaths in Lewisham seems to have come earlier than some other London boroughs.
- 5.34. The graph indicates the number of deaths per week fell to zero in the week ending 26th June.



Source:
Office for National Statistics

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Excess Deaths

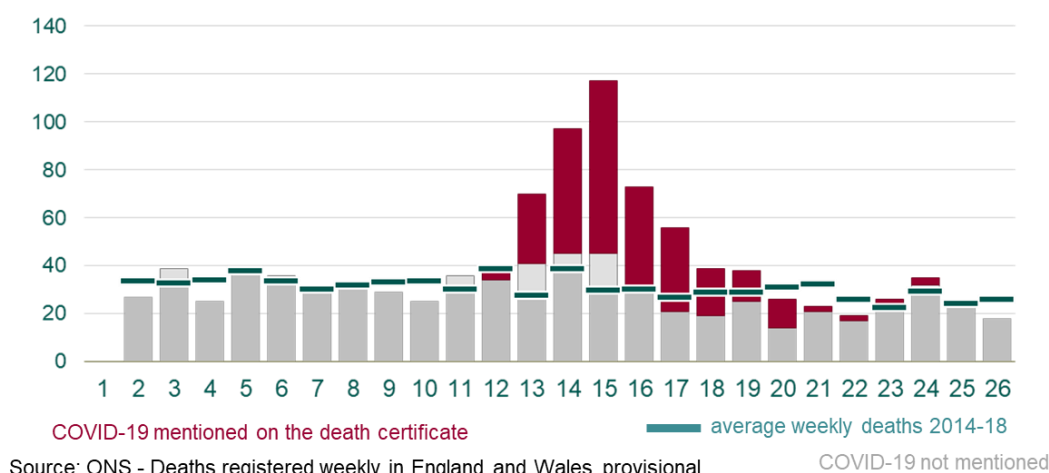
- 5.35. Analysis of excess mortality provides an indication of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on overall mortality rates in an area. It measures the additional deaths in a given time period compared to the number usually expected to provide a measure of the deaths that would not have occurred should the pandemic not have happened.
- 5.36. The graph below indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic caused mortality rates to rise above expected levels for seven consecutive weeks in Lewisham (the weeks where the bar is above the green line).
- 5.37. Although mortality rates rose above expected levels again for weeks 23 and 24 (1/06/20 – 14/06/20) they have since returned to levels below what would normally be expected for this time of year.

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All deaths in 2020 by week, with proportion where Covid 19 is mentioned



- 5.38. Although many of these excess deaths were in people who had contracted COVID-19, some of them were in people where COVID-19 was not mentioned as a contributory cause (this is indicated in the weeks where the grey bar goes above the green line).
- 5.39. This suggests that COVID-19 has had a wider impact on mortality in Lewisham than just being a direct cause of death.
- 5.40. The reasons for this are complex but could include, people being reluctant to seek medical help in an emergency during the pandemic or people with existing conditions not having access to support to manage their condition or an exacerbation of their condition. A range of work is underway to better understand how COVID-19 has impacted on people's health and their use of health services during the pandemic.

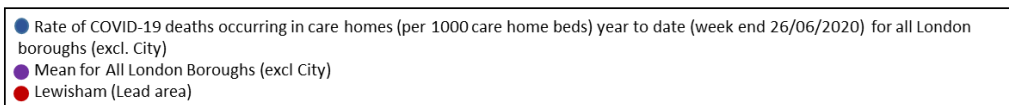
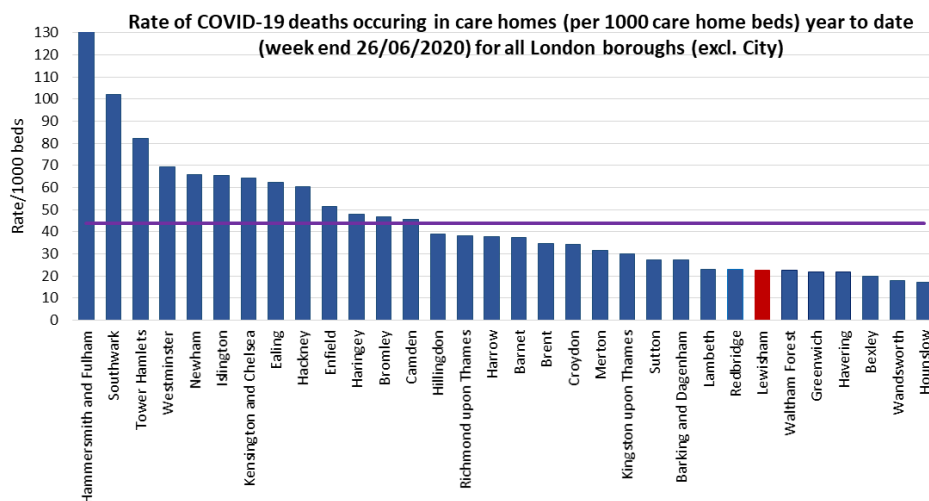
Deaths in Care Homes

- 5.41. Up to 26th June there had been 24 COVID-19 deaths registered as occurring in care homes in Lewisham.
- 5.42. ONS data on COVID-19 deaths in care homes has been standardised by calculating the rate of deaths per 1000 care home beds, to enable a comparison to other London boroughs. The graph below indicates that Lewisham has the 7th lowest rate of deaths in care homes. Although this is higher than last month (when Lewisham were 4th lowest) this is still considerably below the London average.

