

Impact on Finance

The impact on CDC's financial position is significant. The government have so far announced two tranches of financial assistance for Local Government. The first tranche was £40k and the second was £1.211m. It is unknown whether further funding will be made available, but it is unlikely to meet our expected shortfall in income for the current year, and will, in any event, be one off funding only. We cannot rely on government meeting all of our anticipated financial pressures.

In terms of cashflow the government have provided more assistance by releasing up front S31 grants that were due to be paid to us during the year, and have also deferred their share of Business Rates for three months. The Council's Treasury team have tested our cashflow and we have sufficient liquidity for the foreseeable future.

Whilst the current pandemic has had only a marginal impact on our expenditure so far, we are experiencing a very significant reduction in our income streams. In addition to £9m of Council Tax and £3m of Business rates, the council is also heavily reliant on income from fees and charges in excess of £18m. All of these income streams are at significant threat.

The Council is already experiencing an increase in applications for Council Tax Support, and will undoubtedly experience an increase in bad debts as residents struggle to meet their council tax liabilities. Income from business rates will also reduce significantly in the future. However, of even greater risk to the Council's budget is the £18m of income from fees and charges. Over one third of this, £6.4m, is derived from parking charges. Currently the Council has suspended charging in its car parks as part of the response to the pandemic, resulting in a loss of income of approximately £0.5m per month. Other major income streams such as planning fees, and commercial rents are also likely to suffer reductions, not just in the short term, but well beyond the current emergency if the economy struggles to recover.

The Finance team are closely monitoring the current position, and have submitted the first of what are expected to be monthly returns to MHCLG. This indicated a likely loss in the current year of £8m. This year 2020-21 the Council will have no option but to rely on the use of reserves to fund any shortfall in income or increase in expenditure. Budget Managers have been asked to only approve essential expenditure during this emergency whilst officers work through the full implications. The capital programme which was estimated at £55.174m including £11.8 m of asset replacements will be reviewed at July Council so that members can consider which projects it wishes to proceed with.

The table below sets out the current analysis of potential impact on the current year's budget.

Potential Impact of COVID-19 on 2020-21 Budget

		£000s
<u>Other / Corporate Services</u>		
Council Tax Support	Increase in claims (beyond Hardship Fund)	200
Business Rates	Reduced Funding (max loss)	1,000
Bad Debt Provision	Expenditure	500
Covid 19 related costs	Expenditure	61 (as at Apr)
Investments	Interest Income	218
<u>Total Other</u>		1,979
<u>Planning & Environment</u>		
Building Control	Application Income	217
Litter	PCN income	10
Planning	Application Income	547
South Downs National Park	Management Fee	62
Total Planning & Environment		836
<u>Growth & Place</u>		
	Pay and Display income	3,585
	Season Ticket Income	568
Estates	Rental Income	74
	Vacant properties NNDR Costs	73
Investment Properties	Rental Income	46

Leisure Centres	Management fee	154
	Car Parking Refunds (Expenditure)	176
Parks & Open Spaces	Various income streams	61
Museum & TIC	Various Income Streams	86
Licencing	Licence income	11
Total Growth & Place		4,834
<u>Corporate Services</u>		
Domestic Waste (Bulky Items)	Bulky Household Waste income	15
Trade Waste	Bin Collection Income	297
Green Waste	Bin Collection Income	40
MOTs & Vehicle Checks	Income	31
Land Charges	Search fee Income	125
<u>Total Corporate Services</u>		508
<u>Housing & Communities</u>		
Council Tax Court Costs	Income	55
NDR Cost of Collection	Court Cost Income	7
Westward House	Electricity Cost	29
Homelessness	Hostel Rental Income	-
Total Housing & Communities		91
Grand Total		8,248

Beyond the current year the financial forecast is extremely difficult to predict with any accuracy. What is clear, however, is that our income is unlikely return to the pre

pandemic levels for probably several years. A scenario of having reduced income from fees and charges of between 20% to 30% may not be unrealistic. If such a situation did materialise it would create a budget gap of around £3.5m to £5.5m. .

With finite reserves, the Council will have to prioritise its services in order to set a sustainable budget moving forwards. Officers will work closely with members in the months ahead in order to agree priorities for resource allocations for the 2021-22 budget and beyond, and place us in a position that we can respond to the financial challenge ahead.

HR - Managing our staff

Managing our staffing resources during the Covid 19 emergency has been particularly challenging. We have faced major changes to our workload and resources in a very short space of time. Some service areas have had a major increase in demand whereas others have had decreases or their service has been put on hold. We have undertaken an extensive redeployment exercise moving 50 staff into new roles.

Those services that have had staff redeployed to them are:

- Revenues and Benefits
- Contact Centre
- Housing
- The Depot (over 20 East Pallant House Staff have been trained as loaders)
- Supporting Stonepillow with their services for rough sleepers

This has required some major upheaval with an intense training programme, often delivered remotely, to get the new staff up to speed. The programme has been a success and all of the key services currently have the staffing resources that they need and are operating effectively. However we will continue to respond as demand and resource requirements change. The success of this programme is largely down to the goodwill of the staff.

