

Agenda No 5

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title: COVID-19 Response

Name of Committee: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 1 June 2020

Report Director: Executive Director

Portfolio: Executive Director

Ward Relevance: All

Prior Consultation: Senior Management Team and various Middle Tier Managers

Contact Officer: Aftab Razzaq (Monitoring Officer)

Public or Private: Public

Report Subject to Call-In: No

Report En-Bloc: Yes

Forward Plan: No

Corporate Priorities: This report relates to the following priority(ies):

(CR) Corporate Resources To provide excellent, value for money services and sustainable growth

(CH) Communities and Homes Achieve financial self-sufficiency by 2020

(EPR) Environment and Public Realm Enable our residents to live healthy, independent lives

(GI) Growth and Investment Optimise income and identify new revenue opportunities (CR)

Prioritise use of resources to meet changing customer needs and demands (CR)

Ensure that the council works efficiently and effectively (CR)

Ensure residents have a home that works for them and is affordable (CH)

Deliver digitally-enabled services that residents can access (CH)

Understand our communities and enable people to take an active part in them (CH)

Enhance our local, open spaces to make them places where people want to be (EPR)

Continue to improve the efficiency of our waste and recycling services (EPR)

Protect the public (EPR)

- Promote sustainable growth and economic prosperity (GI)
- Promote and grow Rugby's visitor economy with our partners (GI)
- Encourage healthy and active lifestyles to improve wellbeing within the borough (GI)
- This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but

Statutory/Policy Background:	None
Summary:	This is an overview report outlining the Council's response to date to the COVID-19 pandemic,
Financial Implications:	As detailed in Section 5.
Risk Management Implications:	There are a multitude of risks attached to the current pandemic and these have been captured in a detailed risk register.
Environmental Implications:	None
Legal Implications:	None
Equality and Diversity:	None
Options:	N/A
Recommendation:	Report to be noted
Reasons for Recommendation:	To update Members on the measures the Council has taken in dealing with the key challenges surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

Cabinet - 1 June 2020

COVID-19 Response

Public Report of the Executive Director

Recommendation

Cabinet note the response from the Council to COVID 19 and specifically the following;

COUNCIL COVID-19 RESPONSE

1. The strategic response as detailed within this report.
2. The support provided to residents through the establishment of the Food Bank and Shielding Hub.
3. As detailed within this report the response from staff to ensure the continuation of vital services.
4. The Council continues to maintain its strategic response as the COVID-19 emergency remains in place.

COUNCIL RECOVERY RESPONSE

As outlined within this report the focus on four key areas within the Council's recovery planning;

- Economy
- Climate
- Health & Communities
- Organisation

1. Background

1.1. On 23 March, the Government commenced a number of 'lockdown' measures due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

1.2 The outbreak of Coronavirus / COVID-19 has had a significant impact globally, nationally, and importantly for the Council locally and on how it undertakes its functions.

1.3 The outbreak has required the Council to adapt quickly to ensure the continuation of vital services that both residents and local businesses rely upon. This significant challenge has resulted in different ways of working, communication, innovation, and overall resilience.

1.4 As set out within this report the Council has assembled an efficient response structure to deal with the outbreak. This structure has enabled the Council to act proactively and efficiently in dealing with the various issues arising through the COVID-

19 outbreak. This structure remains in place and will continue throughout the outbreak and into the recovery phase.

1.5 The COVID-19 response has also been supported by Members. This has been through positive engagement with both staff and the public. The successful cross collaboration between the political parties, particularly the political Group Leaders has also contributed to dealing with the outbreak.

1.6. This report sets out the key areas in which the Council has been able to deal with the key challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak.

2. Response structure

2.1 The Council's Senior Management Team initiated an emergency response structure consisting of strategic and tactical teams before the Local Resilience Forum declared an emergency. This was led by the newly appointed Executive Director and the present Executive Director.

2.2 This emergency response structure enabled the Council to swiftly get into a "battle rhythm" of three strategic and two tactical video calls per week, setting a clear command structure for officers to highlight issues and implement strategic decisions. The strategic team consists of the Senior Management Team supplemented by the Chief Financial Officer, Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services Manager and the Communications Manager; while the tactical team, chaired by the Head of Environment and Public Realm, consists of managers and team leaders from services across the council.

2.3 The Council has also participated in regular conference calls with military, public health, NHS, and local authority partners within the Local Resilience Forum, as well as county-wide and West Midlands-wide calls with relevant partners.