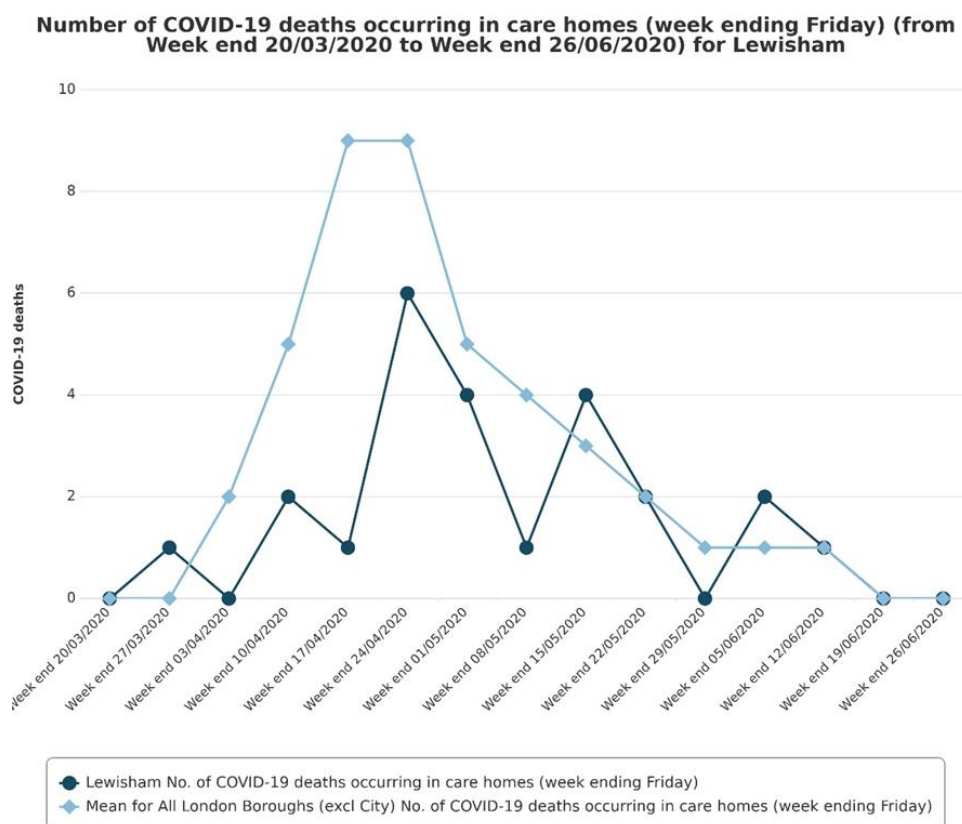
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- 5.43. The monitoring of absolute numbers of deaths in care homes remains important.
- 5.44. The chart below shows the total numbers of COVID-19 deaths occurring in care homes in Lewisham compared to those in the rest of London between 20/03/20 and 26/06/20.
- 5.45. There have been no deaths from COVID-19 registered in care homes in Lewisham for the last 14 days of the monitoring period. Small numbers appear as large fluctuations on graphs like these.



Source:
Office for National Statistics

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6. Critical services

- 6.1. Early on, the Council, and as part of a pan-London agreed position, identified a set of critical services that were to be the focus of maintaining delivery above all other services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.2. The Council has also defined a number of new initiatives and work streams that have arisen from the COVID-19 pandemic response as critical services in themselves. New measures such as Shielding and key Public Health initiatives have been classed as critical and an update on their status is provided below.
- 6.3. This paper outlines the delivery status of the Council's critical services in order to provide strategic oversight and assurance for members. Since the last paper to OSBP, the status of critical services has remained stable. This section therefore provides an update on changes or points of significance. Where there has been no change to the status of the service, this is noted below.

Shielding

- 6.4. There are around 2 million Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people in the UK who have been required to shield themselves. The Council's redeployed Shielding Team has been coordinating the support to Lewisham's Shielding residents. People who are shielding are advised to register for central government support. Once registered, people will receive a free weekly delivery of food and essential goods, coordinated by central government.
- 6.5. People who have registered for weekly food deliveries and are awaiting their first delivery can be referred to Lewisham Local for food parcels if they have limited food supplies (shielding parcel). Central government advise people who need more than one package per week or have allergies/specific dietary requirements to contact their local authority. The Council's Shielding Team have been managing these requests.
- 6.6. The Government food parcel provides basic supplies to meet an individual needs for a week. Due to packing and delivery logistics the parcels consists mainly of tinned, dried and UHT foods that can be safely stored at room temperature. Any fresh fruit or vegetables included in the parcel are varieties that are longer lasting such as apples or pears. Central Government do not specify the quantities of any food items provided in the parcel.
- 6.7. The Lewisham Local food parcel is also based on tinned, dried and UHT foods, this is again because of the logistical issues of storage and delivery. However, the Lewisham Local model also allows additional chilled and fresh food items to be added to the parcel immediately prior to delivery. The fresh and chilled foods includes eggs, cheese, margarine and six varieties of fruit and vegetables such as tomatoes, broccoli and clementine as well as potatoes. This increased range of food items not only improves the nutritional value of the food parcel but allows flexibility to prepare a variety of meals from the ingredients provided. The quantities and variety of food from the five food groups in the parcel are considered to meet an individual's requirements. The fruit and vegetable contents of the food parcel meet the recommended 5-a-day target.
- 6.8. On 22 June the government set out a series of steps for further relaxing Shielding guidance.
- 6.9. As of 6 July:
 - individuals may, if they wish, meet in a group of up to 6 people outdoors, including people from different households, while maintaining strict social distancing
 - individuals no longer need to observe social distancing with other members of their household