Many staff have underlying health conditions that put them at greater risk of Covid 19 and as advised by the Government are recommended to self-isolate at home. In the majority of cases this has not caused an issue as most of our workforce is now working from home. However, there are some roles that cannot be done from home and this has been a particular issue at the depot and to lesser extent in some other services.

Whilst none of our staff have been confirmed to have had the virus through testing, several have been unwell with symptoms of it. Although, many of have been able to work from home for some or all of their isolation period this is not possible for some staff especially waste loaders and drivers and this has had a significant impact on the depot workforce. We are now at a stage where Covid 19 testing is being expanded to cover our frontline local government workers and this should help reduce the isolation period where the member of staff or their family member test negative.

The move to work remotely for some staff has also been challenging, particularly given other factors brought about by the Covid 19 emergency. Working as normal

from home is possible for some staff whereas for others it is not straight forward. Staff with younger children, caring responsibilities or a where the home environment is not ideal, faced particular challenges. As an employer we have been supportive and flexible and have set realistic expectations depending on the member of staff's circumstances.

The country as a whole is currently facing higher levels of stress and anxiety and we are supporting our staff as a priority. We have undertaken regular communications with staff to keep them up to date with the latest local developments, we are signposting staff to support mechanisms, we have produced guidance on working from home and we are giving advice on personal wellbeing as well as guidance to managers on how to manage remotely. We will be shortly be doing an all staff survey to ask how they are finding things and whether there is anything else we could be doing to support them.

Overall we are really pleased with how our staff have reacted and are proud of how well they have stepped up to play a vital part in the role we have in helping our communities deal with the Covid 19 emergency locally.

CCS

The impact of COVID-19 on service delivery at CCS was significant from mid-March as a consequence of the loss of a number of staff with specific underlying medical conditions who had to remain at home. An audit of the CCS workforce identified that nearly half of the staff had underlying conditions that meant they fell into the 'vulnerable' category. Whilst a limited number of staff could work from home, for the drivers and loaders this was not possible.

In preparation for this, the CCS management team prioritised services at that time which included a calculation of the minimum resources required to deliver those services. This was presented as a Green (business as usual), Amber (medium and high priority) and Red (high priority only) document which was agreed with SLT. This exercise meant CCS was relatively well prepared for the loss of staff due to self-isolation and shielding. However it also showed that the service moved into the Amber category (and close to Red) almost immediately.

Using the prioritisation plan, the following services were suspended: trade recycling, bulky household collections, limited access properties, collection of dead animals, emptying of litter bins (with exceptions), highway litter picking, abandoned cars, graffiti and flyposting, volunteer litter picking, mechanical sweeping, volunteer groups in parks, grass cutting, non-essential grounds maintenance, public MOTs and a number of office functions. Available staff resources were then focussed on the following priorities:

Waste	Street Cleaning	Grounds Maintenance	Vehicles workshop	Office and Management
Domestic waste	Litter bins	Play area inspections and repairs	Repairs	Reception and customer service
Domestic recycling	(by exception)	Site inspections	Servicing	Absence and pay recording
Trade waste	Dog bins	Burials	MOTs	Purchasing and invoicing
Green waste	Fly tips	Assisted burials	Hire vehicle fitness tests	Stores and supplies
	Rough sleeper	Essential tree work		Trade waste account management
		Essential site maintenance		Service management
				Health and safety

Assisted collections	clearance	Grass cutting (by exception)		compliance Core training
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In order to support the above services, a number of EPH staff were redeployed. A small number of experienced agency staff were also engaged where their waste round knowledge is critical to the service.

Health and safety issues have remained at the forefront of operations with national waste industry guidance being applied in consultation with the workforce. However, as with certain other critical services, social distancing cannot be fully achieved, as acknowledged in Government advice. To address this, mitigating measures have been introduced and continue to be monitored.

As a result of effective planning, prioritisation and consolidation (together with staff commitment), CCS has managed to remain in the amber category and deliver essential services with minimal disruption. In the first two weeks, green waste was prioritised over domestic recycling to deal with decomposing material. This resulted in some recycling rounds being lapsed. However the priority was subsequently altered and resources stabilised, enabling recycling to be caught up within a fortnight. Services are now stable and the green waste service has been opened up with over 500 new customers joining since 1 April.

The closure of the HWRC's by WSCC has meant a greater reliance on kerbside collections by the District Council and this appears likely to continue until they are reopened. Whilst recorded flytips do not at present indicate a significant increase, reporting of flytipping by the public is affected due the current lockdown and not included in the recorded data are black bags of domestic and green waste that are being found next to litter bins.

Throughout the process, CCS has worked closely with PR to provide up to date messaging and can report that the overwhelming response from residents is one of thanks for keeping our core services functioning at this time.