2.4 This regular upwards and downwards briefing rhythm has meant that the Council has been well-prepared for key decisions at the right times. Decision-making and implementation have been swift, with the Shielding Hub operational within three working days and the testing site operational within 24 hours being just two examples. The Council has provided daily updates for Members and weekly briefings with the MP and Group Leaders.

2.5. The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Senior Management Team, in collaboration with the political Group Leaders.

3. Community Response and Engagement

3.1 The community response has also played a vital role in COVID-19. As detailed within section 10, communities have come together in supporting one another. This support has come through in many forms and has supplemented the Council's response.

3.2 The support towards Council workers has also been evident. This has been particularly towards the refuse workers, which as detailed within this report have been able to maintain services.

3.3 The residents of Rugby have also embraced the drive towards digitalisation. This is shown by the upsurge in social media interaction and the use of the Council's digital platforms (as detailed within section 10).

4. Food Bank

4.1 The Rugby Foodbank is part of a nationwide network of foodbanks supported by the Trussell Trust. In late March, the trustees of Rugby Foodbank approached the Council for support in keeping the foodbank open, following a reduction in their own volunteers as a result of the 'lockdown' measures put in place by the Government.

4.2 The Council agreed to take over the running of the foodbank and deployed a team of staff from Legal, Communities and Projects and Parks and Grounds, together with a newly joined customer services apprentice to run the project.

4.3 The Council has been running the foodbank since 27 March 2020 and in that time has:

- Worked with over 40 referring agencies to ensure access to the foodbank was maintained after the Council took over its operation;
- Facilitated a move to an email referral system to ensure referring agencies could continue to issue foodbank vouchers even if they were working from home;
- Worked with local supermarkets, businesses, community organisations and individuals to receive over 25,900 kg of donations of food, drinks and toiletries;
- Given out over 10,500 kg of donations (503 food parcels) to local residents in need, including delivering 95 of those food parcels to residents who are unable to leave their homes;
- Worked with the Shielding Hub and Rugby St Cross to re-distribute 704 kg of donations to where they are most needed most; and
- Extended the opening hours of the foodbank to ensure greater access to those who need the foodbank and kept the foodbank open over the last three bank holidays.

4.4 The unexpected intervention in the foodbank has been a resounding success and has provided vital support to the local community.

4.5 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Legal Services Team Leader, Communities and Project Officers, Corporate Property Project Officer, Customer Services Apprentice and Grounds Maintenance Staff.

5. Shielding Hub

5.1 The Shielding Hub has been established to support those defined by Government as most medically vulnerable to the effects of Covid-19 and who have actively registered as being in need of support to secure food deliveries. The food deliveries made to local vulnerable residents via the hub is intended as a short-term response to the immediate issue of securing food, until the government appointed wholesaler (Brakes for this area) steps in to take over regular deliveries for the remaining shielding period. As a routine part of the hub's role, welfare checks for those residents receiving food support via the hub are carried out, by phone.

5.2 In addition to the medically most vulnerable, there are others that are defined tier 2 vulnerable (for example but not exclusively people recently discharged from hospital, care leavers, others defined as vulnerable under the Care Act) who may need support from the hub by way of a one-off delivery of food, should there be no available support from friends, family or the wider community. Very few residents have registered as being in need of this support as other solutions are often identified through triaging enquiries.

5.3 The shielding hub is exclusively run by re-deployed staff from different services across the Council. The principal roles are hub managers (x2), delivery drivers and handlers to assist with the receipt and sorting of stock, received via the WCC Military Planners. The hub receives food deliveries on a Monday, which are delivered to our vulnerable residents on a Tuesday and Wednesday. The rest of the week, including the on-call requirement for the weekend, is confined to emergency deliveries.

5.4 The numbers of people supported via the hub have varied across the weeks, primarily with increases in demand as more people are identified as being medically vulnerable and others transition to being supported by Brakes, or are now better able to secure on-line shopping delivery slots. There are currently 188 households registered as needing support from the Council to receive food.

5.5 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by officers and in particular the Communities and Projects Manager, Electoral Services Team Leader, Trainee Electoral Services Assistant, Sport Development Officer, Procurement Officer, Corporate Property Officer, Customer Services Coach, the Grounds Maintenance Team, and the Property Repairs Team.