- in line with the wider guidance for single adult households (either an adult living alone or with dependent children under 18) in the general population, individuals may from this date, if they wish, also form a 'support bubble' with one other household. All those in a support bubble will be able to spend time together inside each other's homes, including overnight, without needing to socially distance.
- 6.10. From 1 August the government has advised that Shielding will be paused. From this date, the government is advising individuals to adopt strict social distancing rather than full Shielding measures. Strict social distancing means that individuals may wish to go out to more places and see more people but should take particular care to minimise contact with others outside their household or support bubble. In practice this means that from 1 August:
- individuals can go to work, if they cannot work from home, as long as the business is COVID-safe
 - children who are clinically extremely vulnerable can return to their education settings if they are eligible and in line with their peers. Where possible children should practice frequent hand washing and social distancing
 - individuals can go outside to buy food, to places of worship and for exercise but should maintain strict social distancing
 - individuals should remain cautious as you are still at risk of severe illness if they catch coronavirus, so the advice is to stay at home where possible and, if they do go out, follow strict social distancing
- 6.11. In summary, unless there is a significant rise in cases, the Shielding programme will be paused on 31 July and all Government Support to individuals will cease. Those in receipt of centrally provided food boxes and medicine deliveries will continue to receive this support until the end of July if they want it.
- 6.12. In response to the Government's announcement outlined above the Shielding Team has refocused its efforts to make contact with all residents (approx. 2800 in Lewisham) who are currently in receipt of a centrally delivered food parcel or medicine service.
- 6.13. These calls are designed to ensure that everyone is aware of the new guidance and that the service they are currently receiving will cease on 31 July 2020. The Shielding Team are advising that people should plan to meet their food and medicine needs from this date through one of the following routes:
- completing their own shopping while observing social distancing
 - seeking the support of friends and family
 - registering on-line for the reserved shopping slots that will continue to be available for the (previously) Shielded for the foreseeable future
 - registering with the NHS GoodSam volunteering scheme for medicine pick-ups which will continue to operate after the Shielding Programme is paused.
- 6.14. The Shielding team will then continue to call those in receipt of packages through July to ensure that they have taken the necessary steps to address their personal circumstances from 1 August. The team will also call other residents who have previously been flagged as having high support needs to ensure that they are aware of the change in guidance and do not require further support.
- 6.15. Officers are developing plans to identify and meet the ongoing support needs of vulnerable and shielded residents once Shielding is paused in August.

Public Health

Lewisham COVID-19 Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan (NHS Test and Trace)

- 6.16. As we emerge from the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to prevent and manage outbreaks of COVID-19 will be critical to enable residents, communities and businesses to resume activities safely.
- 6.17. The Lewisham Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan brings together the existing outbreak prevention and management work of national and regional PHE, local authority public health teams, the national NHS test and trace service, Joint Biosecurity Centre and collaboration of wider system partners to form a robust framework for COVID-19 outbreak management in Lewisham.
- 6.18. Our plan sets out the arrangements, processes and actions that will effectively prevent and manage outbreaks of COVID-19 to ensure that Lewisham residents and communities are protected from the impact of COVID-19.
- 6.19. The key objectives of the plan are:
- To prevent outbreaks of COVID-19 in our communities and complex settings (schools, care homes, communal settings and public spaces)
 - To respond rapidly and effectively to emerging outbreaks of COVID-19 as evidenced by data and health intelligence
 - To manage and control established outbreaks of COVID-19, particularly those in complex settings
 - To rapidly reflect on and adapt to lessons learnt during the management of outbreaks
 - To have a robust oversight and assurance process for the prevention and management of outbreaks of COVID-19
- 6.20. The plan covers the seven main themes outlined by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for inclusion in local outbreak control plans:
- Care homes and schools – planning for local outbreaks in these settings
 - High risk places, locations and communities – identifying and planning how to manage high risk places, locations and communities
 - Local testing capacity
 - Contact tracing in complex settings
 - Data integration
 - Vulnerable people – supporting local people to get help to self-isolate
 - Local boards - establishing governance structures
- 6.21. [The plan was published on the Lewisham Council website on 30 June 2020 and is available here.](#)
- 6.22. The plan will be overseen and implemented by the Lewisham COVID-19 Health Protection Board, which will report in to Lewisham Council Gold, the Lewisham Health and Wellbeing Board and Mayor and Cabinet.
- 6.23. As part of the Local Outbreak Control Plan, a COVID-19 Data and Analysis Team has been established. Led by a Consultant in Public Health, this team co-ordinate the flow of data that is received daily from government sources on the status of COVID-19 cases across Lewisham. This information contains numerous indicators including; the number of new cases over the last 24 hours and 7 days, a RAG rating based on expected vs observed cases, the number of new cases from Lewisham referred into

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the National Test and Trace programme and the number of tests requested by Lewisham residents, amongst many other indicators.

- 6.24. The COVID-19 Data and Analysis team review, collate and analyse this data and present it in a Daily COVID-19 Surveillance Report which is distributed to members of the Gold Committee on a daily basis. The Local Outbreak Control Plan includes escalation criteria which describe the thresholds for indicators within the Daily Surveillance Report that would trigger further action to be taken by the Director of Public Health.