CCS is closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on its major revenue streams and is preparing the approach for recovery. The team are continuing to move forward with planned revenue generating projects where possible although associated revenue targets identified for 2020/21 will need to be re-profiled.

Housing team

Rough Sleeping

At the start of the Covid Crisis the government required LAs to accommodate all rough sleepers. The team have accommodated 24 rough sleepers, creating a new area of work, within the housing service. This included making the placements, liaising with the providers, the police and then supporting the rough sleepers to stay in their accommodation. The longer term issue is the exit strategy and how we move Rough Sleepers on to more permanent accommodation to rebuild their lives. Officers are working closely with Stonepillow to identify housing pathways for the individuals by freeing up move on or temporary accommodation owned by Stonepillow or the council, moves into social housing and sourcing private rented accommodation. This will be challenging as people are not moving home currently and Registered

Providers are not currently letting properties. Consideration will need to be given to the support required to enable rough sleepers to sustain independent accommodation in the long term.

Homelessness & housing register

There has not been a significant increase in households seeking housing advice as a direct response to Covid, however the number of formal homelessness applications arising from such enquiries has increased and as a result there has been an increase in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, (1st April 9 households in B&B, 20th April 27), as a result of the lower threshold for providing interim accommodation during the current crisis. There has been a fall in the number of housing register applications, vacancies advertised have fallen and registered providers are only signing up new tenants in emergency situations. Homelessness and Housing register applications are expected to spike once the lockdown is eased, as a result of family/relationship breakdowns, delayed evictions and households struggling to get on track with paying their mortgages and rent.

The resilience of the team has been built up by training five deployed staff to provide basic housing advice and support with completing homelessness applications. There is also expected to be a build-up of customers to whom the Council has temporary accommodation duties that have been unable to move on during the lockdown. Westward House currently has no vacancies. Residents will need to be moved on as quickly as possible to ease the requirement for the bed and breakfast accommodation in the medium to longer term.

Housing Enabling

Although the number of planning applications has reduced, the enabling officers have been catching up on a backlog of work, particularly in respect of negotiating section 106 and nomination agreements. Work with Community Land Trusts and new policy and strategy work has slowed with staff being utilised to support other teams.

Housing Standards and Disabled Facilities Grants

Urgent applications for Disabled Facilities Grants have continued to be accepted and investigations of serious housing health and safety hazards undertaken, however other property visits have ceased unless there is evidence of imminent risk. Applications for new/renewal HMO Licences have been processed and licences issued, but there will be a backlog of property inspections to be undertaken once lockdown is relaxed.

Freeland Close

Work has carried on at pace to ensure that all the tender documents are ready for the procurement exercise. This is due to launch via the Government's tendering portal on Thursday 30th April 2020 although it should be noted that Covid presents a significant risk to the project delivery timetable.

Communities & Wellbeing Team

In response to the Covid-19 emergency the Government asked Local Authorities to work in partnership to set up hubs to support the most vulnerable in our communities. The hubs would ensure vulnerable people would have access to food, medicine and other support during the crisis.

In the Chichester District the County Council (WSCC) took the lead to set this up and the Communities and Wellbeing team allocated staff to the area support team to respond to referrals from the Community hub. People calling the WSCC hub are triaged to identify their needs and whether they have other sources of support, and where appropriate they are referred to the Area Support Team. The team have developed a flow chart clearly setting down the process and have populated a spread-sheet of all local offers of support including volunteer groups and other organisations. Most calls have been related to food supplies and have been dealt with by referral to local stores who can offer delivery or to local residents groups, either existing or set up to assist neighbours in response to the crisis. Where no referral has been possible, the team has actioned the request themselves.

This process has worked well and all referrals have been successfully dealt with and closed down on the day of referral. There have been an average of 3 - 4 referrals a day with most requiring support for essential shopping or telephone support due to social isolation, we expect the numbers to rise as lockdown continues.

The remaining members of the Communities and wellbeing team have been working as follows:

- Wellbeing, Social prescribing and Choose work teams are still functioning but at a slightly reduced level and offering telephone appointments instead of face to face and the group work has stopped. New referrals are still being accepted. Wellbeing staff are also offering weekly telephone support to those affected by social isolation during the crisis.
- The Grants and Concessions Panel have held a virtual meeting and the decisions made are being progressed in the usual way.
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and community safety work has continued as before with the ASB caseworker working from the Police station, Community safety staff have also been able to provide support in the City and offer support to Rough Sleepers.
- There has been a notable increase in neighbour disputes as a result of the lockdown and a high number of people reporting their neighbours for flouting social distancing guidelines. There has been a general decrease in reported crime however we are aware incidents of domestic abuse may be on the increase and have added a section on our community safety and crime webpages for those needing advice and support.
- Community wardens (those not self-isolating) have been out and about as normal but undertaking no face to face meetings and they are also supporting the hub work delivering food packages. The wardens have also been ensuring compliance in public places to the social distancing guidelines and conducting regular welfare checks on vulnerable residents..
- Partnerships have continued virtually and advice for voluntary groups and the Chichester Community Network which is the online platform for Parishes and community groups www.chichestercommunitynetwork.org have been kept updated.
- CCTV continues as normal. Issues in the city centre including anti -social behaviour and flouting of social distancing rules have successfully been passed to Police for action.

Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services Division

Customer Services performance

Telephone answer rates across all customer service lines within the Council's Contact Centre for April so far have averaged 95%. Telephone calls are being answered within one minute. We have received a number of compliments from residents who have been pleased with the service they have received. The service continues to publicise the support available through the government and directing businesses to the gov.uk websites.

Website usage has significantly increased during the COVID19 pandemic. This has helped to keep telephone lines free for residents and businesses who have needed to speak to an officer. From the table below there is a clear and significant increase in website usage for Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services.

Webpage	16 March - 17 April 2019	16 March - 17 April 2020
Enquiry type	Visits	Visits
Council tax and benefits - Coronavirus FAQs	No data	4889
Applying for benefit	388	1445
Change of circumstances	92	211
Housing benefit & council tax reduction	348	1329
Benefit calculator	140	194
Benefit forms	118	251
Housing benefit & council tax reduction	348	1139
Total	1434	9458

Hardship Fund

As part of central governments support package for COVID19 we have received £699k to administer to residents in the form of hardship payments. Our IT supplier provided us with the software to make the hardship payments. This was received on 22 April 2020 but was subsequently withdrawn by the provider due to a bug. It is hoped that a fix will be with us in the week commencing 27 April.

Provided this works correctly hardship payments will start to be made from 4 May 2020. In practice what this means for residents is that those who are in receipt of Council Tax Support and have a balance of £150 to pay towards their Council Tax bill during 2020/21 will receive a payment of £150.

Residents in receipt of Council Tax Support and have a zero Council Tax balance to pay will not receive a hardship payment. Residents in receipt of Council Tax Support

with a balance less than £150 will only receive the equivalent amount. Residents will then be issued with revised Council Tax bills.

Council Tax

Since the outbreak of COVID19 we have received 563 requests from residents to defer their Council Tax instalments from April 2020 to June 2020. Out of a tax base of 57,900 this is just under 1% so at this stage a very low amount of requests coming through. Residents are being encouraged to apply for Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and other benefits when they contact us and the website directs them to information on CTR for those who may qualify.

Staffing

Current staffing levels are very good. The Division has an additional 16 staff redeployed from other service areas to support the increase in work.

Business Rates Grants

Please find a breakdown below of Business Rate grants paid as at 20 April 2020. We still have approximately 700 businesses whereby we don't have bank account details in order to pay them. We continue to make contact with the businesses to obtain their bank account details.

Any outstanding as at 27 April 2020 will be issued with a cheque. We are doing everything possible to minimise the number of cheques being issued as these come with an administrative burden. However, where necessary, cheques will be issued. This is to ensure that they get their grant money as quickly as possible.

The table below shows all local authorities within West Sussex's performance along with the national position against 315 local authorities within the country.

Local Authority	Initial Allocation	Number of hereditaments	No of grant payments made	Value of payments (£)	% of grant payments made	National position
Chichester District Council	£37,086,000	3,008	1,915	£23,830,000	64%	70 / 315
Crawley Borough Council	£12,102,000	854	447	£6,645,000	52%	138 / 315
Mid Sussex District Council	£26,882,000	2,237	1,065	£13,700,000	48%	171 / 315
Arun District Council	£39,380,000	3,281	1,183	£14,350,000	36%	253 / 315
Horsham District Council	£29,522,000	2,227	783	£10,380,000	35%	261 / 315
Worthing Borough	£26,130,000	1,647	459	£5,790,000	28%	293 / 315

Council				,000		
Adur District Council	£17,640,000	951	234	£2,925,000	25%	304 / 315

As at 28 April, the number of grants paid by Chichester District Council stood at 2,411, with a value of £29.6m. No other comparator data has been published since 20 April.

Business Rates Reliefs –

1,090 businesses have received support through the increase of Expanded Retail Rate Relief, including pubs. This equates to a total rates reduction of £27million in this financial year. The Government has also introduced 100% business rates relief for day nurseries registered on Ofsted’s early years register. This has assisted 18 nurseries in the district and reduced their combined rates bill by £250,000. Businesses did not need to apply for this relief and all businesses have been issued with revised Business Rates bills showing a zero balance for this financial year.

Business Support

The Economic Development service has been operating a remote service via email and ‘phone contact, with much of their time to date spent signposting businesses and answering phone and email queries. The service has been extremely busy, they have been in contact with over 350 businesses since the start of the crisis, many of these have been multiple contacts as the picture has evolved. In an average month they would be in contact with approximately 70 businesses. This is an increase of 400%.

