



REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 27 April 2021

BY: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: COVID-19 and Concurrent Risks – Update on the Management of Council Response & Recovery

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report follows on from the previous COVID-19 reports to Council on 25 August 2020, 27 October 2020 and into the Members' Library Service on 14 December 2020. This report provides a further update of how the Council has managed both our ongoing response to supporting the national public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent risks related to Brexit, winter emergency/adverse weather and coastal/countryside implications of easing of lockdown, and action taken in support of East Lothian's recovery and renewal.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Council is asked to:
- i note the contents of this report and to acknowledge the unprecedented impact the COVID-19 outbreak continues to have on the East Lothian community, partners and delivery of Council services;
 - ii note the ongoing COVID-19 response in respect of service delivery and interventions necessary to continue to contain the spread of the virus, particularly the ongoing deployment of Business Continuity Plans in support of National Guidance and appropriate public health measures;
 - iii note the progress in deployment of the East Lothian COVID-19 vaccination programme;

- iv note the development of COVID-19 Community Testing symptomatic and asymptomatic testing provision in support of the Scottish Government's Community Testing Strategy;
- v note the Council's achievement in distribution of extensive Scottish Government funding arrangements deployed within the East Lothian business sector;
- vi note the complex COVID-19 funding arrangements and consequences for 2020-21 financial year end, and onward implications impacting on 2021-22 and future financial years;
- vii note the ongoing relentless focus on engagement with the public through external communications encouraging compliance with Protection Level requirements, uptake of vaccinations and access to community testing provision, to constrain the spread of the virus within East Lothian;
- viii approve the proposals set out in Appendix 4 and summarised in Paragraph 3.8 within the report, noting that officers will continue to report progress thereon through the Connected Economies Group (CEG) and that the CEG will oversee flexibility of resource deployment in the context of the deliverability of the identified interventions.
- ix note that work continues in accordance with the Council's Recovery and Renewal Framework and that the Council remains well placed to support communities in terms of both ongoing response interventions and the journey towards recovery;
- x note that the Council Management Team will conduct a second COVID-19 Interim Lessons Learned Debrief in May 2021, and agree to conducting a COVID-19 Interim Lessons Learned Debrief for all Elected Members in June 2021; and,
- xi note further updated COVID-19 Response and Recovery reports will be brought forward when appropriate with particular reference to the implementation of the COVID-19 Scotland's Strategic Framework Updates and incremental 'relaxation of lockdown'.

BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since March 2020 the Council has been operating within a series of unprecedented constraints, restrictions and implications associated with the COVID-19 global pandemic. For a significant period, Council decision-making was operating under delegated emergency powers although since August 2020, the vast majority of our governance arrangements have been reinstated, albeit largely working on a remote/virtual basis. Following consultation with Group Leaders, it was accepted that committee agendas would likely be restricted to essential and urgent business only, and it is expected that while in Business Continuity mode, these arrangements will continue.

- 3.2 Business Continuity Plans were formally invoked by the Chief Executive across all services on 24 March 2020. This remains the position. This means that responding to the COVID-19 emergency continues to be the Council's priority, as it now has been for over a year. Our strategy throughout has been to follow and support all relevant Scottish Government and Public Health Guidance and to ensure that the Council continues to provide essential business critical public services, minimising the impact of the developing COVID-19 outbreak, ensuring critical services are prioritised and that planning takes place for council services to recover and restart wherever possible/permitted. As the pandemic continues, our Business Continuity Plans and our Response and Recovery structures continue to flex to address the developing challenges brought from COVID-19 impact, national planning and any seasonal impacts.
- 3.3 The COVID-19 Command and Response Structure remains in place, with the Chief Executive designated as 'Gold Command'.

The Council Management Team continue to hold a weekly COVID-19 Response and Recovery Meeting. The Head of Communities is 'Silver Command' and leads the Council's COVID-19 Emergency Planning Response, supported by the East Lothian Council COVID-19 and Concurrent Risks Oversight Group (COG) and supporting sub-groups (See Appendix 1).