6. Finance/Revenues

Grants

6.1 Since the start of the pandemic Central Government has provided a number of funding sources in order to support Local Authorities to deal with the financial impact. The headline funding source is the emergency funding grant which is a £3.2bn programme. The largest share of the funding was awarded to authorities with social care responsibilities, but homelessness support is also a key priority. The table below summarises that allocations awarded to Rugby Borough Council.

Summary of Grant Funding		£000s	Notes
Emergency Funding	Tranche 1	43	To support the additional costs and the loss of income as a result of CV-19
	Tranche 2	1,078	
	Total	1,121	
Rough Sleeping Contingency Fund		9	For accommodation costs to support vulnerable people
Total		1,130	

6.2 Although a significant sum of money, it is currently estimated that this could fund about one quarter of the costs and the lost income as a result of the pandemic. This will be a figure which will continually be reviewed based on government guidance in the return of services to full provision.

6.3 The funding of the remaining pressure will be monitored throughout the recovery process and will include an assessment of the reserves held by the organisation. The Medium-Term Financial plan will be updated to reflect the forecast impact on 2021/22 and beyond.

6.4 In order to support the local economy the authority has also been allocated funding which will be provided directly to residents and businesses;

Summary of Grant Funding				£000s	Notes
Council Tax Fund		Hardship		651	Council tax relief to vulnerable households
Business Scheme		Support		20,044	Cash grants to eligible business
Business rate relief (funded by MHCLG)				13,157	NDR discounts provided to businesses with a rateable value of under £51,000
Total				33,852	

6.5 At the time of producing this report, the authority has awarded £15,022m of a potential total value of £18.435m in relation to the Business support scheme, this can be summarised as follows

- 304 Retail grants totalling £5.152m
- 987 Small business grants totalling £9.870m

Cash flow management

6.6 During late March and April day-to-day cashflow was prioritised to ensure the availability of funds to meet business critical demands. Officers maintained high liquidity balances in current account or instant access Money Market Funds. Forecasted cashflows are likely to be on a downward trend in the medium/long term, but in the short-term temporary surpluses from grant awards and central government emergency support have alleviated problems. Robust and reliable information on key significant items of income (council tax and business rates payments) will be vital in assessing the medium/long term impact upon investment management.

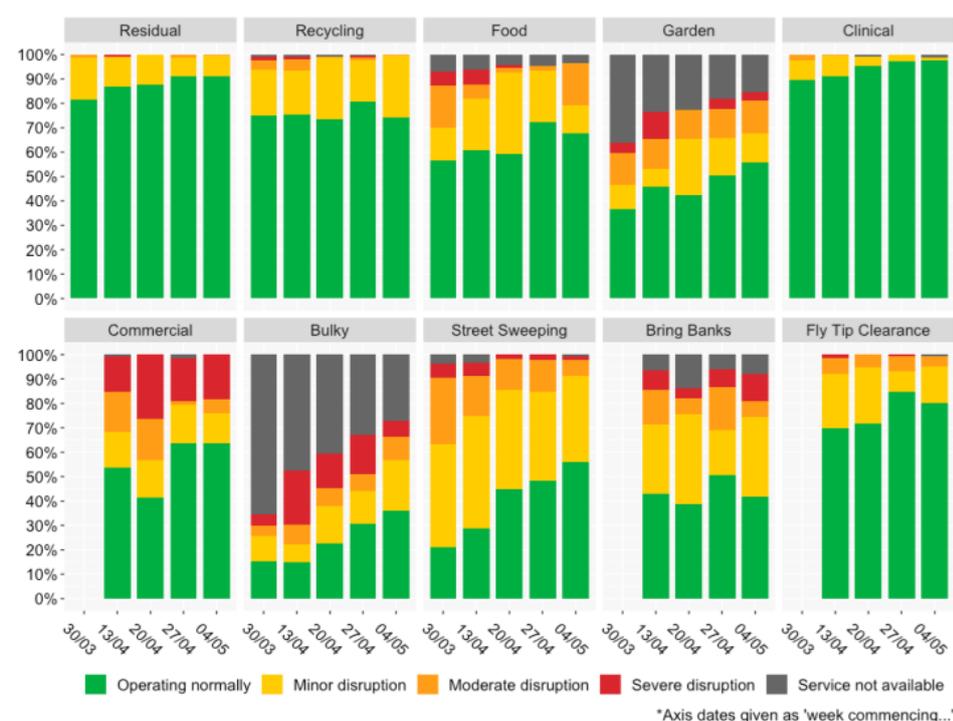
6.7 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Revenues Manager, the Financial Services Manager, and all officers within both teams.