It is expected that workload for the team will increase over the coming months and through the ‘recovery’ phase, as businesses begin to feel the full impact of the crisis and any monies available (savings/grants/loans) are used up.

Economic Development Officers (EDO’s) have been proactively contacting all businesses on their radar to ensure they are aware of all the support which is relevant to them. EDO’s have been in regular contact with business associations to try to keep ahead of any issues foreseen for their members.

The service has picked up on gaps in the Government provision resulting in businesses being entitled to little or no support. These businesses include premises which are part of a larger estate or business park who don’t pay rates individually – there are many examples of businesses throughout the district that are not entitled to any support, these issues have been reported up to the LEP and onto central Government.

One area of work that has slowed down for the team is planning comments, with fewer applications in for business premises; there has been around a 50% drop in comment requests compared to previous volumes.

Two of the largest sectors in the District and are struggling. The tourism sector nationally is reporting that 33% of tourism businesses who have received no funding/support are saying they will not survive. A large percentage of businesses in this sector had inadequate insurance.

In Horticulture a large number of the ornamental businesses have greenhouses full of stock, but with no garden centres open to export to, a large majority will be wasted, West Sussex Growers Association expects that the impact is likely to be severe.

Some businesses have been able to make adaptations to continue trading, for example some of the local shops are working together delivering essential items such as milk, meat and fruit and veg. There are gyms which have gone online and offer personal tuition by skype or similar. Therapists are also offering online sessions. Some pubs and restaurants have managed to diversify into takeaway operations; this has been supported with the new change of use legislation.

Many businesses who have survived will need to reassess their income streams and will be looking for support in doing so. Issues such as external fund signposting, support with applications and education are likely to be high on the agenda for them.

Communications

Since the Covid 19 crisis began, the council has been issuing timely advice and information to its residents, businesses, staff, councillors, partners and other stakeholders to make sure that they are well informed and are aware of the support that is available from the council.

Coronavirus advice web pages

Dedicated pages have been created to offer comprehensive advice to both residents and businesses. As well as sharing Government advice, the pages also offer information on the status of our services, the latest guidance and frequently asked questions. Between 16 March and 7 April we received a total of 28,317 'unique visits.' On average this amounts to 1,231 visits per day.

Social media pages

The council has been issuing updates and advice on its social media pages, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. The Public Relations Team answered over 300 questions in the first three weeks through these channels. The service reached 451,302 people through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram between 23 March and 19 April. The team have also been posting videos with key information, such as the importance of not visiting the district and staying home.

Stakeholder newsletters

Email newsletters have been issued to resident and community groups, councillors, residents, parish councils, businesses, partners and other groups on a weekly basis. People can also now sign up to our email updates on our website www.chichester.gov.uk/newsalerts Copies of the newsletters are also available on [our website](#).

Advertising campaign

The service ran a two week advertising campaign in the Chichester and Midhurst & Petworth Observers, as well as on Spirit FM to highlight the support available to our residents and businesses. Further advertising was also placed in the Chichester and Midhurst & Petworth Observers to encourage businesses to access their government grants.

Community guide and Look after your neighbour campaign

The PR service produced a community guide with important information numbers and guidance for residents and community groups. Alongside this, we also produced materials to support those who wished to help neighbours and friends throughout the crisis.

District Dispatch

The Leader has been issuing weekly updates, which have been appearing the Observer series, and which have been sent to all councillors and parish councils, as well as appearing on the council's website and social media sites.

Media

We have continued to answer media enquiries and issue media releases, which have been covered by our local media.

Sponsorship offering free advertising for local businesses

CDC has sponsored pages in the Observer series for the month of May in order to provide free advertising space for local businesses.

Communication with councillors

All councillors have all been given access to a help desk where the communications team have been answering questions. Within the first three weeks over 80 questions were answered.

Communication with staff

Staff have received regular communications; the new ways of working that have been introduced; and on the support and technology that is available to them. Feedback has been that people feel well informed and supported.

ICT

The move to get almost all staff based at East Pallant House and the Westhampnett Depot offices set up working from home over a timescale of just a couple of weeks was a huge undertaking. The first challenge was an infrastructure project to replace an old server with one that had the capability to increase the number of concurrent users who were able to log in to the council's systems through the VPN. This project was accelerated with all resources focused on its delivery and the VPN capacity was successfully increased on the day before the full lockdown came into effect.

As well as improving the system capability, a huge amount of work was required to get all relevant staff set up to work from home, whilst many staff had worked from home previously there was still a significant number who had not ever done so before. This exercise ranged from rolling out laptops to those staff who were using desk top computers, setting people up on the VPN and training them how to use it to talking people through their home set up when first trialling it. Providing on-going support to staff and members is now mostly being done remotely which has created

a number of challenges to overcome. We have kept a small onsite ICT team presence to support those staff who continue to work in EPH as well as dealing with tasks where users need to be on the office network or bringing in their own kit.

