

Committee: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 11 June 2020

Title of Report: Cumbria County Council's Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Report by: The Chief Executive

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council

What is the Report About? (Executive Summary)

1. This report provides an overview of the Council's response to the Covid-19 epidemic to date.

Recommendation of the Chief Executive

2. It is recommended that Cabinet note the report.

Background to the Proposals

3. The first confirmed positive case of Covid-19 in Cumbria was notified on 3 March 2020, with the number of cases rising rapidly from that point. A major incident was declared on 11 March and the first death in the County sadly came on 18 March. In the three months to 3 June 2020, there have been 399 deaths ascribed to Covid-19 registered in Cumbria. Mortality peaked in mid-April and has been declining since, with a smaller second peak in early May, mainly associated with outbreaks in care homes. To put these figures in context, this is more than twice the number of deaths than in the worst flu seasons over the last 50 years. This is despite the impacts of "lockdown" in rapidly reducing the spread of the virus and bringing the death rate to a peak much earlier, and at a much lower level, than might have been expected otherwise.
4. On 2 June, Public Health England released Age Standardised Mortality Rates for upper tier local authorities. These are death rates that have been adjusted to take account of the age structure of the population. This is crucial in understanding the impact of the epidemic at a local level. Covid-19 very disproportionately affects older age groups – and as such, County's such as Cumbria that have an older population on average would be expected to have a higher crude death rate. As at 13 May (the latest age standardised data available) the rates were as follows:

	Males		Females	
	Deaths	Rate	Deaths	Rate
England	17,597	76.1	12,075	38.8
North West	2,735	91.2	1,949	48.0
Cumbria	188	70.1	138	38.6

5. From these figures, it can be seen that when the age structure of the population is taken into account, Cumbria's overall death rate is slightly below the national average.
6. All-cause mortality rates (including deaths from Covid-19) are currently returned to the levels that would be expected in a normal year.
7. It is important to note that the epidemic is not over. The virus is still circulating in the community, and the gradual release of the lockdown measures is a very risky time in the progress of the epidemic. If physical distancing measures break down too fast, there is a very real risk of local outbreaks that end up merging into a generalised second wave of infections. As lockdown measures are eased, it is therefore important both for the public to continue to observe the physical distancing guidelines that remain in place, and for local public health agencies to be able to identify and respond quickly to cases and outbreaks that emerge.
8. As a category 1 responder as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act, the County Council has been a standing and active participant in the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) since its formation on 4 March. For the period 4 March to 20 March the County Council, through the Director of Public Health, chaired the SCG and from that date the SCG has been chaired by Assistant Chief Constable of Cumbria Constabulary. The Director of Public Health has been a participant in the SCG throughout as has the Council's duty Assistant Director. Council officers also lead a number of sub-groups to the SCG, these are: Care Homes, PPE, Waste, Logistics, Multi-Agency Information Cell, Strategic Media Advisory Cell and Education.

Public Health and Community Services

9. The Council's Public Health team have been at the forefront of the response to Covid-19 in Cumbria. The Director of Public Health has played a key leadership role. Working with partners across the health system at a local and regional level and has been in close contact throughout with the Chief Medical Officer. Since the beginning of the epidemic the public health team has:
 - Acted as the main source of public advice and communications at a local level;
 - Led on predictive modelling and monitoring of the epidemic to ensure strategic awareness of the local position;

- Provided specialist public health advice to the Strategic Co-ordination Group and other joint planning groups within the response;
- Provided a wide range of advice and guidance on key health protection matters, including on the appropriate use of Personal Protective Equipment and on wider infection prevention and control measures, to the Council and partners including schools and care homes;
- Established and led joint infection control systems to manage the partnership response to outbreaks in care homes;
- Provided capacity and support to the Community Hubs both through specialist guidance and releasing staff capacity to provide direct support;
- Continued through the Health and Wellbeing Coach team to provide crucial support to vulnerable clients in a wide range of innovative ways that respect physical distancing guidance;
- Set up a local approach to contact tracing, testing and outbreak management to support and enhance the national and regional system, bringing together colleagues from District Council Environmental Health teams, NHS services, the County Council Service Centre and Digital Teams, and Public Health England into the first fully-functional local Covid-19 outbreak response system in the North West of England.