7. Refuse Collection Services

7.1 The Council has been able to maintain its Refuse Collection Services. This has been through the following of national guidelines and the continued cooperation, hard work and resilience of staff. The restructuring of street sweeping resources has allowed for cleansing and waste removal operations to be carried out on sections of the A46 in partnership with Highways England. It should also be noted that the

Commercial Waste collection service is still operating for businesses and customers still operating.

7.2 This maintaining of services was shown through the recent National Waste Industry Survey. The results are set out below and confirm the maintaining of services undertaken by the Council. (all RBC waste collection and fly tip clearance services are represented within the green sections of these fortnightly charts and within the yellow section for street cleansing services).



7.3 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Interim Waste and Transport Manager and all officers within the Work Services Unit.

8. Housing

Homelessness and Public Health Strategic Cell

8.1 The Head of Communities and Homes has been leading Rugby's response with regards to people that are homeless and are at high-risk population for COVID-19. They are more likely to have poor health and multiple comorbidities that are known to increase vulnerability to COVID-19 and face a higher likelihood of serious disease or death from this disease. The Group has also been responding to particular challenges within communal housing settings where there is potential for explosive spread of COVID-19. Key areas and scope of the group has also included the work on how we protect this vulnerable population as far as possible by:

- reducing the transmission risk through as good as possible infection control procedures
- identifying individuals who may be symptomatic early
- finding people suitable space to physically isolate themselves, and
- providing the support they need during that time to remain in that accommodation.

8.2 A Single Point of Contact process (being provided and led by Rugby and Public Health) is now in place across the whole of Warwickshire- District's/Borough, Public Health and Community and Voluntary Sector partners.

CAST

8.3 The Community Advice and Support Team have seen a dramatic increase in the number of clients that have had to be provided with temporary accommodation in a very short period.

8.4 The Government requested that all rough sleepers should be provided with accommodation, and accommodation has been provided for all those who were accommodated by the Winter Night Shelter, our own Cold Weather Support Project or those who were still rough sleeping and had refused previous offers of accommodation. In addition to the provision of accommodation, they have also been provided with meals to encourage them to remain in the accommodation provided.

8.5 The Council has been working in conjunction with the other District and Borough Councils, Warwickshire County Council and partner agencies to ensure a co-ordinated response plan is in place to support any rough sleepers who are required to self-isolate due to having COVID-19 symptoms.

8.6 In addition to working with rough sleepers, we have also been providing accommodation to those who were previously staying with friends, sofa-surfing prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.

8.7 The Council will be working with individuals to create a plan with the aim of moving clients to more settled accommodation and therefore avoiding a return to rough sleeping.

8.8 The Council has assisted with the discharge of two patients from hospital into temporary accommodation. The aim of this was to create additional in-patient capacity within the hospitals. The team will work with both clients to identify long-term housing options.

8.9 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Community Advice and Support Team Manager, Community Advice and Support Team Leader, and all officers within the CAST team.

HOUSING

8.10 The Council has contacted all of our Independent Living Tenants and replaced home visits with telephone calls, gathering essential data to ensure that the most vulnerable tenants needs are being met and making appropriate referrals for support where necessary.

8.11 The Council has maintained a presence on at Independent Living schemes ensuring that residents health and safety and building safety has been maintained.

8.12 The Council has continued to install and replace Lifeline units, it has assisted in the installation of Lifeline units due to hospital discharge working with partners in Warwickshire and has implemented a 'click and collect' service for private customers who have signed up for the service and who were able to install the equipment

themselves. It has continued to attend to emergency calls for assistance where necessary.

8.13 The Council has contacted all of its most vulnerable general needs tenants ensuring that they have had access to necessary foods and medicines.

8.14 The Council has continued to address any tenancy and estate management issues including anti-social behaviour during the crisis.

8.15 The Council has continued to support our most vulnerable tenants throughout the crisis and contributed to the delivery of food parcels and medication.

8.16 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Housing Services Manager and the Housing Services Team.

9. Regulatory Services/Enforcement

9.1 Regulatory Services covers a wide range of roles including food safety, health and safety, infectious disease control, private housing, licensing, pest control, community safety and parking.