The Executive Director Council Resources is 'Bronze Command', leading the COVID-19 Emergency Planning Recovery and Renewal and the approved Recovery and Renewal Framework. A Multi-agency Recovery & Renewal Co-ordinating Group (MARRCG) and various supporting sub groups (See Appendix 2) continue to drive this work. At a future point in time, when the COVID-19 Response phase concludes, the Head of Communities will step down and Executive Director for Council Resources will assume 'Silver Command'.

Council Management Team continue to oversee the COVID-19 Risk Register and monitor business critical activities, with the COVID-19 Risk reported most recently within the Corporate Risk Register presented at the Audit and Governance Committee on 16 June 2020 and will be reported again on 15 June 2021.

In addition, Council Management Team regularly assess the COVID-19 Lessons Learned Log maintained by the COG. Council Management Team conducted a COVID-19 Interim Lessons Learned Structured Debrief in August 2020, and will conduct a second Interim Structured debrief in May 2021. An Elected Members Interim Structured Debrief is proposed in June 2021 for all Elected Members (see Paragraph 3.20).

Partnership multi-agency collaborative working at Gold and Silver command levels has maintained throughout the COVID-19 Response. The Chief Executive participates in weekly Lothian Gold meetings with fellow council chief executives and executive officers from Police Scotland

and NHS Lothian. Neil Mitchell, Chief Inspector, Local Area Commander for East Lothian, attends the weekly CMT COVID-19 meetings. The Head of Communities participates in Lothian Silver multi-agency meetings similarly. Weekly collaboration and joint working with the NHS Lothian Public Health Directorate sees the Chief Executive and Head of Communities meet with the Public Health Director/Consultant to gain detailed briefing on the containment of the spread of the coronavirus across East Lothian, which in turn informs the Council and multiagency COVID-19 operational response activity (such as deployment of community testing, inspection of business premises et al).

3.4 **COVID-19 Scotland's Strategic Framework**

Launched by the Scottish Government on 23 October 2020, the Strategic Framework of 'Protection Levels' was introduced across Scotland, with each of the 32 Local Authority areas placed into Protection Level 0 through to Protection Level 4, with Level 4 bringing the highest level of COVID-19 restrictions to bear on local communities and businesses.

Initially, East Lothian was placed in Protection Level 3 and subsequently, on 24 November 2020, into Protection Level 2. Scottish Government continued to review the allocation of Protection Levels to local authorities on a 3-weekly basis, and at the 7th review on 22 December 2020, Scottish Government moved mainland Scotland in its entirety to Protection Level 4 – namely, a return to 'lockdown'. After limited relaxation of restrictions over the Christmas 2020 period, Boxing Day 2020 saw further Protection Level 4 restriction applying, with a national 'Stay at Home' requirement taking effect.

On 23 February 2021, the Scottish Government laid out Scotland's COVID-19 Strategic Framework Update (available on the Scottish Government's website), setting out plans to restore, in a phased way, greater normality to our everyday lives. This update remained predicated on the national strategic intent to:

“Suppress the virus to the lowest possible level and keep it there, while we strive to return to a more normal life for as many people as possible.”

Six main tools applied for achieving this:

- *The quickest practical roll-out of the vaccination programme*
- *The most effective use of Test and Protect*
- *Applying proportionate protective measures (rules and guidance) to suppress transmission of the virus*
- *Effective measures to manage the risk of importation of the virus*
- *Supporting individuals, businesses and organisations to adhere to protective measures*
- *Providing care and support to mitigate the harms of risk.*

The update of 23 February 2021 set out the gradual easing of restrictions within Protection Level 4, to apply only when data indicated it would be safe to do so, and conditional on meeting the World Health Organisation's

more stringent conditions. (See Appendix 3: Extract Page 14 of Strategic Framework Update (further update of 15/4/21) – Timetable for Easing of Restrictions).