10. As the epidemic response moves into its next phase, the public health team will be even more central to the safe release of lockdown measures through the establishment and running of a new Health Protection Board and joint Incident/Outbreak Management Hub to co-ordinate the work of the local Test and Trace function.

11. Shielding Hubs: On Monday 30 March 2020 Cumbria County Council and partners launched an emergency support service comprising 6 welfare coordination hubs and a call centre. Established in just 5 days the hubs have been vital in helping thousands of vulnerable people across County. Receiving on average 200 contacts a day via telephone, online or email the most common requests have been for help with medication and prescription collections, food supplies and from family members who are isolating or live far away and are worried about elderly loved ones who they would normally care for. As well as providing much needed support directly to vulnerable residents the hubs have been central in locally matching voluntary offers of support to those requesting this, thereby supporting the co-ordination of the very positive local response to Covid-19 in our communities.

12. Libraries have been closed during the lockdown, however the Council has maintained a core delivery service to the most vulnerable. During the lockdown we have seen very significant increase in the use of on-line and electronic services with some increasing by over 70%. The Council has been reviewing how services can be provided in the future and how libraries can be made safe for public access in the future once national guidance allows for this. The Council's Archives service has also been closed to the public during the lock-down. Many staff from the archive and

libraries service volunteered to be re-deployed to support other front-line roles such as in the locality shielding hubs and to support front-line care services.

13. The Council's registration service has played an important part in the response to Covid-19 with death registration being a critical service area at a time of increased deaths across the County. All other registration services have ceased during the lock down. Government guidance has recently been received that outlines a re-commencement of birth registration, with no changes to the regulations the registration of births will continue to be conducted face to face, work is ongoing to put in place the measures required to ensure that this is done safely. All weddings have been stopped during the lockdown and there has, to date, been no further government guidance in relation to weddings, however this is anticipated in the near future.

Health and Care Services

14. The Council's response across health and social care has been characterised by strong partnership work and system leadership with health including both Clinical Commissioning Groups in Cumbria and Hospital Trusts in the County along with NHS England and wider partners.
15. At the beginning of the outbreak considerable work was undertaken to support hospital discharge which made a significant contribution to ensuring that hospitals in Cumbria have maintained sufficient acute capacity to care for covid-19 positive patients. To assist with this this Adult social care teams provided a 7-day per week services on extended hours during the peak of the incident. Teams worked to quickly respond to any situations where care and support arrangements were disrupted due to fragility in the care sector. This has resulted in Social Work and Occupational Therapy Teams reviewing changes to care packages arising from Covid-19 to ensure people are safe and are in receipt of care and support proportionate to their needs. In addition, communication has gone to all direct payment recipients to inform them where to access up to date information, advice, guidance and support during the Covid-19 outbreak.
16. The Council has been able to maintain its care services and has not, unlike some local authorities, found it necessary to enact Care Act "easements".

Care Homes

17. The increasing concern regarding fragility of care homes due to staffing and outbreaks of Covid-19 led to the formation of a multi-agency group and 24/7 response cell led by the County Council. Part of the work of the group has been to produce a co-ordinated process for managing admissions to care homes to minimise the spread of Covid-19. In addition a multi-agency Outbreak Control Team has been established which receives daily intelligence on the spread of the infection in care homes and provides a coordinated response. At the time of writing the report

the situation in Care Homes has stabilised with falling numbers of homes which are Covid-19 positive and a lower infections rate for staff and residents.