9.2 The two objectives have been to maintain existing services where possible, which in most cases it has been, while also meeting new demands which have included enforcement of closures; enforcement of social distancing in our parks; increased nuisance complaints (noise and bonfires); and increased fly tipping. Advice has also been given to businesses e.g. food businesses setting up takeaways; social distancing in supermarkets; legionella in empty buildings; suspension of evictions for private landlords; and protecting residents from COVID-19 for landlords of houses in multiple occupation.

9.3 The Council has been able to adapt quickly, and this has included additional flexibility. The use of the Community Wardens has meant that the Council has been able to provide cover 8 am – 11 pm 7 days per week. Services such as pest control have been maintained with revised procedures, which some other local authorities have not been able to do.

9.4 The Council has also maintained its partnership working with other Warwickshire authorities, Warwickshire County Council Trading Standards and Warwickshire Police; all of which have been very important. Like all local authorities parking income has been affected, but the car parks have been used for the COVID-19 test stations, shielding hub, foodbank, blood donors and key workers including staff, and are forming part of the government's return to work strategy. Work is now being carried out with Public Health England and Public Health Warwickshire to use our public health qualified staff to support the national contact tracing project.

9.5 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Regulatory Services Manager, Community Wardens, and all officers within Regulatory Services.

10. Communications and Public engagement

10.1 In any declared emergency public information is critical, however it provides a particular challenge in a public health emergency due to the prolonged nature of the emergency response.

10.2 The Council's communications response has focused on providing critical public information at the right time, in a way that is accessible to residents and encourages an appropriate response. With local news now only published weekly to a very limited audience the Council has deliberately targeted its communications directly to residents.

10.3 The primary response has been digital via the Council website and social media. However, on 3 April, just over two weeks after the Prime Minister's initial announcement, the Council wrote to all households explaining how residents could get the support that they needed. This letter was sent to 48,000 households over a five-day period and a copy was posted on the website and social media. The content of that letter remains accurate and relevant.

10.4 Social media posts have aligned with one of three communications objectives:

- Build community
- Support the vulnerable
- Support the economy

Content has covered the government and NHS messaging on Stay at Home and later Stay Alert, support for mental health, the #YouAreNotAlone domestic abuse campaign and #ThankHoliday messaging supporting key workers.

10.5 The communications team have also signposted the business support grants and growth hub small business support team and written to 500 businesses that did not respond. Community and neighbourhood networks have been promoted, residents have been encouraged to be good neighbours by avoiding smoky bonfires and keeping the noise down, and we have supported key messaging on waste management. On a single day, a social media post on checking your next bin day resulted in nearly 300 downloads of the Council's app, helping the Council reach ten per cent of all households that are now using the app.

10.6 The communications team has liaised closely with all services, and particularly the shielding hub, the foodbank, waste services and the customer service centre. By horizon scanning, anticipating problems and working closely with these services the team aimed to mitigate potential peaks in demand to the customer service centre by publishing relevant and timely content. While inbound contact has at times been high, this approach has helped make sure that the customer service centre has never had call demand that exceeded its capacity.

10.7 The coronavirus pandemic has given the communications team a unique opportunity to broaden the range and scope of social media content and modify the Council's "tone of voice" through conversational and engaging content. The team have made significant use of video showing behind the scenes footage of the Council's foodbank, shielding hub and waste management operations as well as featuring staff explaining how they are working to support communities. Photos of council operations

and of gifts and artwork left for our bin crews have been received positively, as have the weekly clap for carers videos featuring different teams from across the Council.

10.8 This new approach to content creation and dissemination has resulted in the council's Facebook page more than doubling its number of followers. At the time of preparing this report posts had reached residents more than 780,000 times and the account now has more followers than any other Warwickshire authority. Website content related to coronavirus has been accessed more than 113,000 times.

10.9 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Communications Manager and all officers within the Communications Team.

11. Bereavement Services

11.1 The COVID-19 outbreak has inevitably given rise to a significant demand upon Bereavement Services and the Crematorium. This demand has required officers to be resilient, innovative and consider a wide range of matters such as the requirements of mourners and the overall operational procedures to meet the unprecedented demand.