Subsequently, on 16 March 2021, the Scottish Government set out how it plans to lift the current coronavirus restrictions over the weeks and months ahead. The 'Stay at Home' requirement was replaced with a 'Stay Local' message with effect from 2 April 2021, retaining the current local authority-based travel restrictions for at least a three-week period.

On 5 April 2021, the Scottish Government eased a range of current restrictions in Protection Level 4 areas including, for example, resumption of outdoor contact sport for 12-17 year olds, reopening of non-essential click and collect retail, extending the list of retail permitted to include garden centres (indoors and outdoor), hairdressers, vehicle showrooms.

By 12/19 April 2021, it is planned that all children will return to school full-time.

By mid-April, subject to vaccine supply, the mass vaccination programme will have offered first doses of vaccination to the 9 priority population groups set out by the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

Assuming the data evidences it, a more significant reopening of the economy and society is expected from 26 April 2021, for example, travel within all of mainland Scotland permitted (subject to any data-informed local/regional level related restrictions), weddings and funerals for up to 50 (including wakes and receptions with alcohol permitted), hospitality premises can allow people indoors until 20:00hrs with no alcohol; however, alcohol is permitted outdoors until 22:00hrs.

By 17 May 2021, it is hoped that in-home socialising will recommence and hospitality opening hours will be extended to 22:30hrs indoors with alcohol permitted. Adult outdoor contact sport, cinemas, in person face-to-face support services, are also expected to resume.

By June 2021, it is hoped that Scotland may move to Protection Level 1; this will allow further relaxation across all areas of the economy and society, while still applying physical distancing and other non-pharmaceutical interventions and the FACTS guidance. From the end of June, it is hoped that Scotland will be able to move to Protection Level 0.

Notwithstanding this hoped for timetable of easing of restrictions, Scottish Government emphasises that if the data shows that the virus is spreading again, we must be prepared for the easing of restrictions to be paused and even reversed. Scottish Government will act decisively to reapply higher levels of restrictions to manage localised outbreaks should the need arise; this could be on a local or regional basis, depending on the nature of the outbreak.

3.5 COVID-19 Incidence Monitoring

In receipt of weekly COVID-19 data reports from Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland and NHS Lothian Health Protection Team, East Lothian Council conducts detailed scrutiny of this data to inform local prevalence and identify risk. Close collaboration and joint working across Council services, particularly with the Education Service, Protective Services and the Health & Social Care Partnership, supported by the NHSL Health Protection Team, ensures accurate and timely response to any positive COVID-19 cases or cluster outbreaks. NHS Lothian's Public Health Team's provision of case incidence data helps enable prompt response leading to direct engagement, as appropriate, with individuals, businesses and communities affected.

The key data monitored is the data used by the Scottish Government in its weekly review of local authority levels:

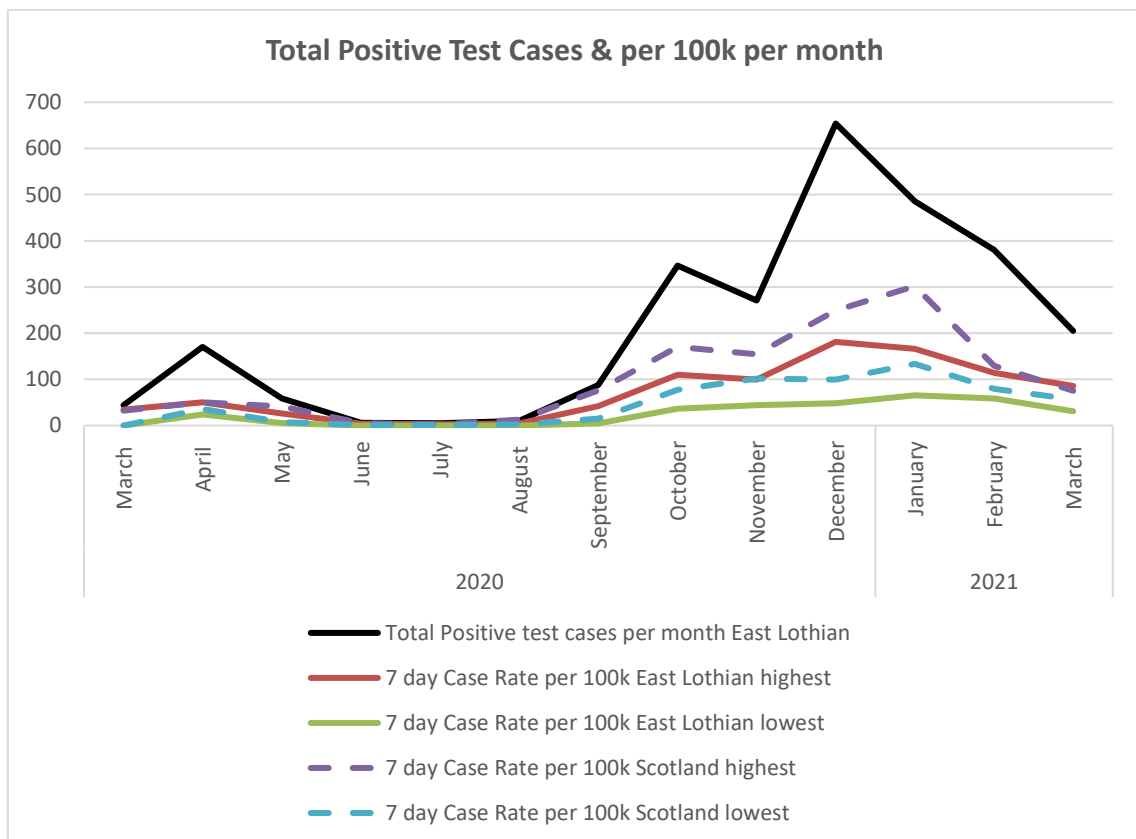
1. Positive cases over the previous 7 days
2. Case rate (cases per 100,000 population) over the previous 7 days
3. Cases per 100,000 forecast
4. Hospital bed forecast (at NHS Lothian level)
5. ICU bed forecast (at NHS Lothian level)

East Lothian experienced a rise in cases through September and October 2020, with the 7 day case rate per 100,000 population peaking at 110.2 cases on 27 October 2020. New cases dropped back in November so that East Lothian moved from Protection Level 3 to Protection Level 2 on 24 November 2020. However, cases rose again very quickly through December 2020, which had the largest monthly total of new positive cases (654) and the highest peak in 7 day case rate – 181.2 on 19 December 2020.

Following the move back to Protection Level 3 on 22 December 2020 and the national move back to Level 4 with an additional Scottish Government 'Stay at Home' direction on 5 January 2021, new case numbers fell back in January to 486 and again in February 2021 to 380. From late February there has been a steady reduction in new cases and in the 7 day case rate per 100,000 (from 113.9 on 25 February to under 50 on 16 March 2021) and it has stayed below 50 since then. Over the period since 8 March 2021 the Scottish average 7 day case rate has floated between 75 and 70.

Total Positive Test Cases & per 100k per month

| | | Total Positive test cases per month | 7 day Case Rate per 100k | | 7 day Case Rate per 100k | |
|------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| | | | East Lothian | | Scotland | |
| | | East Lothian | highest | lowest | highest | lowest |
| 2020 | March | 44 | 34.6 | 0 | 32 | 0 |
| | April | 170 | 50.4 | 24.3 | 50.5 | 35.6 |
| | May | 59 | 26.1 | 5.6 | 41.2 | 7.7 |
| | June | 6 | 3.7 | 0 | 5.4 | 1.1 |
| | July | 5 | 2.8 | 0 | 2.1 | 1 |
| | August | 10 | 4.7 | 0 | 13 | 2.6 |
| | September | 88 | 42 | 4.7 | 76.3 | 15.3 |
| | October | 346 | 110.2 | 36.4 | 170.3 | 77.4 |
| | November | 271 | 99.9 | 43.9 | 154.2 | 101.7 |
| | December | 654 | 181.2 | 48.6 | 249.1 | 99.3 |
| 2021 | January | 486 | 166.2 | 65.4 | 301.8 | 133.5 |
| | February | 380 | 113.9 | 58.8 | 129.4 | 79.8 |
| | March | 205 | 85.9 | 30.8 | 75.5 | 56.6 |