18. The Council responded quickly in providing a supportive response to the social care market and promptly established mechanisms to collate vital intelligence to coordinate an effective response to the pandemic. This includes daily information collection to assess the state of the local market. As well as daily calls to all care homes, processes are in place to collate data from domiciliary, supported living and other areas of the care sector. Information includes (but not limited to): vacancies, number of COVID-19 deaths, current outbreak status, impact on staffing and PPE status. This also provides a mechanism to identify and address where possible any financial challenges faced by providers as a result of COVID-19.
19. To ensure effective and timely communication with providers a new dedicated email was created that is staffed seven days a week, from which key information such as updated PPE guidance has been communicated to all providers and allowed providers to have a single point of contact for any COVID-19 related issues they needed to raise.
20. Cumbria Care have been at the forefront of the Council's response to the Covid-19 epidemic providing residential care and home care services to some of the most vulnerable residents in the County. Services have been delivered in line with national guidance throughout and Cumbria Care has worked with the Council's public health team to ensure accurate and timely information and interpretation of national guidance has been made available to the wider care home and home care sector in the County.
21. Cumbria Care have ensured that care home residents have been able to stay in contact with families and loved ones, despite the need to restrict visits, through supporting phone calls and video chats. Cumbria Care staff have been an essential emotional support to residents at an extremely difficult time when face to face contact with family has not been possible, they have worked exceptionally hard to address issues of isolation providing care and support to residents throughout.

Schools and Learning

22. In early March Cumbria County Council and leaders across the education system established the Education Tactical Co-ordination Group (ETCG) as a sub-group of the SCG. Chaired and led by the Council's Assistant Director Education and Skills this group has overseen the temporary closure of schools and the establishment of a network of school hubs to provide education and childcare to the children of key workers and vulnerable children. Disadvantaged and vulnerable children have been a priority throughout. The approach has been based on working with schools to adopt a hierarchy of need based on: Priority one: Vulnerable children, Priority two:

Children of critical workers and more recently Priority three: Children in year groups identified in the Government's announcement on 10 May.

23. On 31 March, the DfE introduced a national voucher system, and where possible head teachers have been ensuring children entitled to Free School Meals pupils are getting vouchers. On 19 April the Department for Education announced an initiative to provide digital devices (laptops/tablets) and internet access for some disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people who do not currently have access to them from other sources. Through this scheme the County Council is responsible for ordering and distributing devices to: care leavers and children with a social worker; and disadvantaged year 10 pupils in maintained schools (Academy Trusts are responsible for disadvantaged year 10 pupils in their schools, who do not have a social worker). The needs of over 3,000 potentially eligible children & young people were assessed by social work teams and relevant schools. The DfE provided initial figures for the allocations of devices for each cohort, which whilst sufficient for care leavers and children with a social worker with a moderate or high level of need were insufficient for the number of disadvantaged year 10 pupils in maintained schools with a moderate or high level of need. The County Council has subsequently been successful in its application for this allocation to be increased. The ordering and logistics for the delivery of these devices is underway with distribution by the middle of June.
24. Throughout the epidemic the council has provided regular updates to families, schools and childcare settings throughout the period which are available on the Council's website. The information made available has been extremely broad and includes things like guidance on Covid-19 testing for school staff, guidance on social distancing, guidance on personal protective equipment and updates on national policy developments.
25. Since the Prime Ministers announcement on 10 May of a phased return to wider school opening, commencing on 1st June for pupils in reception, year 1 and year 6, the Council has undertaken a huge amount of work to support schools across Cumbria to make their own decisions as to whether to open and to support them where they have decided to do so. We have worked with schools on their risk assessments and operational plans, ensured they have the PPE they require, provided guidance and advice to schools and parents and have put transport arrangements in place for specific children with SEND for whom transport is essential to ensure they can attend. Dialogue with schools over the half term period indicated that on 1st June 194 schools would be open and that the 17 School Hubs would in addition remain open. This represents 67% of the 322 schools in Cumbria. The Council understands that this position is largely accurate but it is noted that the Council is dependent upon information updates from individual schools in relation to their status and situation remains fluid as on a daily and weekly basis head teachers are having to make operational decisions in respect of their schools based on local factors such as staff availability and local risk management. Additional schools have indicated their intention to open over the coming weeks and it is

understand that by 22 June in the region of 80% of schools in Cumbria will have decided to open. The Council is working closely with head teachers to develop and simple to use daily attendance return to provide up to date information on school attendance levels while recognising the significant pressures on school leaders at the present time.