BAME Health inequalities

- 6.25. Birmingham City Council and Lewisham Council have launched a ground-breaking review into the health inequalities of African & Caribbean communities. The review will aim to explore in-depth the inequalities experienced by these ethnic groups and their drivers, to find approaches to break the decades of inequality in sustainable ways that will lead to better futures for local citizens.
- 6.26. The importance of this work has come at an unprecedented time following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affecting BAME communities. This disproportionate impact, alongside the rise in tension around racial inequality as highlighted of late by the Black Lives Matter movement, is emphasising the critical need of this work to explore inequalities within the communities.
- 6.27. The review will take place via academic and external advisory groups that are in the process of being recruited to. The academic criteria for members of the academic advisory group have been agreed between the two organisations and applications are now open for this group. Applications to the external advisory group will be opening over the few weeks.
- 6.28. The existing Lewisham Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Health Inequalities working group will oversee the review and report back to the Health and Wellbeing Board. The group will also provide updates as required to the Healthier Communities Select Committee on progress with the review.
- 6.29. In the light of evidence that BAME women are at significantly higher risk of poor maternity outcomes, actions were already in place by local maternity providers in Lewisham to address these inequalities. More recently, the UK Obstetric Surveillance System (UKOSS) has resulted in additional changes to current practice:
- A risk assessment is conducted at the point of referral to maternity care and an individualised plan of care is discussed with the pregnant women by the midwife with particular attention being paid to BAME women and additional COVID-19 risks
 - Continuity of Carer models of care in which women are looked after by a small team of midwives providing continuity through pregnancy, labour and post-natal care had already been planned for BAME women in Lewisham with co-existing health issues. These models of care are associated with improved outcomes and higher user satisfaction.
 - The Lewisham Maternity Voices Partnership (MVP) had prioritised, 'Improving outcomes for BAME women' in its 2019/20 plan. An event was planned in April, to hear from BAME women about their maternity experiences, what information should be provided, in what form and what actions should be taken. This event has now been rescheduled for September 2020.
 - Discussions are planned between Lewisham and Greenwich Trust, public health and maternity commissioners to explore amendments to current maternity policies which may include supplementary information to BAME women and the possibility of a lower threshold to review, admit and consider multi-disciplinary action in women of BAME background.

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Dentists, opticians and pharmacy services

- 6.30. Dentist and optician services are commissioned directly by NHS England. In keeping with other NHS services, dentist and optician services are transitioning to recovery with routine services now resumed. Both national and professional guidance has been issued to support clinicians, staff and patients to apply the ongoing public health/social distancing measures. Guidance on triage and remote consultations has been provided and the provision of face to face services can now follow on from remote consultation. Routine patients can be seen if appointment capacity is available. Priority will be given to patients who are considered by a clinician to have increased need for face to face dental work or sight tests. [Public facing information is available on the NHS website for dental services](#)
- 6.31. Core pharmacy services are commissioned directly by NHS England with enhanced services commissioned locally. Despite the unprecedented demand during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, all Lewisham community pharmacies remained open and operational reducing the impact on wider healthcare services. This included bank holidays where all community pharmacies were open for at least 3 hours between 2 – 5 pm. Many community pharmacy teams have had to adapt their frontline services to meet this demand and all maintained sufficient staffing levels throughout.
- 6.32. All Lewisham community pharmacies employed social distancing as advised by HM Government bodies, this included measures such as:
- Two-metre distancing floor stickers supplied by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
 - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 - Prominent signs/displays on shop fronts to ensure safe access to service users and COVID related information/advice
 - Maximum of 15 minute consultation times
 - Restrictions to number of people within pharmacy premises.
- 6.33. Community pharmacies continue to operate as 'Covid Secure', supporting their local population's health and pharmaceutical needs and putting into place plans in case of a second spike. They remain the most convenient and fastest route to have a socially distanced face to face consultation with a healthcare professional without an appointment. Throughout the pandemic the Local Pharmaceutical Committee has been, amongst other stakeholders, instrumental to pharmacy contractors. A risk assessment of the pharmacy workforce is taking place to mitigate risks especially to those at an increased risk such as BAME staff.

Adult Social Care

- 6.34. Critical Adult Social Care services are: safeguarding, emergency duty team, emergency homecare response, placements and discharges from hospitals, care home placements. The Adult Social Care and Joint Commissioning services in Lewisham have been working closely with health and care partners across the system to support residents to stay safe and reducing pressure on the NHS.
- 6.35. Adult Social Care services have remained stable since the last update report to OSBP.
- 6.36. Key priorities for Adult Social Care during the pandemic were to:
- Free up Hospital Beds
 - Support the Care Providers
 - Ensure safe ways of working and access to PPE
 - Minimise risk of further infections

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- 6.37. The impact of the increased mortality of older people in care homes has resulted in significant vacancy rates of around 20% in Lewisham. Estimates undertaken by the London School of Economics suggest that the combined impact across London of the loss of income from vacant beds and the added costs outlined above from 29th March to 17th June is £30m. For South East London this is estimated at £6.6m. There have also been significant additional costs for all care providers around PPE and wider infection control measures. This is estimated to be around £30k per month in Lewisham. Increased staffing levels have also been needed to reduce infection.
- 6.38. The Council has worked closely with care providers throughout the pandemic, supporting infection prevention control, access to PPE, testing, clinical support through the NHS and workforce support. Lewisham Council has been allocated £1,624,275 from the Department for Health and Social Care Infection Control Fund. The grant conditions require that 75% of the funding is passed directly to residential and nursing care homes for infection control. Lewisham has 1,057 registered beds in care homes and each will receive £1,152.51 per bed they have registered with the Care Quality Commission.
- 6.39. The remaining 25% of the Infection Prevention Control Grant fund is £406,069. It was agreed that funding should be allocated to supported living providers, extra care, domiciliary care providers, shared lives carers and family carers. Officers have written to providers with the detailed funding offer.
- 6.40. Additionally, £35k will be used to match fund an Infection Prevention Control Nurse within the Clinical Commissioning Group who will specifically work with Care Homes and supported living providers to review their policies and procedures and to further improve training to reduce the risk of further outbreaks.
- 6.41. Officers are estimating a two year recovery time for the care system and are working on the assumption that COVID-19 will continue to impact the care system. There are also lessons to be learned on the disproportionate impact on BAME residents, people with learning disabilities and older people. The cost pressures on an already fragile market will continue and there is a need to be resilient in the face of possible future spikes in infections. One home in the borough has already given notice of closure due to the financial impact of COVID-19.