Council Officers and the NHS Lothian Public Health Service Directorate also closely monitor new cases by postcode across East Lothian's SIMD intermediate zones, the lowest geographical level that Public Health

Scotland dashboard reports cases numbers. This detailed data along with other Public Health Track and Trace information about clusters of cases, has been used to support decision making about where to place National Mobile Testing units and make other targeted interventions to tackle geographical clusters of new cases or outbreaks in specific sectors such as care homes, schools or businesses.

3.6 COVID Performance

The Council contributes to national COVID-19 performance reporting, overseen by the Improvement Service, resulting in weekly updates of a COVID-19 Dashboard which uses a range of national sources of information as well as Council provided data to highlight some key input, output and outcome indicators of the impact of the pandemic across Scotland. The weekly dashboard now includes 25 indicators with the most relevant listed below:

| Indicator | Summary |
|---|---|
| Number of Test and Protect calls | East Lothian has had lower than the Scottish average number of calls from people who have been asked to self-isolate through Test and Protect and very few requests for support in recent months |
| Environmental Health & Trading Standards Business Advice and Enforcement Activity | Significant levels of EH&TS business advice and enforcement activity throughout the last year – peaking at 263 per week in December – and higher than the Scottish average per 1000 population for most of the year |
| Business Start Ups | The number of business start-ups has been affected by the pandemic and economic downturn and fell from 30 in March 2020 to 0 in April and May 2020 and 0 in the first three months of 2021 |
| Retail and recreation activity | East Lothian has followed the national trend – a massive fall in activity in February, March and April 2020 followed by some recovery through to November, before another significant fall in December and a slow recovery from January. Overall East Lothian has seen a fall in retail and recreation activity of 44% from February 2020 to March 2021 compared to a 45% fall across the whole of Scotland |
| Claimant Count | The number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance plus those who claim Universal Credit and are required to seek work and be available for work has almost doubled from c.1800 in March 2020 to c.3500 in February 2021. This mirrors the increase in claimant count across Scotland so East Lothian's claimant count per working age population (5.32%) has remained below the Scottish average (6.1%) |

| | |
|---|--|
| Scottish Welfare Fund – Community Care Grants | Spend on Community Care Grants per head of population has been at or above the Scottish average and above the average of Councils in the deprivation family group. Total spend has been c.50% higher than in previous years as funding from the Scottish Government increased |
| Scottish Welfare Fund – Crisis Grants | Spend on Crisis Grants per head of population has been below the Scottish average but above the average of councils in the deprivation family group. Total spend has been c.50% higher than in previous years as funding from the Scottish Government increased |
| Discretionary Housing Payments | Both applications for, and spend on, Discretionary Housing Payments has been lower than the Scottish and Family Group averages |
| Rent arrears | Rent arrears has increase marginally since May 2020 from £1.3m to £1.35m. Current rent arrears as a % of rent due in East Lothian is currently 4.7% (up from 4.5% in May 2020) compared to the Scottish average of 6.9% (up from 5.9%) |
| Homelessness applications | The number of homelessness applications per month has almost tripled from 23 in May 2020 to 63 in March 2021, and the average per 1000 population has increased from 0.2 (half the Scottish average) to 0.58 (just above the Scottish average) |
| Delayed Discharges | The number of delayed discharges has been between 0 and 2 for almost the whole of the last year (only once rising to 4). During this time the Scottish average per 1000 population aged 65+ has more than doubled from 0.45 to c.1 |
| Local Authority staff absence | Staff absence levels have fallen consistently since the start of the pandemic. East Lothian's Council's staff absence (% of days staff absent on sick or special leave) fell below the Scottish average in September 2020 and is now 4.7% compared to the Scottish average of 5.3% |
| Pupil Attendance | Pupil attendance has been at around (just below or just above) the Scottish average for most of the pandemic |
| Domestic abuse incidents | The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the police has been as high as 32 in one week to a low of 10 and has averaged around 20 per week. It has not increased over the period of the pandemic |
| Child protection registrations and | The number of new registrations of children in the Child Protection Register has been below the |