Children's Social Care Services

26. The approach within children and young people's services in Cumbria, in line with other local authorities was initially to very quickly undertake risk assessment RAG rating of all children and young people open to services. Clear procedural guidance was developed alongside of this to ensure that practitioners and managers were clear regarding expectations including maintaining contact, visiting, and management oversight during this period. Many visits to families have been virtual. But face to face visits have been made in the family's homes and appropriate PPE has been provided where required. We have continued to work closely with professional networks including North West Association of Directors of Children's Services NWADCS, Ofsted, and the Principal Social Worker (PSW) Network to source and share best practice to support and inform our approach. The majority of staff have worked at home during this period with a small team of social workers and team manager present in the district offices throughout.
27. On the 3 April 2020 the DfE published guidance for local authority children's social care departments, to guide appropriate responses to the current challenging pandemic situation which ensure the most vulnerable children and young people continue to be supported and protected. The guidance details how the DfE recognise that flexibility may be required in maintaining statutory functions, but that this must be done in a manner which keeps the child or young person at the centre of decision making, prioritises those at greatest risk, and with record keeping that provides a clear audit trail of decision making and any deviation from normal practices. We have followed this guidance throughout and ensured we continue to take robust steps to ensure that we continue to support and discharge our statutory responsibilities towards vulnerable children and young people in Cumbria.
28. The DfE updated children's social care guidance on 6 May following the Adoption and Children's (Coronavirus) Regulations coming into effect on 24 April 2020. These regulations temporarily amend 10 sets of regulations, related to children's social care, to provide additional flexibility in meeting statutory obligations whilst maintaining appropriate safeguards. The regulations are in place until 25 September 2020. The Council's position in relation to the flexibilities is that they will only be utilised when absolutely necessary and with appropriate oversight in doing so through the Assistant Director or Executive Director. In many instances we are not proposing to take up the flexibilities on offer, however a limited number will be used for example the ability to undertake virtual visits (for children we have assessed to be low risk) and hosting meetings virtually rather than face to face.

29. We continue to place the welfare and wellbeing of our most vulnerable children and young people at the centre of our decision making, and our priority is to ensure we continue to support and discharge our statutory responsibilities towards vulnerable children and young people in Cumbria.

Environment, Health & Safety

30. Throughout the epidemic the Waste Services team have played a central role in co-ordinating and leading work across the County to ensure that the core domestic waste collection and disposal services and dry waste recycling services have remained operational throughout. The waste services team have chaired and led the Waste sub-group of the SCG which has brought together representatives from all the District Council's plus other relevant bodies such as the Environment Agency. Colleagues have worked collaboratively to ensure that the core kerbside collection service has remained operational throughout in all areas. The group has implemented measures such as: redeployment of HGV drivers which included 10 County Council staff being redeployed from Highways to support District collection services, vehicles and welfare facilities being shared and the close monitored of fly tipping. A hotline was established for Police, Fire & Rescue and Districts to report incidents of fly tipping through which 9 incidents of general fly tipping and 24 incidents at HWRC's were reported and responded to. In line with national guidance at the start of the lock-down period the Council temporarily suspended the operation of its Household Waste Recycling Centres, once national guidance allowed for these to be re-opened the Council undertook detailed operational planning, working closely with district councils and the police to enable a safe re-opening of these sites to the public.

31. The role of the Corporate Health and Safety team has been central to many aspects of the Council's response to the covid-19 epidemic with the teams full capacity deployed to work with recognised Trade Union and service based colleagues to mitigate the risks of transmission of covid-19 to our staff, elected members and the public that use Council services. The Health and Safety team have supported all service areas with guidance and advice, have worked to translate national guidance into plain language and user friendly formats, have developed training and induction materials, have worked with front-line services to develop specific risk assessments and safe operating procedures.