Children and Young People's Services

- 6.42. Critical services in Children and Young People's Services are: safeguarding, children with complex needs, children in care and placements, education services such as childcare support network, support for schools to deliver education to specific groups of children, and advice to parents/carers.
- 6.43. Children's Social Care and Placements have remained stable since the last update report to OSBP in June.

Schools and Education

- 6.44. The Council has worked closely with schools across the borough to provide support and guidance for following government guidance about providing continued learning programmes for children and young people remotely, and provided support to schools as they planned for the phased return of pupils from 1 June. Schools have continued to open to provide for vulnerable children (including those who have a social worker and/or an Education, Health & Care Plan).
- 6.45. At 9 July, over 6,700 children and young people are attending school daily. From 15 June, secondary schools have been able to offer face-to-face support for 25% of the year 10 and 12 cohort at any one time. Secondary schools with capacity are not being asked to invite further year groups to return this term.
- 6.46. All our secondary schools have invited Year 10 and 12 students in for a tutorial. The focus is broadly the same across schools, looking at how young people have engaged

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with home learning, teaching them how to make better use of learning platforms and identifying individual support they might need to complete work at home to a higher standard and with increased motivation. From this, schools are developing plans for individual pupils.

- 6.47. We are encouraging all schools to offer opportunities for face to face contact for children and young people this term and particularly to consider pupils who are not returning to school this term, targeting those who would particularly benefit from more face-to-face support, such as disadvantaged pupils or pupils who have not been engaging in remote education. This time can be used to check-in on pupils, find out what would help with home learning and to get ready for a planned return to school from September.

Summer catch up

- 6.48. Schools are not expected to open during the summer holidays as they were during holidays during lockdown. The Council are working with a number of partners to deliver targeted summer activities which will focus on a wide range of outcomes, such as confidence and wellbeing and include sports, music and drama that activities that children have missed out on during lockdown. We are seeking to confirm venues as soon as possible, as government guidelines are released, but we are targeting use of school and setting sites. Schools will be asked to extend invitation to children most in need of these activities.
- 6.49. The temporary extension of Free School Meals eligibility to include groups who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF) will continue so that these families can be supported by the COVID Summer Food Fund. Schools are ordering vouchers to cover the six week period for families (one per eligible child). The Council is asking schools to identify families who are not eligible under the scheme to ensure that they are referred to Lewisham Local food banks. We have an agreement with food banks that they will accept referrals from head teachers.

Academic year 20/21 - school opening and catch-up programme

- 6.50. Government guidance has been very clear that the expectation is that all children in all classes return full-time to school in September. We await further guidance as to how this will work. Given the possibility of a 'second wave' of COVID-19, either nationally or locally, schools need to have a high quality home learning offer on standby.
- 6.51. We are encouraging schools to adopt a Recovery Curriculum to re-engage children and young people socially and emotionally, help them reflect on their COVID experience and re-establish routines and behaviours for learning. The approach to 'catch-up' must be long term, spanning the next academic year and beyond, with specific targeting for those children and young people closer to exams. The catch-up programme will need to form part of an evidenced based plan with a strategic approach to identifying gaps in learning for individual children and young people. This will be supported by the Council and Lewisham Learning through existing forums.
- 6.52. The Government announced that state primary and secondary schools will receive £650 million in additional funding for the 2020-21 academic year to help pupils catch up on education missed as a result of COVID19 schools closures.
- 6.53. A further £350 million will pay for the establishment of a National Tutoring Programme for the 2020-21 academic year and give schools access to subsidised tutoring sessions and free coaches for disadvantaged pupils.
- 6.54. The Council has been working with Alternative Providers with Lewisham Year 11s to ensure that they apply for the scheme to support transition to post-16. Providers are planning to offer a range of activities which include mentoring, coaching, virtual work experience, information advice and guidance talks, equipment for college – construction and beauty kit, summer programmes, clothing vouchers and others. There

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is a small number of providers that are not eligible to apply as most of them are Pupil Referral Units or have independent school status. Lewisham College is also involved as they have a large number of English as an Additional Language and Electively Home Educated learners in Y11. The Council has provided commissioning letters as evidence where needed.

- 6.55. We understand that there has been some reconsideration on free travel for those under the age of 16. We are still awaiting formal notification of this and will then assess the impact on children and families.
- 6.56. Schools are currently surveying families about their intended modes of travel to and from school and are looking at staggered start and finish times to help avoid overcrowding at peak times.