| | |
|--|---|
| Face-to-face contact with Social Worker | Scottish average for most of the pandemic. An average of around 35 children on the Child Protection Register have face-to-face contact with a social worker each week |
| Adult protection investigations | The number of adult support and protection investigations started each week per 1000 people aged 65+ (which averaged about 2 per week) has been below the Scottish and family group averages apart from three brief periods |
| Adults at risk and adult wellbeing referrals | Adults at risk referrals has been above the Scottish and family group averages whereas Adult wellbeing referrals have been below the Scottish and family group averages |
| COVID-19 related deaths | Apart from a brief period in April 2020 the number of COVID related deaths in East Lothian per head of population has been slightly lower than the Scottish average |

3.7 COVID-19 Support for People

Shielding People: Supporting people who are considered clinically vulnerable and have been identified as requiring to shield has been at the forefront of the pandemic response in East Lothian. The numbers of people shielding have changed during the pandemic based on clinical advice and the addition and removal of clinical conditions that prompt eligibility. As of the 12 March 2021, 3.2% of the population in East Lothian are shielded, that equates to 3,620 people, distributed across Area Partnership areas as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Dunbar and East Linton | 465 |
| Haddington and Lammermuir | 441 |
| Musselburgh | 962 |
| North Berwick Coastal | 399 |
| Preston Seton Gosford | 723 |
| Fa'side | 610 |
| Other | 20 |

A significant take up of support was evident in the first lockdown in summer 2020, and additional resources across the Council and the community and voluntary sector were mobilised to respond to the emerging demand for access to food and pharmacy deliveries etc. In the subsequent restriction periods as supermarket online shopping has been made available, local community support projects have been established, family and friends have been providing ongoing support along with an increased confidence and resilience in adapting to current advice, demand for support has significantly reduced in recent months.

The East Lothian public information **COVID-19 Helpline on 01875 824300** - operated through the Contact Centre - continues to be available for people to contact should they require any additional support throughout the pandemic. In the week commencing 15 March 2021 only 1 person made contact through the COVID Helpline.

Test and Protect: Information on the national Test and Protect Programme is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/news/test-and-protect-rolled-out-nationally/>. The Scottish Government launched Guidance (on 12 October 2020 and updated in December 2020) relating to the support to be offered to those vulnerable people required to self-isolate, including people who are on the shielding list and people aged 65+. Demand within East Lothian has been low as many people require no support, having sufficient assistance from family, neighbours and friends – and from community groups. In the week commencing 15 March 2021, only 4 people required to be contacted in respect of Test and Protect, and none required any support from the Council.

People identified through the Test and Protect system, as a close contact of a person who has tested positive with the virus, and who are required to self-isolate for a period of 10 days, may be eligible to receive the Scottish Government's Self-Isolation Support Payment (of £500). As at 31 March 2021, 237 people had applied for the Grant and in accordance with nationally set eligibility criteria, 97 people had been awarded the grant.

Financial Insecurity and Poverty: Tackling poverty and digital and food insecurity remain national priorities. Scottish Government have issued funding and guidance to local authorities to support those in their communities experiencing financial insecurity related to COVID-19.

East Lothian Council was awarded a grant of £327,000 to support individuals at financial risk over the period 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021. This funding was allocated to support five service areas.

Scottish Welfare Fund/ Fuel Poverty

£90,000 to augment the Scottish Welfare Fund to enable support to be provided to a greater portion of claimants, in particular people in fuel poverty. A new Coronavirus Fuel Poverty Fund was created to help households who are under intense financial hardship during these uncertain times and are struggling to afford to heat their homes and keep the lights turned on. To date almost 600 one-off payments of £100 have been paid to people who need help with their gas or electricity charges.