32. The team have also worked very closely with schools developing the risk assessment methodology that they have used to make their own decisions about opening to those year groups and pupils allowed under the national guidance. The team have worked closely with head-teachers to support their work. The Health and Safety team have and continue to work closely with trade union colleagues with various weekly meetings focused on health and safety, the Council response to the challenges faced by Covid-19 and to review specific challenges such as the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE).

33. The Council has played a pivotal role in the management of PPE across the County. This has been in relation to supporting the NHS, wider public services and independent care providers and County Council services. The Council has led the management and distribution of PPE on behalf of the Local Resilience Forum since it started to receive supplies of PPE from the U.K Government on 5th April. The Council provides the management, storage, logistics, distribution and call centre function to supply PPE across a broad range of critical front-line services. The management of the LRF PPE is overseen by the PPE sub-group of the SCG which is chaired by the County Council. The Council has also undertaken significant procurement of PPE to ensure the necessary volumes are available to Council staff. In total the Council has distributed over 2.7 million items of covid-19 related PPE to frontline health and social care workers.

Highways and Transport

34. The Transport Services Team have been have been closely involved in the Council's early response to the COVID-19 epidemic. The Transport service, who usually provide transport from homes to schools and day care settings have assisted in a number of important roles including: the distribution of PPE to care homes and other front line services across the County, providing a food and medicine delivery service to vulnerable residents through the 6 locality Welfare Hubs, supporting the Re-ablement Service moving equipment between homes, hospitals and stores and supporting the NHS by providing transport to and from out-patient services. More recently the team have been central to ensuring our education and childcare offer for vulnerable children and the children of key workers operates effectively by providing a home to school transport service where required.

35. In order to ensure social distancing and to respond to guidance during the lockdown period the Council temporarily suspended the majority of highways maintenance activity on 26 March. Throughout the Council has maintained its response to urgent safety related defects and to respond to road traffic collisions or other related emergency situations. During the temporary suspension of works the service reviewed its operating procedures to ensure that planned maintenance work could recommence ensuring safe social distancing at the earliest opportunity. The decision was made to recommence highways maintenance activity on 28 April. During the period from 26 March to 28 April the highways team have used the opportunity to undertake a full review of all outstanding defects on the network and respond to these and provide updates to the public.

36. The Rights of Way team have worked throughout to ensure rights of way remain open. They have also responded supportively to local tensions that have arisen in some areas due to fear within communities associated with the spread of Covid-19 through contact with gates etc. and where rights of way pass close to people's homes / farms.

Customer, Transformation, Fire & Rescue

37. To prepare for the impacts of Covid-19 and to respond as the epidemic has developed the Council has needed to transform the way it operates and delivers services at unprecedented pace. These changes have affected both how we provide our services, how our staff work and in some cases which of our services we continue to provide during this challenging time.
38. As part of the national strategy to “Stay at Home” the Council rapidly moved to a position where all staff whose job could be done from home did so. To support this the People Management Service have provided support and resources to help address the challenges staff have faced around isolation, adopting new working practices and needing to shield either for their own well-being or for that of another person in the household. Where some services ceased to operate employees were redeployed to support a number of critical services including residential care, supported living and the community hubs. Flexible working patterns were adopted by those employees who needed to balance their work priorities and their caring responsibilities. A number of policies and procedures were adapted to reflect the changing needs of the workforce and so to minimise any detriment to employees during this difficult period. To aid communication and engagement a virtual chat room ‘Yammer’ was introduced, together with Microsoft Teams to aid better team connectivity and virtual meetings. Employee advice and guidance was supported by the introduction of a Coaching & Wellbeing network with the aim of signposting staff to the relevant information and advice. Employees who were required to self-isolate, or stay at home and shield were supported by Occupational Health who provided advice and guidance to support wellbeing and the safe return to work, where appropriate.
39. ICT, technology and communication has also adapted promptly and has been upgraded with very significant changes in a very short period of time during March and early April. For example, to enable home working for all staff for whom this could be accommodated and to support elected members to work from home, the Council’s VPN (Virtual Personal Network) was increased from an average daily capacity of 400 users per day to an average of 5,500 users per day, significantly expanding the bandwidth into both Cumbria House and Fire HQ in Penrith. Provision of additional laptops and mobile phones were promptly deployed to support the work of the community hubs and to increase home working, with the introduction of Yammer and Microsoft Teams implemented at scale and pace to keep colleagues connected with additional communication tools whilst maintaining robust ICT security needs given a global increase in cyber security concerns and potential scams.
40. To support residents in Cumbria Care homes to stay in contact with family and loved ones during this very difficult period, our ICT team provided mobile telephones and tablets to enable both voice and live stream video contact.