Bereavement Services

- 6.57. The Council's critical bereavement services are registrations of births and deaths, public mortuary body storage, Council Crematoria and Burial Grounds. Bereavement Services have seen increased pressure as a result of COVID-19. The service continues to follow guidance issued by central government, Public Health England and the London Resilience Forum and is working hard to support residents during a very difficult time while observing social distancing guidance.
- 6.58. Local authorities in London are working together to ensure a consistent approach to bereavement services and to coordinate mortality management and planning across the capital.
- 6.59. The bereavement service has needed to take significant precautions and manage the risks of transmission of COVID-19 by limiting attendance at services. This is in line with other London Councils. The number of mourners at funerals has been increased from 10 to 20 people.
- 6.60. The Lewisham Register Office temporarily closed its doors in March and only registered deaths via telephone. On 1 June, the Council resumed registration of emergency births only and booked birth registrations resumed on 15 June. There are currently a significant backlog of births to register which may take two to three weeks to clear. Weddings and Civil Partnerships are due to recommence in mid-July

Environmental Services

- 6.61. The Council's critical environmental services are highways management, refuse collection, refuse disposal, CCTV, emergency licensing and enforcement and pest control, all of which are operating at either a reduced or normal service at this time. Where possible, staff are working remotely but this is not possible for a number of environmental services, such as refuse collection. Staffing levels across environmental services remain stable, with frontline teams operating on rotation to ensure resilience in the service.
- 6.62. Refuse collection, disposal and recycling is running at full capacity. In June, Street Cleansing resumed normal service, bulky waste collected resumed and fridge and mattress collection resumed.
- 6.63. There has been no overall increase in the amount of waste collected but there has been a shift in the balance of what we are collecting through the lockdown period: we are now collecting more household recycling and organic waste than previously and less household residual waste. Based on May's data we have seen a slight increase in the amount of organic waste and recycling collected by the kerbside compared to the same period in 2019.
- 6.64. Officers in Licensing and Planning have worked closely with businesses to provide guidance to ensure the safe opening of businesses from 4 July. Officers have

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signposted businesses to sector-specific government guidance and provided support to businesses when completing risk assessments. Officers have also provided guidance for businesses who are considering extending opening hours or applying for a pavement license.

Housing

- 6.65. Critical housing services are emergency repairs, critical housing safety and emergency housing provision. Housing services have adapted effectively to COVID-19, swiftly adopting new and innovative ways of working with people remotely to continue effective service delivery while ensuring the safety of service users and staff.
- 6.66. The Council has supported over 202 rough sleepers since March, however the numbers continue to increase each week. Over 40 of our rough sleepers have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) are ineligible to claim mainstream benefits or housing assistance.
- 6.67. The number of those in Temporary Accommodation stands at 2,502 as at the 3 July, up from 2,383 at 27 March. Of these 2,502, 152 are rough sleepers accommodated as part of the government 'everybody in' which began in April.
- 6.68. New eviction claims made after 25 March will only be lawful if there is a three month notice period and all ongoing housing possession claims are suspended. On 5 June the government announced that this moratorium on evictions will be extended until 23 August. This guarantees safety from eviction for most renters for the short term, although there is a cause for concern around the impact that ending the moratorium will have.
- 6.69. Despite the moratorium, there remains threats of eviction to residents and officers are continuing to work with these households, including offering mediation between landlords and tenants, and supporting tenants to remain in their current tenancy through discussion with the landlord. Officers have prevented 87 illegal evictions since the 6 April, enabling the tenant to remain in situ. A further 17 illegal evictions have resulted in the tenant being evicted and the council will take further action in these instances. During this period there has been a focus on preventing and relieving homelessness.
- 6.70. The grants team continue to work closely with partners to ensure that those in need receive the adaptations they need, whilst also following guidelines closely. Between April and June, four adaptations were completed under our mandatory disabled facilities grants scheme, and a further 14 adaptations were completed where the council either provided a discretionary grant or a loan.
- 6.71. Licensing teams continue to ensure that our residents live in homes that are safe and secure and we work with landlords to ensure that all residents living in the private rented sector have support from us and also to ensure landlords are undertaking emergency repairs. Within Lewisham Homes, all emergency repairs are being completed in time and as per pre-COVID. There are some minor issues with a small number of gas safety certificates due to residents refusing access and court activity being suspended due to COVID. 0.3% of stock owned by the council currently has a non-compliant gas certificate as a consequence of this. These are being closely managed and residents are being regularly engaged with to ensure access at the earliest point.
- 6.72. Between April and June the Housing Procurement team sourced 101 properties in the private rented sector for households that were homeless or threatened with homelessness. This gives those households secure, affordable accommodation, providing a route out of temporary accommodation for many households and preventing others from needing to go into temporary accommodation. The team have also completed on the acquisition of Morton House which will provide at least 27 homes for those in need of temporary accommodation, and leased an additional 64

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homes for use as temporary accommodation.

- 6.73. On 30 March 2020 choice based lettings of Social Housing was temporarily suspended. Available social housing has been directly matched to emergency and urgent lets, along recommended Government guidelines. 90 matches to permanent homes have been made, and 32 homeless households with health conditions that place them at risk of COVID-19 have been moved into self-contained accommodation. The service resumed the normal lettings process via Homesearch on 4 July 2020.