The mass implementation of working remotely has meant that we had to be innovative in our use of ICT systems and we have developed a number of different solutions to help with team working, audio / video conferencing and file sharing. Due to the small timescales involved we have needed to be both reactive and learning as we go as the normal thorough testing phases have not usually been available. Overall there has been positive feedback from services and all services are enabled to work with ICT that supports them effectively.

During the Coronavirus emergency, there has been an increase in opportunist and more sophisticated cyber-crime / fraud. We have had to have increased awareness of these threats and react accordingly. We are proactively ensuring that our programme of security patching is up to date, again doing all of this remotely provides its own challenges and we will need to work with users to ensure that we find ways of keeping all of our systems secure.

Finance

The Accountancy team have put in place a weekly reporting mechanism for SLT to monitor the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council. MHCLG have also instigated a monthly financial return which the team complete and submit via a web portal. The Accountancy and Income and Payment teams are providing assistance to the Revenues and Benefits team in relation to the business grants payments specifically in connection with making cheque payments, along with the Audit Team assisting with the payment processes and to ensure that the controls are robust.

The Treasury team continue to manage the cash flow which has been rather different than we would normally expect. The receipt of £37m advanced funding from the government for the business grants created some problems in terms of placing the money with secure counterparties until such time as the grants are paid out. As a result an urgent decision had to be taken to increase the counterparty limits with Money Market Funds.

Several members of the Internal Audit & Corporate Investigations team have been seconded to assist other services. Accountancy and the Income and Payments teams are maintaining core services, and work continues in relation to the 2019-20 final accounts. 1 additional staff member was redeployed to the Income and Payments Team to assist with the workload impacted by remote working and supporting the Business Support Grant payments.

Democratic Services

Administration officers from Legal Services and much of the Members Services team have been redeployed elsewhere to assist other departments. Legal and Procurement work continues, but the availability of the courts to hold hearings has caused some issues as most Council enforcement work is perceived to be a lower priority as far as the courts service are concerned.

Legal work to support the key areas of benefits, planning and procurement of services needed urgently, as well as governance requirements for formal decision making and completion of deeds has been challenging but prioritised over other tasks.

Advice and support on procurement has been undertaken for major purchasing of goods and services needed to enable the Council response to Covid, including advice on specific support for “at risk” businesses.

A significant amount of work has been undertaken by the Democratic Services team members to enable remote meetings to commence, working with the Council’s ICT service to ensure the system in place is secure and suitable to host formal committee meetings.

Environment and Health Protection Service

Health Protection

The food hygiene inspection programme has been deferred for 12 weeks due to Covid 19 other than high risk establishments where an intervention is due (34 cases); establishments still trading where enforcement visits are due (2 cases); new businesses where registration information raises public health concerns (6 cases) and businesses which have notified the Council of a change in activities, such as moving to takeaway services (40) largely due to the implications of the Business Closure Regulations.

As a result of the 12 weeks deferral, Covid 19 will continue to have an impact on the food hygiene inspection programme going forward with a backlog of inspections from 2019/20 (137 inspections were planned) and 2020/21 (207 inspections were planned) not having been undertaken.

The team have also dealt with 91 complaints relating to Covid 19 of which 42 relate to business closure and 61 to social distancing in the workplace.

Environmental Protection

The service has not seen a reduction in the total number of service requests submitted although the nature of these requests has changed with more concerning bonfires and pollution made in April 2020 compared to April 2019 as set out below:

Complaint Type	1 Mar 19 – 31 Mar 19	1 Mar 20 – 31 Mar 20		1 Apr 19 – 20 Apr 19	1 Apr 20 – 20 Apr 20
Pollution	21	21		20	61
Bonfires	11	12		13	58
	32	33		33	119

Recorded fly tips collected in March were the same as last year, at 86 although reporting by the public is affected by the current lockdown. Site visits by staff are only being undertaken where there is a significant public health risk or disturbance.

On-going proactive work undertaken by the team includes support work for the Local Plan e.g. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure, Goodwood motor circuit/airfield noise policy and sewage discharge from Apuldram waste water treatment works into

Chichester Harbour. The team continue to provide responses to planning application consultations which have not yet reduced although this is expected.

Environmental Strategy Unit

The work of this team has largely continued. This includes preparation of an interim sustainability statement relating to emerging local plan work policies which will set out what energy standards the Council will expect new development to achieve. Wildlife corridor survey work has recommenced after a month to collect evidence for the new policies in the Plan. The team continue to provide responses to planning consultations which have also not yet reduced. The new climate change officer has been recruited and will start in May 2020. Following her induction, she will be moving forward with designing the criteria for the Zero Chichester Fund.

Building Control

Building Control continues to offer the full range of services i.e. site inspections, plan checking, with officers working remotely in most circumstances. Site visits are only being undertaken where necessary. It is evident that officer workloads have reduced as a result of a slowdown in the construction industry due to the lockdown although inspections are continuing on existing applications. The table below demonstrates the reduction in the number of applications received in the same periods for 2019 and 2020.