41. The Council's Service Centre has played a significant and expanded role in supporting the delivery of critical support services to the public and to partners. The investments and changes made in our customer service offer in recent years enabled us to respond quickly establishing multiple communication channels for the public through phone, email and website proving a 7-day per week contact centre service for the locality shielding hubs and the PPE emergency contact centre.
42. Cumbria Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) have continued to adapt and flex the way they deliver the key objectives and have fully engaged with partners to provide support to the most vulnerable members of our communities. A risk-based approach has been applied to Protection activity, giving advice to high and medium risk premises owners and checking fire safety compliance via a telephone audits in line with guidance from the National Fire Chiefs Council. Telephone "safe and well" visits have been provided to our most vulnerable households to ensure that those who are shielding have working smoke alarms and are aware of fire safety advice. Any high risk households have received a face to face visit. Alongside this work fire crews and members of the prevention team have been supporting the 6 locality shielding hubs by delivering food, medicine, information and PPE.
43. Fire and Rescue have monitored and managed operational capability in line with national and local guidance and have continued to mobilise to all emergency incidents quickly; firefighter absence rates have fluctuated between 1.5 – 15%. However, as a result of the furloughing of many of our On Call staff we have actually seen an increase in the availability of our Fire Engines in many rural areas across the county. The service has also supported national arrangements and mutual assistance requests, including deployments to a significant wildfire in South Yorkshire and a number of large wildfire incidents in Lancashire. The Service has also recently responded to a serious fire in Workington, involving a disused nightclub.
44. The Resilience Unit has been in response mode since early February 2020, although the tracking of COVID-19 started well before then. The team supported the Director of Public Health with the early multi-agency response arrangements for COVID-19, and continue to be influential in supporting partners across the county through the Strategic Coordination Group environment.
45. The team moved the incident through the initial activation of plans through the stages of Potential Incident, Major Incident Standby and to the declaration of a Major Incident on 11th March 2020. Ongoing support includes providing technical advice, guidance and the adaptation of plans so that the arrangements align with the SCG sub groups that are focusing on areas such as: Education, Multi-Agency Information Cell, Multi-Agency Support Team, Forecasting, Excess Deaths, PPE Cell, Recovery and more latterly Contact Tracing and Outbreaks.

Economic Development and Property

46. The Council has worked to support the economic response throughout the pandemic supporting the work of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership who are leading the Business and Economic Response and Recovery sub-group of the SCG. Throughout the epidemic the Council has had a strong focus on continuing to progress those key projects and programmes that will be so central to the economic recovery of the county. For example working with government and partners on the development of major projects and programmes such as the Carlisle Southern Link Road, the Borderlands Deal and our pipeline of transport improvement that will be even more vital to support the future growth and recovery of the County. The Council has continued to work closely with district Councils to support progress with plans for the Future High Street Fund and Towns Deals in Cumbria which will be central to the recovery of our town centres and to local economies. The Council has also continued to engage strongly with partners and government around the clean growth agenda that will create opportunities for Cumbria's economy and environment in the future.