Finance

- 6.74. Critical finance services are Revenues and Benefits and Business support. The Council has taken measures to support both businesses and residents who are facing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19.
- 6.75. On 24 March the government announced a hardship grant would be made available to local authorities in response to COVID-19 to provide council tax relief to vulnerable people and households. Lewisham received £3.2m hardship funding and has made these funds available to individual Council Tax payers through grants aligned to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and emergency support for residents.
- 6.76. Central government has turned to local authorities to deliver a number of new schemes aimed at supporting local businesses who have been impacted by coronavirus.
- 6.77. For businesses, support measures include extended business rates relief for 2020/21, grants to small businesses and those in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors, and a grant to support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) – those with less than 50 employees – not covered by the initial grant arrangements.
- 6.78. The Council has received £47m to distribute in grants of £10k or £25k to small business within certain rateable values and/or in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. At 9 July the Council has assessed all those who have applied and disbursed 3,081 grants of the 3,375 businesses eligible.
- 6.79. Small and micro businesses with fixed property costs that are not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund may be eligible for the Small Business Support Fund. There are four funding categories:
1. Charities in receipt of charitable business rates relief
 2. Small businesses and social enterprises in shared offices or other flexible workspaces which do not have their own business rates assessment
 3. Small businesses and social enterprises in the Cultural, Creative and Evening & Night Time Economy sectors
 4. Independent grassroots, small businesses or social enterprises that make a considerable impact to the local economy and the vibrancy of our high streets and town centres
- 6.80. Successful applicants should receive their payments by 17 July.

Impact on Council finances

- 6.81. The Council's finances have been severely affected by the ongoing pandemic. In our June monitoring return to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) we estimated that the COVID-19 outbreak will have a £53.2m impact on the 20/21 budget. We are expecting total estimated additional costs for 20/21 of £24.6m and lost income of £28.6. To date we have received £18m (separate from specific grants for targeted activities such as business support, infection control, Test and Trace etc.). The Secretary of State announced a further package at the end of June with three elements: 1) £500m of additional funding; 2) the ability to manage tax base (business rates and council tax) income pressures over three years rather than one; and 3) cover for some income losses after the first 5% to the level of 75p in the pound. The detail of how this will impact the financial planning is being worked on as the detail

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of how much of the funding, income collection assumptions, and which income is covered are still to be confirmed. Irrespectively this package still does not cover the losses faced by the Council and puts pressure on service spend and the use of reserves in this and future years.

- 6.82. Analysis by the LGA estimates that the total projected financial pressure in the year 2020/21 arising from the impact of COVID-19, nationally, continues to amount to 3 to 4 times that which has been allocated by Government so far. The Council will therefore need to proceed with extreme caution as the full financial risks and implications of COVID-19 become apparent. The Council will need to assess the likelihood and potential implications for the need to use reserves to meet the cost of the response should government support not cover the full costs. As this now appears likely, Council is preparing to have to make significant changes to the range and scale of services it offers or further put the burden of these costs on local tax payers, who themselves will be managing the financial implications of COVID-19 to their household budgets. A communications plan and narrative is being worked up to explain this and set out the implications for residents.

Corporate, HR and other support services critical to the COVID-19 response

- 6.83. Other services that are critical to the Council's COVID-19 response are emergency planning and response teams, customer service centre, communications, health & safety, payroll and emergency recruitment, ICT and critical public health services all of which are focused on supporting and enabling the Council's COVID-19 response and its critical services.
- 6.84. COVID-19 has required Council staff across the organisation to work very differently. Corporate support teams have been instrumental in enabling staff to adapt to new ways of working, ensuring they have the right equipment, guidance and support to fulfil their roles and support residents. HR policies and IT provision is currently being reviewed and adapted to suit the ongoing needs of the organisation as we move out of lockdown and into a transition phase, in which the majority of staff will continue to work from home.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1. Financial implications of COVID-19 are set out in paragraphs 6.81 - 6.82 of this paper. The Council's financial commitments are currently not wholly inconsistent with the budget as, while there are significant changes at this time, the Council continues to operate its usual services and is receiving government funding for the additional and unplanned impact of COVID-19. A revised budget in the autumn is being brought forward to confirm the position at that time for the remainder of the financial year and consider the implications for reserves and assessment of the scale of change to be planned for the next financial year 2021/22 and future years.
- 7.2. Taking the estimated costs and lost income considerations of the Covid 19 response and additional support from government into account, the Council has sufficient reserves to meet these financial commitments at present. While the impact of the Covid 19 response may reduce the Council's financial resilience to face future shocks, it is the section 151 officer's assessment, along with the Head of Paid Service and the Monitoring Officer, that the circumstances do not require consideration of a section 114 notice at this time.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1. The Coronavirus Act 2020 received Royal Assent on 25th March this year. It gives the Government emergency powers to combat the COVID 19 pandemic. The provisions of the Act are time-limited for two years, though this period may be shortened by

ministerial direction. In addition the Act is subject to Parliamentary review every 6 months.

