



TABLED DOCUMENT

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUSINESS PANEL

Date: TUESDAY, 23 JUNE 2020 at 7.05 pm

TABLED DOCUMENT – PART 1 AGENDA

Item No		Page No.s
3.	Scrutiny of the Council's Covid-19 Response - Update Report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">The attached documentation was circulated at the meeting – it contains questions and strategic suggestions prior to preparing the report.	1 - 6

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Date: 23 June 2020

OSBP – 23 June 2020 – Advance Questions

Strategic suggestions made before report prepared

1. School Re-openings. **6.43**
2. Grooming of children: County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation or Extremist groups. **6.46 - 6.51**
3. Catch Up Programmes for children who have fallen behind in school due to the pandemic. **6.45**
4. Track and tracing to cover: **6.12 – 6.21**
 - When did this become operational in Lewisham?
 - How many contact tracers do we have?
 - How many residents have been contacted by the service?
 - Who monitors the associated statistics?
 - Will Members receive updates if particular locations become hot spots?
 - Are there any plans for local lockdowns if required?
 - Are there any specific plans for schools?
 - What is the current infection rate?
 - Testing – to cover if tests be available within 24 hours and then results within 24 hours.
5. Preparation for a second spike. **5.14**
6. Update on mortality rates in the community and care homes. **5.1 – 5.22**
7. PPE update (including how this is charged for at home and in care homes for self-funders and those using direct payments). **6.34 – 6.37**
8. Plans for the ongoing support of shielded residents. **6.4 - 6.11**
9. The financial costs of the pandemic response, to include: **6.9 – 6.14**
 - Monitoring procedures
 - Changes to department budget management in response to the crisis
 - Robustness of financial measures
 - Managing risk in this 'new' financial environment – any changes to the corporate risk register been changed.
 - The role of Scrutiny and Audit.

Advance questions

Chair of Safer Stronger Communities

- 1. Can we have a demographic breakdown* of the 20 staff redeployed into the established outreach team, how long they have been in that role, and if they are in good health. Is there a plan to rotate people so that the same 20 people are not continuously at higher risk?**

2 people in the outreach team were Lewisham Homes employees who have now returned to their substantive roles. A number of Council employees have also returned to their substantive roles now.

Of the remaining employees:

- 8 BAME
- 5 White
- 2 prefer not to state their ethnicity

All members of the team are currently in good health. While we have not been able to rotate people, most volunteers who are visiting residents work part time in their outreach role. The team is also encouraged to take annual leave and to take up wellbeing support such as the peer support helpline set up at the beginning of the Council's response.

Managers across the organisation are also being asked to complete an individual risk assessment with the officers they manage. The risk assessment has been specifically designed to support members of staff who fall into high-risk categories. Appropriate mitigations will be put in place according to risk.

- 2. Of the rough sleepers that have been rehoused, how many have been allocated into permanent and temporary accommodation? Can we have a demographic breakdown of those allocated into both types of accommodations?**

As at Tuesday 16 June, 38 rough sleepers have been rehoused into permanent housing. A further 138 have been housed in temporary accommodation.

Of the 38 rough sleepers who have been rehoused:

Gender	Number of individuals
Male	35
Female	3

Age	Number of individuals
18-30	8
31-50	20
51-70	7

Unknown	3
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Ethnicity	Number of individuals
<i>Black or Black British African</i>	2
<i>Black or Black British Caribbean</i>	10
<i>White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British</i>	15
<i>White – other</i>	4
<i>Mixed ethnicity - White and Black African / Caribbean</i>	3
<i>Other ethnicity</i>	3
<i>Unknown</i>	1

Due to the way in which demographic data is captured and manual steps that need to be taken to analyse the data, it has not been possible in the timeframe given to compile all demographic data for the 138 rough sleepers housed in temporary accommodation.

3. At the last OSBP meeting, it was reported that there had been some enforcement in our parks for non-compliance of social distancing regulations, can we have a demographic breakdown* of those where enforcement was carried out?

* Demographic breakdown means; age, race, gender, sexuality (I appreciate that this data isn't always available) and disability.

Unfortunately, police are unable to provide demographic information at a borough level. Across the Metropolitan Police Service, a total of 802 people have been arrested for breaches of Coronavirus regulations. In 67 cases, a breach was the sole offence. A total of 1,128 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued. Across the South East Basic Command Unit (Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley), 53 Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued by police. The Council has not issued any Fixed Penalty notices.

4. Before the Head of Highways and Transport makes any changes or additions to the work streams, can those changes, with explanations be brought to the Business Panel?

Officers are planning to bring an update report to the September meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel. This will include an update on how the programme of measures are working and outline any changes that have been made and the reasons why. Due to urgent need for the measures to be implemented, officers are unable to bring these forward to the Panel for discussion prior to implementation.

5. Are the changes to parking bays in Forest Hill affecting business? Has this been re-evaluated and what will we be doing to mitigate the harm, if changes cannot be made?

The intention of the measures is to support social distancing on high streets, and give customers confidence that they can use high streets safely. As set out in the report to scrutiny, evidence detailed in the Transport for London (TfL) guidance shows that those who walk to a high street spend 40% more than those who drive, and that high street pedestrian, cycling and public realm improvements can increase retail sales by up to 30%. There is also evidence that retailers have inaccurate perceptions around the modal share of shoppers, in that they tend to significantly overestimate the proportion of journeys made by car. Most shoppers tend to be relatively local, meaning that there is scope for these journeys to be made by sustainable modes. Those arriving by sustainable modes also tend to visit more shops.