2019		2020	
20 Jan 19 – 19 Feb 19	85	20 Jan 20 – 19 Feb 20	55
20 Feb 19 – 19 Mar 19	73	20 Feb 20 – 19 Mar 20	70
20 Mar 19 – 20 Apr 19	80	20 Mar 20 – 20 Apr 20	40

Coastal Engineers/Land Drainage/Foreshore

All members of this team have been redeployed although this has not precluded the completion of routine maintenance work, including shingle clearance and repair work on the promenades continuing. The team continue to respond to ordinary water consent applications and provide responses to planning consultations.

The Foreshore service has been suspended, however the team operated over the Easter weekend with the Community Wardens and Civil Enforcement Officers to support Sussex Police efforts to discourage unnecessary travel to the coast and compliance with social distancing rules.

Corporate H&S/Emergency Planning

Emergency planning has been a priority through the Covid 19 pandemic with the team supporting the corporate response. Corporate Health and Safety work is ongoing, particularly at the Depot.

Planning Policy and Development Management Services

Planning Policy

Work on the Local Plan is proceeding with all staff working from home. The team continue to develop the evidence base for the plan and are working closely with a number of key agencies (Environment Agency, Natural England, Highways England etc.). Liaison is however being closely monitored to determine whether the current situation does lead to any delays in response.

Neighbourhood planning work is continuing but with the current restrictions, the public consultation stages are affected as well as the requirement to hold referendums as these have been deferred by Government until May 2021. The situation will continue to be monitored and reviewed in the light of any further changes to legislation or guidance.

The Conservation and Design team are continuing to offer a full service using virtual means to inspect properties and conduct meetings with developers where required. No significant drop in workload has yet been registered.

The developer contributions service is continuing to operate as normal, applications are still being received, processed and monitored. Developers for some of the larger development sites have requested renegotiation of their payment periods and these are being recorded. It is too soon to say how significant any reduction in CIL for 2020/21 may be, but the situation is subject to ongoing monitoring. The April 2020 CIL Parish handovers have been made. Parish Councils are continuing to send in their Annual CIL Monitoring Reports as requested, together with updates to their projects, which will inform the 2021 Infrastructure Business Plan.

Development Management

The Development Management teams are continuing to operate all services including planning application processing, pre-application advice (with the exception of the 'front-desk' surgeries) and planning enforcement. This is being conducted with staff primarily working from home (with the exception of post room and scanning staff). Whilst officers have been moving toward paperless working over the past 6 months, the social distancing restrictions have resulted in some changes to the way in which the service operates as detailed below.

Planning Applications and Pre Application Advice

No site visits are being undertaken for planning applications. Instead, applicants are asked to provide comprehensive photographs of the outside and inside of the relevant part of the application site and any other elements necessary, at the direction of the case officer. It is possible that without a site visit some applications will not be able to be progressed at this time and officers will consider a range of options available, including long-term extensions of time or withdrawal of the application altogether.

Properties are no longer directly notified by letter of planning applications, but instead a site notice is posted at a public vantage point on or near to the site. This provides the required statutory notification and applications will only proceed where this has been accomplished. However, in addition to our statutory requirements, we are also encouraging the public to sign up to our Public Access system, which allows them to choose what type of application they wish to be notified of electronically, and in which areas.

Delegated decisions are being issued as they would be normally, in electronic format. Planning Committee will be held in a virtual environment on 6 May which will allow us to progress a number of important decisions on applications. Whilst there remain a significant number of applications currently under consideration, the number of incoming applications is currently 25% lower than would normally be expected. This will be carefully monitored to ensure workloads are proportionate to staffing levels.

Planning Enforcement

The number of enforcement complaints received appears to be on a downward trend with some 60% of the average number having been made over the last 4 weeks (31 compared to some 52 typically). Some of these have been in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller community, in response to which officers have been required to recently serve 3 Temporary Stop Notices. In response to the majority of enforcement complaints, officers are currently seeking further information from alternative sources and site visits are only undertaken in the case of the very highest priority cases, and only where the Council is satisfied that the risk to the public through the possible further transmission of the COVID-19 disease can be avoided.

Estates and Building services

The estates service team has been able to offer a remote service and respond to tenant enquiries or issues raised. Over 30 requests have been received from CDC tenants, asking for some form of rental support, from rent free periods to rent holidays with a repayment plan. To date, we have been working with the tenants to ensure they are accessing all of the available funding from Government to support them. There is a risk that some tenants will stop paying and the service has seen a dip in the payment of the first quarter 2020/21 invoices from the same time last year. There are temporary restrictions in place preventing landlords from forfeiture action.

The void levels are unchanged at present but the expectation is that this figure will increase throughout the 2020/21 year.

It is expected that workload for the team will increase over the coming months and through the 'recovery' phase, as tenants begin to feel the full impact and any monies available are used up.