- 8.2. The Act enables the Government to restrict or prohibit public gatherings, control or suspend public transport, order businesses such as shops and restaurants to close, temporarily detain people suspected of COVID-19 infection, suspend the operation of ports and airports, enrol medical students and retired healthcare workers in the health services, relax regulations to ease the burden on healthcare services, and assume control of death management in particular local areas.
- 8.3. Many of its provisions are specific to local government. For example the Act temporarily suspends local authorities' legal duty to meet the care needs of all people who are eligible under the Care Act 2014. Instead, councils will have a duty to provide care only if necessary to avoid breaching a person's rights under the Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). However as set out in the report, the Council has not sought to rely on any of the easements to the Care Act allowed in the Coronavirus Act.
- 8.4. The Act also makes provisions for elections and annual general meetings to be deferred and for council meetings to be held remotely.
- 8.5. A number of directions have been made to legislative provisions using the Coronavirus provisions. For example, the Secretary of State issued a direction on 31 March 2020 to Ofqual about the calculation of students' GCSE, AS and A level results and on 9 April in respect of technical qualifications though many of the government's intentions for local government have been expressed through non statutory guidance. Whilst having no statutory force, the Council would be well advised to have regard to this guidance, and only departing from it with good reason, particularly bearing in mind that the Secretary of State retains the power to issue directions if necessary.
- 8.6. Under Section 17 Crime and disorder Act 1998 the Council has a duty in the exercise of its functions to consider the impact of all their functions and decisions on crime and disorder in their local area.
- 8.7. Section 12 of the Health and Social Care Act inserted a new section 2B into the NHS Act 2006 to give a local authority a new duty to take such steps as it considers appropriate to improve the health of the people in its area. The steps in this report are consistent with that duty.
- 8.8. Under S3 Local Government Act, 1999 the Council must make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. This duty remains even in these exceptional circumstances.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1. There is emerging evidence that suggests a disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on groups with protected characteristics. National research shows there are significant health inequalities affecting Black African and Caribbean communities, which are perpetuated by inequalities in the wider determinants of health such as housing, employment and education. These have been exacerbated by COVID-19 and may underpin some of the excess deaths in these populations.
- 9.2. Lewisham Council and Birmingham City Council are partnering to conduct a review gather insights on health inequalities within Black African and Caribbean communities in Birmingham and Lewisham asking 'how do we break the cycle of inequality?'. The Council has also submitted evidence to the Women and Equalities Committee about the different and disproportionate impact that the Coronavirus – and measures to tackle it – is having on people with the protected characteristics under the Equality Act.
- 9.3. The Council plans to supplement this work with an extensive impact assessment of COVID-19 on the borough, with a focus on those with protected characteristics.

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- 9.4. The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) introduced a public sector equality duty (the equality duty or the duty). It covers the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 9.5. In summary, the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- 9.6. It is not an absolute requirement to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct, or to promote equality of opportunity or foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. It is a duty to have due regard to the need to achieve the goals listed in the paragraph above.
- 9.7. The weight to be attached to the duty will be dependent on the nature of the decision and the circumstances in which it is made. This is a matter for members, bearing in mind the issues of relevance and proportionality. They must understand the impact or likely impact of the decision on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision. The extent of the duty will necessarily vary from case to case and due regard is such regard as is appropriate in all the circumstances.
- 9.8. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty and statutory guidance entitled “Equality Act 2010 Services, Public Functions & Associations Statutory Code of Practice”. The Council must have regard to the statutory code in so far as it relates to the duty and attention is drawn to Chapter 11 which deals particularly with the equality duty. The Technical Guidance also covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty. This includes steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The guidance does not have statutory force but nonetheless regard should be had to it, as failure to do so without compelling reason would be of evidential value. The statutory code and the technical guidance can be found at:
- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-codes-practice>
 - <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/equality-act-technical-guidance>
- 9.9. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has previously issued five guides for public authorities in England giving advice on the equality duty:
- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
 - Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making
 - Engagement and the equality duty: A guide for public authorities
 - Objectives and the equality duty. A guide for public authorities
 - Equality Information and the Equality Duty: A Guide for Public Authorities
- 9.10. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirements
- The essential guide to the public sector equality duty
 - Meeting the equality duty in policy and decision-making

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- Engagement and the equality duty
 - Equality objectives and the equality duty
 - Equality information and the equality duty
- 9.11. The essential guide provides an overview of the equality duty requirement including the general equality duty, the specific duties and who they apply to. It covers what public authorities should do to meet the duty including steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. The other four documents provide more detailed guidance on key areas and advice on good practice. Further information and resources are available at:
- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance>

10. Climate change and environmental implications

- 10.1. There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

11. Crime and disorder implications

- 11.1. There are no direct crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12. Health and wellbeing implications

- 12.1. There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report, however it should be acknowledged that COVID-19 presents a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of Lewisham's residents, as it does across the world. The Council's response and recovery objectives are rooted in promoting good public health and safety for Lewisham's residents.

13. Background papers

- 13.1. [Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel 5 May 2020 - Scrutiny of the Council's COVID-19 Response](#)
- 13.2. [Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel 26 May 2020 - Scrutiny of the Council's COVID-19 Response](#)
- 13.3. [Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel 23 June 2020 – Scrutiny of the Council's COVID-19.](#)
- 13.4. [Mayor and Cabinet report 10 June 2020 - Council's response to Covid 19 - Financial update](#)

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
Council Gold	A gold/silver/bronze command structure is a hierarchy used by the emergency services and other public sector organisations (including local authorities) to manage the response to major incidents. Gold command is responsible for formulating a strategy for dealing with the incident and has overall control of resources.

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Term	Definition
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The two main symptoms of COVID-19 are a high temperature and a new, persistent cough, but people
Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel	<p>Lewisham has two Business Panels (sub-committees of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee).</p> <p>Overview & Scrutiny Business Panel is made up of the chair and vice-chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the chair of each of the Select Committees, and two other non-Executive councillors.</p> <p>The main functions of Business Panel are reviewing key decisions once they have been taken (potentially “calling in” key decisions that have been made but not yet implemented); coordinating and approving the overall scrutiny work programme; and allocating scrutiny work in the event that it crosses the remit of more than one scrutiny body.</p> <p>Three parent governors and two diocesan representatives sit on the Education Business Panel, alongside the councillors that make up the regular Business Panel. The Education Business Panel reviews.</p>
Shielding	Those who are at the greatest risk of severe illness and have been advised to shield by the NHS.

15. Report author and contact

- 15.1. If there are any queries about this report, please contact Charlotte Parish, Principal Officer – Policy, Service Design and Analysis, by phone (020 8314 6101) or by email charlotte.parish@lewisham.gov.uk.

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