47. With greatly increased home working a number of council premises have been closed to both the public and staff. The property team have worked to ensure these buildings have been safely managed and maintained in line with statutory compliance requirements. A small number of our main offices have remained open for essential staff use throughout, with reduced use the buildings have required amended maintenance regimes and also enhanced cleaning in response to covid-19. The property and facilities management team have also been working in anticipation of the easing of lock-down restrictions to develop measures to enable our buildings to be brought back into use safely when the national and local situation allows for this. These measures include significantly reduced occupancy levels, enhanced cleaning regimes, the installation of screens at reception areas, changed access and egress, the provision of hand sanitizer stations and much more.

48. When lock-down came into place the Council took the difficult decision to temporarily suspend construction works under the capital programme until we could be confident that our contractors could operate safely with social distancing in place to safeguard their workers and the wider public. As government issued further guidance for the construction sector and as our contractors demonstrated their plans to ensure social distancing we have been able to recommence work on a number of construction sites which is enabling projects important to our communities to be delivered.

Options Considered and Risks Identified

Option (a)

49. It is recommended that Cabinet note the information contained in the report seek a regular update on progress.

Option (b)

50. That Cabinet note the information contained in this report and do not receive regular progress updates.
51. Risks – There is a risk that Cabinet may be left unaware of important future developments if they decide not to receive further information at a future date.

Reasons for the recommendation/Key benefits

52. This paper provides an update to Cabinet on the Council's response to Covid-19 to date. It is likely that there will be further important matters over the coming months in relation to Covid-19 that cabinet would wish to be updated on.

Financial – What Resources will be needed and how will it be Funded?

53. The financial impact of Covid-19 in 2019/20 is reported elsewhere on today's agenda. Two tranches of general emergency funding (totalling £3.2 billion) have been provided by central government. Cumbria's allocation totalled £25.204 million. Total expenditure incurred in 2019/20 is £1.044m. However, the financial impact in 2020/21 will be significant.
54. The Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have asked all Councils to provide estimates of these financial impacts for this year. The Council's forecast financial impact is based on a number of assumptions and estimates, principal amongst these being that there is no second wave and service income starts to recover after September. The forecast estimate for 2020/21 is £47.340m. This provisional projection is consistent with other County Councils. The biggest areas of impact are forecast in relation to the costs of providing for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), additional social care demand (childrens and adults), staff costs associated with response (e.g. additional care and social work staff, support for shielding hubs etc.), the loss of income from council services (e.g. Registrars, Windermere Ferry, parking enforcement, Port of Workington etc.) and the non-delivery of MTFP savings as a result of the re-direction of key staff to support the Covid-19 response.
55. This forecast does not include an estimate of a decline in the main sources of funding from Council Tax and the element of Business Rates retained locally. In two tier areas, such as Cumbria, these local taxes are administered by the District Councils and the County Council makes an annual precept demand. The accounting requirements for this income are such that any deficit (or surplus) impacts on the Council's income in the following year.

56. In relation to the 2020/21 estimate, assumptions continue to be reviewed as lockdown restrictions ease and recovery commences. The difference between government funding and the forecast impact creates a significant pressure upon the Council's budget. Work is underway to determine how this shortfall can be addressed and a detailed report will be presented to Cabinet at its meeting in September. Lobbying by local government as a sector continues. The Local Government Association (LGA) estimated following the MHCLG return in May that the sector required a further £6 billion of funding support in 2020/21. The sector expects a further tranche of funding will be provided in line with the initial announcement of government to compensate local authorities for the impact of COVID-19. Without further funding from government, the Council, along with many other Councils will have difficult choices to make in ensuring a balanced budget is achieved in the year.

57. Planning for the financial consequences of COVID in 2021/22 is also underway. However, there is currently significant uncertainty in relation to expenditure pressures, funding availability (both from local sources of taxation and government funding as the Fair Funding Review has been delayed) and service demands in the light of Covid-19 and the extent and speed of economic recovery that follows.

58. In addition to the emergency funding detailed above Government have provided 2 further specific grants to Local Government, a £600m Infection Control Fund for Adult Social Care and £300m to support the new test and trace service. The Councils allocation from the Infection Control Fund is £5,678,490 and this funding has been provided to support adult social care providers to reduce the rate of transmission in and between care homes and to support workforce resilience. Each local authority will also be given an allocation from the test and trace fund, actual allocations are yet to be announced, to develop tailored outbreak control plans, working with local NHS and other stakeholders.