Some Estates work is 'on hold', such as rent reviews and property inspections; new lettings enquiries have all but completely stopped and disposals of land not already marketed are not currently being progressed.

The building services team continues to organise urgent health and safety repair or maintenance works on CDC properties and the service is also planning and scheduling works to be undertaken in public buildings whilst they remain closed to the public i.e. Pallant House Gallery and Westgate Leisure Centre.

Project work is continuing on the St James Industrial Estate and concept drawings for the refurbishment and redevelopment of the estate have been submitted to Planning Services in anticipation that a pre-application meeting will take place shortly. The contract has been awarded for the physical works in connection with Priory Park 'phase I', although those works are also on hold following the discovery of a bird nest.

Place

Under urgent powers parking charges were suspended from all council-owned car parks from 23rd March until the 11th of May the inflation price increase was also delayed under urgent powers. The sale of season tickets has also been suspended and parking enforcement has focussed on yellow line restrictions, loading bays and

obstructions. Many of the enforcement officers have been redeployed to work at CCS.

Four coastal car parks have been closed for access to deter people from driving to visit our coastal towns and villages and this is being kept under review. The car parking notice processing service have continued to operate, responding to customer enquiries, dealing with Penalty Charge Notices and introducing the new NHS and Healthcare permits on-street in conjunction with West Sussex County Council.

All Public Conveniences have remained open to ensure that delivery drivers have facilities along with other workers such as highway engineers who require facilities and bus shelter contractor continues to maintain and clean the shelters in CDC ownership.

The service has been liaising with Chichester BID who have advised us that they are preparing an emergency budget and during this period have closed their offices and are operating remotely to produce newsletters and information to their BID levy payers.

Over the last few weeks the two members of staff supporting the vision work throughout the district have been redeployed to assist critical services. The vision work is currently being reviewed under new ways of working with partners to determine what progress has been made and whether there are any amendments required to the projects. A new action plan will be developed for the recovery phase.

Licensing & Events

Following lockdown and closure of many license premises the service has followed Government advice and a new enforcement procedure has been produced and relevant staff authorisations updated. The service has been raising awareness of the new Regulations with operators of licensed premises; caravan/holiday site owners, event/market organisers and the taxi/private hire industry. Currently the service has received very few enquiries or complaints regarding breaches of the Regulations.

The level of service, whilst reduced, is continuing to fulfil our statutory requirements. From lockdown until 22.4.2020 the service has received a third of its normal licence applications and events across the district have either been postponed or cancelled with 16 Temporary Event Notices refunded. The service has been working with event organisers around the possible rescheduling of events later in the year.

New applications for taxi licenses have now stopped although we have 75 applicants on 'pause' until we can recommence delivering knowledge tests required for applicants.

The service is reviewing procedures associated with our duties under the Licensing Act 2003 and taxi/private hire licensing functions to manage the licensing functions effectively and fairly which may include 'remote hearings' associated with contested applications and are developing a policy around how we are dealing with any fees under the various licensing regimes.

Resources and Legal Implications

There is the potential for enforcement action against businesses which operate in breach of the 'closure' Regulations. For licensed premises, it could potentially lead to applications to review the licence. The council remains under a statutory duty to provide the various licensing functions.

Community Impact and Corporate Risk

The council continues to provide as full a licensing service as possible to support the industry and enable applications to be submitted. However, some modifications have been necessary due to issues beyond our control. New procedures have been introduced to effectively overcome these.

The service will continue to be consistent with Government and LGA advice and consideration as to potential implications associated with the end of lock-down is now being considered and will involve discussions with statutory partners.

Culture, Sport and Tourism

The museum was closed to the public on 17 March and the government closed all leisure centres from the evening of Friday 20 March. All events and sports pitch hire on Council land have been cancelled until the end of May with this date likely to be extended. The service has been in discussions with Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT) and Pallant House Gallery (PHG) regarding their events programmes and continue to support these organisations with their annual cultural grant, however not all of the actions within the Service Level agreements will be delivered. The annual grant has been paid to Visit Chichester, who has been actively working behind the scenes with new promotional campaigns so they are ready to launch again. The service is continuing to work with parish councils to progress Section 106 projects and payments.

The leisure contractor SLM, requested financial support from the council during the closure period. All of their staff with the exception of 3.66 FTE staff have been furloughed. The support offered will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and on an open book process. The details are within the urgency decision notices to Full Council

The Novium museum have managed to develop a number of strands of online content and the public programme of exhibitions and displays is currently being reviewed. All events and learning programme activities have been postponed until the end of June. Options for recovery following the lockdown are being developed which include a review of opening hours and development of further online content. Building checks of The Novium and Guildhall are being completed for insurance purposes and to ensure that the collection is safe from a security and environmental point of view. A number of staff from Culture and Sport have been redeployed to critical services.

The service is waiting on further details regarding future sports fixtures and events which are dependent on the Governments decision on lockdown.