11.2 The Council has been able to maintain an efficient service and put in place operational procedures to ensure the safety of staff, whilst recognising the needs of mourners. These procedures have been made in conjunction with government guidance, and the evolving nature of this advice has required staff to be proactive and resilient to these changes. The Council has also been able to offer web streaming facilities to mourners, and this innovative measure has assisted in the difficult decisions in the number of attendees and allowing virtual access to those that are not able to attend.

11.3 The Crematorium continues to provide a key service and operate within capacity.

11.4 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Bereavement Services Manager and all officers within the Bereavement Services Team.

12. Customer Contact Centre/Business Support Services/Control Centre

12.1 The Contact Centre has played a key role in the Council's response to COVID-19. The demand in areas such as emails have increased, and this has been coupled with the difficult circumstances of wholesale changes to working practices.

12.2 The Contact Centre has been able to maintain its services and provide a clear communication message to residents. The Business Support Team have also provided the required support to key service areas to ensure the swift response to COVID-19. As set out in this report the Council issued 48,000 letters over a five-day period, and the Business Support Team were instrumental in the Council being able to issue such letters over such a short period.

12.3 The Control Centre have also provided valuable support in contacting vulnerable residents.

12.3 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Customer and Business Support Services Manager, Business Support Services Team Leader, and all officers within Customer & Business Support, and the Control Centre.

Other Key Support Areas

13. ICT Services

13.1 The demands of virtual working have also put significant demands on IT services. This has required providing additional equipment to staff, dealing with ad-hoc training needs and overall ensuring the required infrastructure to ensure the Council can utilise its IT and virtual tools.

13.2 The support provided by IT services has ensured that staff are able to work from home and conduct virtual meetings. This has been essential in dealing with the outbreak and allowing staff to work from home.

13.3 The IT department has also provided continuous data support and cleansing for the shielding hub, allowing them to provide the necessary deliveries to the people most vulnerable in our community. IT have been required to ensure the data being received from several sources including Warwickshire County Council, NHS and delivery providers is put through an automated process for cross checking on a daily basis and then visually produced through Council's business intelligence reporting dashboards.

13.4 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Corporate ICT Manager and all officers within ICT services.

14. Democratic Services/Decision Making

14.1 The Council has been able to maintain its decision-making functions. Where appropriate emergency powers have been exercised and the use of delegated powers.

14.2 There also been the required work undertaken to ensure that virtual meetings can be operational from the beginning of June. As the COVID-19 outbreak was towards the end of the Municipal Year it has meant that there has been minimal impact on key decisions.

14.3 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Legal Democratic & Electoral Services Manager, Democratic Services Team Leader, Democratic Service Officers, the Legal Team Leader, the Digital Innovation & Account Management Leader Officer, and IT Trainers.

15. Human Resources

15.1 The COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in a variety of HR implications. This has been due to the unprecedented change in circumstances and much of the workforce working from home.

15.2 The HR Team have been required to advise on issues such as working from home protocols, childcare, holidays, recruitment, and disciplinaries. The impact on employees has been significant, and this has equally required significant support from the HR Team.

15.3 This support and advice has been made in conjunction with legal advice and wider collaboration through West Midlands Employers Association.

15.4 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Human Resources Manager and the Human Resources Team.

16. Planning Services

16.1 As set out above the vast majority of the workforce is now working from home and this includes Planning Services. This change in working practices has resulted in a minimal disruption to a key regulatory service. Officers have implemented social distancing measures to site visits, and areas such as development management, planning enforcement and policy have been maintained.

16.2 The Development Management team have continued to process planning applications and have also been able to deal with an increase in such applications.

16.3 The number of applications received during April 2020 was 73, compared to 56 in January 2020, 68 in February 2020 and 80 in March 2020. Therefore, the first full lockdown month was the Council's second busiest month of 2020.

16.4 Based on Monday 18th May 2020 the number of applications officers had on hand was the highest recorded since the introduction of the Council's new system last year at c335. It has steadily been rising since the beginning of the calendar year from c275.

16.5 The number of applications that were determined in April 2020 was 65, compared to 57 in April 2019. The functions of Planning Committee have been maintained in the very small number of cases whereby emergency powers have been exercised.

Planning Income:

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
April	- 27,559	- 47,872	- 115,783	- 91,109
May	- 62,175	- 37,166	- 192,542	- 49,921

The above table sets out the income generated with **the figures for May 2020/21 being for the first week of May only.**

16.6 The Planning Policy Team has also been able to maintain its key strategic work in areas such as the Air Quality SPD, and South West Rugby SPD.