Legal Aspects – What needs to be considered?

59. There are no specific legal issues that need to be highlighted in respect of the recommendation in this report. However, Cabinet is asked to note that Directorates have worked closely with the Legal Department throughout the response work and have therefore received legal advice on individual issues and decisions as and when those issues have arisen.

Health and Safety Aspects – What needs to be considered?

57. The Council has a responsibility under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that adequate health and safety

provisions are in place for everything that it does. This is especially important for both the response and recovery phases of the COVID 19 pandemic.

58.Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of County Council employees, elected members, contractors appointed to work on behalf of the Council and the customers we serve remains our top priority. The Council remains strongly committed to fulfil our legal and moral duties to protect our staff and these duties and responsibilities do not diminish during the unprecedented COVID-19 situation which has impacted locally, regionally, nationally and globally.

59.The 2019/20 Corporate Health and Safety Policy Statement agreed by Cabinet in September 2019 has been reviewed and the commitments within the policy statement remain valid and are being followed where reasonably practicable in the context of the scale and pace in which health and safety management is required across the vast majority of council services to respond to the challenges faced by COVID-19.

60.All parties involved in the Cumbria COVID-19 response, whether at a strategic, tactical or operational level, have and continue to work incredibly hard to commit significant extra time and resources to do as much as is reasonably practicable to seek to best identify and manage any risks to our staff, elected members, partners, contractors and service users.

61.As outlined in the report, health, safety and wellbeing has been central to many actions taken to respond to the pandemic and to minimise the risks faced. Controls have been implemented to change the way services work; all health and safety committees have continued to meet; and additional meetings held with Trade Union colleagues on a weekly basis to progress and overcome any challenges faced.

62.Regular communications, instruction, information, training and guidance has and will be continue to be provided wherever required to ensure colleagues remain up to date with the latest position as the ongoing situation develops further.

Council Plan Priority – How do the Proposals Contribute to the Delivery of the Council’s Stated Outcomes?

60.The Covid-19 epidemic has had an impact of our residents, communities, economy, environment and public services in a way that is unprecedented in living memory. Consequently the impacts of the epidemic have been felt across all areas of the Council’s stated outcomes “People in Cumbria are Healthy and Safe, Places in Cumbria are well connected and thriving, the Economy in Cumbria is growing and benefits everyone”. The Council’s response has and will continue to be guided by our stated objectives.

What is the Impact of the Decision on Health Inequalities and Equality and Diversity Issues?

61. There are no decisions in this paper that impact on health inequalities and equality and diversity issues. However it is noted that there are national indicators which strongly suggest that Covid-19 is having significant impacts on health inequalities and on equality and diversity issues. The Council will be reviewing the health inequality and equality and diversity issues related to Covid-19 as further the service planning is undertaken.

Appendices and Background Documents

N/A

Key Facts

Electoral Division(s): All

Executive Decision	Key Decision Included in Forward Plan	Exempt from call-in	Exemption agreed by scrutiny chair	Considered by scrutiny, if so detail below	Environmental or sustainability assessment undertaken?	Equality impact assessment undertaken?
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No

Approved by the relevant Cabinet Member/s on 10.06.2020

Previous relevant Council or Executive decisions

- Review of the Temporary Closure of Libraries and Archives 03.04.2020
- Temporary Closure of Libraries and Archives 20.03.2020
- Allocation of Covid-19 Emergency Funding for Local Government 07.04.2020
- Establishment of the Local Committee Covid-19 Response Fund 02.04.2020
- Temporary changes to the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme 26.03.2020
- Carlisle Local Committee Additional Funding for Covid 19 Response Fund 03.06.2020

Consideration by Overview & Scrutiny

Scrutiny Management Board received a paper entitled "Covid-19 Briefing – The Council's Response to Date" on 22nd May.

Background Papers
N/A

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