Businesses in the vicinity of each scheme would have received a letter detailing how to provide feedback on the scheme. To date, no specific concerns have yet been raised by any particular business. It should also be noted that any decrease in visitor numbers/revenue being experienced would need to be set within the wider context, as other factors may be having a greater impact – for instance long queues to get into shops may dissuade those from visiting, as well as potential anxiety over visiting shops in person whilst the virus is still in circulation. Officers from the Highways and Transport team and the Economy and Partnership teams will continue to work together in relation to these measures to support business and the economic recovery.

6. In response to concerns about disabled parking bays being removed in order to facilitate measures to support safer walking and cycling, we were told that disabled bays would be replaced as close to the original ones as possible. Could we have details of where disabled parking bays are being removed and where they will be replaced?

None of the measures implemented to date have resulted in the removal of disabled parking bays.

7. Can we have confirmation that six months after the implementation of TTRN's and TTO's there will be an evaluation as to the efficacy of the decisions?

An update report will be brought to the September meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel. This will include an update on how the programme of measures are working and outline any changes that have been made and the reasons why. Officers will also be regularly monitoring the impacts of the schemes and any easing/re-tightening of government restrictions, and making adjustments as necessary.

Beyond this ongoing review, it is difficult to put a firm timescale on any further formal evaluation of the temporary measures, as this is likely to be closely linked to the timescales for easing of government restrictions, which is currently unknown and difficult to predict. This will influence the timing for taking any decision on if/how to transition the measures to experimental traffic orders (ETO), which would be the

framework under which we intend to assess whether the schemes should be made permanent. As part of the ETO process there would be a formal review after 6 months. A further update on formal evaluation timings will be provided at the September meeting.

Chair of Housing Committee

1. How long will Homesearch be suspended for?

Properties will start being re-advertised via Homesearch from 2 July 2020.

2. What will be the effect on the Housing List by the suspension (e.g. the effect of 1 month's suspension, the effect of 2 month's etc?)

The impact of the suspension has been that between 27/03/2020 and 22/06/2020, no applicants have been able to bid for any properties on Homesearch. However, during this time 85 households have been directly matched and have accepted properties. Direct matching was undertaken in line with the Covid-19 Emergency Letting Policy, reflecting the Government advice on emergency lets during this time.

3. What is the effect on the Discretionary Housing Payment fund by Covid-19? Has there been an increase in applications? Have we got funding for this extra expense from central government?

Lewisham has not received additional Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding because of the Covid-19 crisis, although the amount we received this year did increase by £261,000.

There has not been a marked increase in DHP applications over this period, possibly due to the stop that has been placed on evictions and a reduction in arrears action being taken. Officers anticipate that there will be a spike in applications once eviction activity re-starts and we are preparing accordingly so we can deal with them.

4. What is the plan in respect of all the people who have "jumped" the housing queue (and now been housed in permanent accommodation) once the Covid-19 crisis is over?

There is no further plan for those who were direct-matched and accepted a permanent housing offer as a result of the Emergency Letting Process. These households have moved in and are settling in to their new homes.

5. At the end of March the Government directed that LAs home all street homeless, irrespective of immigration status. When the lockdown is lifted, what will happen to those people we have housed to whom we owe no duty at law to house, beyond the requirement to house during the lockdown?

We are committed to doing everything within our power to ensure that all rough sleepers who have been accommodated as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic are

resettled into longer term accommodation. There is work going on across London to ensure this is joined up and that any additional costs which arise as a result are captured, so discussions can take place with Government about this. All individuals will be fully assessed for their entitlement to accommodation and subsistence and all support that we can legally provide will be given. Where there are issues with the individual's immigration status, we are committed to doing everything within our power to regularise their status to enable us to resettle them.

6. We know the effect of Covid-19 on the revenue of Lewisham Homes because we get regular updates. What's the effect on Phoenix and Pinnacle?

The PFI contract is managed by Regenter B3 who sub-contract housing management to Pinnacle. The PFI contract with Regenter B3 remains unaffected by the pandemic, with regular payments still being made by the Council at the contract rates.

The pandemic may have an impact on the Housing Revenue Account collection rates and void turnaround loss for the properties under the management of the PFI. This would be lost income to the Council. To date there has been minimal impact. The rent collection rate is above 100%, as a result of a balance of support and enforcement, encouraging residents to repay debts via instalments and supporting residents to access benefits.

Lewisham Council has not been made aware of any significant impact on the revenue of Phoenix Community Housing as a result of the pandemic.

7. Greenwich Council are currently paying Council Tax Reduction ("CTR") at 100% and with a 6 month backdate without good cause being shown. Has Lewisham, or is Lewisham, going to amend their CTR scheme in any way to benefit the additional claimants caused by Covid-19 in anyway at all?

Our CTR scheme already awards up to 100% of liability to elderly residents.

We currently have 16,330 households of working-age. We received some hardship funding from central government and have used this to award each household an additional payment of £150 to their council tax account. In addition, we will continue to award £150 to all working-age households who apply and qualify for an award of CTR.