16.7 The Council, through the newly appointed Executive Director has also reached out to developers to maintain a strong collaborative relationship through this COVID-19 pandemic.

16.8 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Development & Enforcement Manager, the Development Strategy Manager, and officers across planning services.

17. Legal Services

17.1 As set out in Section 2 (response structure) the Legal, Democratic & Electoral Services Manager has provided a key role in the strategic response and the various legal implications and interpretation arising from the COVID-19 planning.

17.2 The Legal Team have also provided key support during this pandemic. This has entailed the legal implications of COVID-19 in a number of areas such as procurement, employment, housing, human resources, and both criminal and civil litigation.

17.3 The Legal Team have also continued to maintain support to ensure the Council is able to continue with its disposals and acquisitions. This has been through minimal disruption and in parallel work is being undertaken to implement a case management system. This system will strengthen the ability of the team to work remotely and support the Council through COVID-19.

17.4 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Legal Democratic & Electoral Services Manager, Legal Services Team Leader, and all officers across Legal Services.

18. Corporate Assurance Risk/Safety and Resilience/Procurement

18.1 COVID-19 has resulted in wide ranging risks in several areas. This includes the delivery of Council services and the overall response to COVID-19. The assessment of risks has been through the strategic and tactical discussions with an overall risk register being formulated. This register will continue to be managed and updated by the Corporate Assurance Team.

18.2 The Council has also undertaken a comprehensive exercise to ensure the required health and safety practices are implemented at the Town Hall.

18.3 The Council's Procurement Officer has also worked in conjunction with the Safety and Resilience Manager in securing vital PPE equipment for the Council.

18.4 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Procurement Officer, Safety and Resilience Manager, Corporate Assurance and Improvement Manager, and officers within both teams.

19. Sport and Recreation Services

19.1 The Sport and Recreation Service faced new challenges as services usually consist of a variety of practical sessions for support and guidance to young people and families across the Borough. Following the close down of public spaces, all community engagement was cancelled within a 48-hour period, informing young people via email, text and social media to ensure compliance with the governments Stay Home, Stay Safe messaging.

19.2 In the absence of access to public spaces, the teams have developed a significant number of policies and guidelines to initiate online workshops, programmes and support mechanisms. With new risk assessments and online policies in place, staff have moved to delivering online content to our residents. Family Lifestyle Advisers continue to develop new programmes and contact those families who have been

identified by Warwickshire School Nurses as needing additional support. Consequently, 1-1 support sessions with some of the Borough's most at risk young people have been delivered ensuring young people are safeguarded during the lockdown.

19.3 The Play Service has striven to deliver a range of online materials for families to engage with including a 6 part series of 'Tree Top Tom' and Forest Schools @ Home. This series generated 3,000 views on the Sport and Recreation Facebook page and were supplemented by a number of 'how to' instructional videos for home made arts and crafts such as milk bottle elephants. One member of the Play Ranger team has continued to support our partner school delivering Forest Schools and play support to those key worker children who have attended school.

19.4 On Track have also moved online with pupil mentoring being delivered to those requested for additional support from their schools and families. New policies and procedures are now in place to deliver a range of online youth club content that will engage the young people from the range of services. This will bring young people from different areas of the Borough, possibly for the first time as youth sessions bring together Long Lawford, Overslade, Brownsover and Hillmorton young people.

19.5 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Sports and Recreation Manager and all officers within this service area.

20. The Benn Hall/Rugby Art Gallery and Museum (RAGM)/Visitor Centre

20.1 The Benn had a significant task of engaging all promoters, community groups and companies to cancel a 3-month programme of bookings, room hire and ticket sales.

20.2 Due to the quick response and relationships built up, 90% of events have been rescheduled for later in 2020 and 2021, with minimal loss to programming. Staff have worked to engage all customers and issue ticket refunds where customers do not wish to transfer their tickets to the new shows.

20.3 The building continues to provide Blood Donations sessions coordinated through the NHS. Safe working practices have been adopted with social distancing measures created within the building. This was alongside offering refreshment and toilet provision for the military personnel who delivered the Mobile Testing Unit in the Newbold Road carpark.

20.4 Staff are planning ahead for the potential reopening of services including community and private events and ensuring the building is risk assessed and managed safely to ensure social distancing measures can be maintained throughout, with reduced capacity being communicated with hirers and promoters.

20.5 The RAGM/Visitor Centre have also responded to COVID-19 by continuing to work proactively to support artists, audiences and communities through innovative measures and digital platforms.

20.5 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Benn Hall Manager, The Arts Heritage and Visitor Services Managers, and all officers within both teams.

21. Property Services/Property Repairs.

21.1 The Property Repairs team has focussed on emergency repairs during the lockdown and ensuring repairs all void properties are complete to facilitate re-letting of these properties quickly once this can recommence, The service has also provided support to Warwickshire Heart to enable the safe discharge of patients from hospitals back in to their homes.

21.2 The Property Services have also continued to maintain its overall services which has included acquisitions and disposals, and delivering its statutory obligations in areas such as gas and electrical safety compliance on the Council's assets.

21.3 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Interim Property Repairs Manager and Property Services Manager, all Team Leaders, and officers across both services.

22. Parks and Open Spaces

22.1 The role of Parks has played a key role in the dealing with the challenges of COVID-19. The access to Parks and Open Spaces has formed a key part to the central government guidance, and the staff have worked closely to maintain access and overall management of the Council's Parks and Open Spaces.

22.2 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Parks and Grounds Manager and all officers within the Green Division.

23. Elections

23.1 As we are all aware COVID-19 has had a direct impact on the planned elections that were due to take place this year. The Elections Team have managed to establish remote working practices, and this is in conjunction with the redeployment of part of the team to the Shielding Hub.

23.2 The Elections Team continue to work through discharging the Council's statutory obligations and is also planning for the significant challenges that will arise next year.

23.3 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by the Electoral Services Team Leader, both Trainee Electoral Services Assistants, and the Electoral Services Officer.

24. Redeployment

24.1 A number of staff members have either been redeployed or put their names forward for redeployment. This resounding support from staff and overall resilience has been instrumental in the Council's response to COVID-19.

24.2 The Council acknowledges the significant contribution by all staff that have been redeployed.

25. Continued Emergency

25.1 The Council remains very much in its emergency response to COVID-19. This will remain in place until such time that the Local Resilience Forum declares that the emergency is over.

25.2 As detailed within this report the strategic response from the Council, the input of Group Leaders, the significant hard work of staff and the collaboration with Members has resulted in RBC being able to meet the challenges of the outbreak. These challenges continue and will take place through to the phase of final recovery. As detailed within this report the processes that have been put in place will continue to be maintained.

26. Recovery

26.1 In parallel with the emergency response to COVID-19, the Council is planning for the recovery. This recovery planning will be made in conjunction with the evolving nature of the pandemic and COVID-19. As detailed within this report the strategic emergency response will remain in place for the planning and implementation of recovery.

26.2 As part of recovery planning it envisaged that this will comprise the following key elements;

Economy

26.3 The Council recognises its fundamental role in supporting the local economy and the subsequent benefits to a variety of areas in having a strong and supported economy. It is difficult to predict at this stage what the impact will be, however we are very much aware of the challenges our businesses and residents face and we will continue to make representations to Central Government on ways to provide support.

26.4 Furthermore, work has commenced to prioritise activities the Council can undertake to support economic recovery. Also, since the easing of the lockdown, work has commenced on making the Town Centre COVID secure, in order to support retailers to welcome customers with confidence.

Climate

26.5 As we are aware the Council declared a Climate Emergency last year and this focus will not be deterred by COVID-19. This pandemic has brought forward innovation in a variety of forms such as digitisation, transport, and overall, several ways in addressing the way the Council discharges its functions and its staff operate. Again, this will be incorporated into the Council's recovery planning.

Health & Communities

26.6 The COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, and the Council is aware of the significant impact it has had on the health and communities of the residents of Rugby. The Council's response to COVID-19 has ensured that as much as possible residents have been supported. However, the Council recognises its key role and the continued

needs in areas such as mental health, domestic violence, homelessness, and overall wellbeing.

Organisation

26.7 Services will continue to adjust and change as they respond to the needs of residents and businesses in a very different environment. The use of remote technology has been adopted rapidly and widely in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Council will be identifying how this can support efficient and effective service delivery.

27. Conclusion

27.1 The circumstances of COVID-19 are unprecedented, and this report highlights the comprehensive response from the Council.

26.2 It is requested that Cabinet note this report.

Name of Meeting: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 1 June 2020

Subject Matter:

Originating Department: Please select

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY YES NO

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A