In addition, the Council is making a one-off award of £9 for period products (from our period product budgets) to every successful SWF claim if there is a woman or girl in the household.

Discretionary Housing Payment

£75,000 was allocated to augment the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund to assist tenants with rent arrears who may be eligible for a DHP

award or a top up of an existing award and have experienced new/ increased rent arrears in 2020/21.

Children's and Adult Services (text updated on 27/4/21)

Children's Services was allocated funding to support families and young people through Section 22 and Section 29 Social Work payments, supplementing income for vulnerable families and children, including those who are looked after, and provide financial support for care experienced young people in temporary accommodation arrangements.

£30,000 was allocated to Adult Social Work, to support vulnerable clients in financial difficulty. The funding was distributed to:

- Carers of East Lothian
- Community Link Workers
- Community Justice
- S12 Social Work payments

Connected Communities

£90,000 was allocated to the six Area Partnerships to tackle food insecurity through continuing to providing support for community based food initiatives. Examples of how this funding has been used include:

- Fa'side Community Kitchen and Fa'side Fridge
- New food pantries in each area
- Frozen meals cooked in the North Berwick Community Centre
- Sunny Soups (in partnership with Basics Foodbank)
- The Ridge (in partnership with Dunbar Rotary Club and Basics Foodbank) provided a Christmas Day lunch for 120 people
- Purchase of a new freezer for Port Seton Pantry

In addition, funding has been used to cover the costs of moving the Fareshare Hub to a new base in Aldhammer House, Prestonpans, and to pay the annual membership fee that allows county-wide food initiatives free access to the food resources within the Hub.

3.8 COVID-19 Business Support

Business Support Grants: as at 31 March 2021, the following Scottish Government funded, Business Support Grant activity has been undertaken providing much needed financial support to the East Lothian business community:

| Payment | Type | Amount | Comments |
|---|-------|--------------------|---|
| Business Support Grants (April to 10 July 2020) | Grant | 17,636,250 | 1,573 organisations supported, funding provided by Scottish Government |
| Newly Self Employed Hardship | Grant | 216,000 | 108 Sole Traders supported by funding provided by Scottish Government |
| Hospitality (Scottish Enterprise) (CTHEHF) Hardship & Pivotal (PERF) | Grant | 431,995 | 159 organisations supported, funding provided by Scottish Government |
| Soft play (One-of award, November 2020) | Grant | 45,000 | 3 organisations supported, funding provided by Scottish Government |
| Scottish Government – Furlough Support Grant | | 107,250 | 65 Organisations supported with one-off £1,650 grants |
| (Brake period) Business Closure Grants (9 Oct - 3 Nov 2020) | Grant | 375,150 | 123 organisations supported, funding provided by Scottish Government |
| (Brake period) Business Hardship Grants (9 Oct - 3 Nov 2020) | Grant | 56,845 | 36 organisations supported, funding provided by Scottish Government |
| Strategic Framework (Closure & Restrictions & sector Top Ups combined) 3 Nov 2020 to date. | Grant | 8,593,000 | 922 applications received 711 organisations currently being supported, funding provided by Scottish Government (Ongoing) |
| Taxi and Private Hire Driver Grants | Grant | 210,000 | 140 Drivers supported with one-off £1,500 grants |
| East Lothian Discretionary Support Grant | Grant | 618,000 | Total 309 x £2k grants paid, (from 2 tranches). Further 70+ to be considered from final Tranche 3. |
| Contingency Fund Plus (Breweries/Travel Agents & Indoor Football Centres) | Grant | 60,000 | Self-Declaration applications issued to 5 Breweries and 3 Travel Agents. (Thus far 3 Travel Agents and 4 Breweries paid). |
| Accommodation Support Grant (Large Self-Accommodation/Exclusive Use/Bed and Breakfast Businesses) | Grant | 216,000 | 17x Small Accommodation (Wave 1,2 & 3) supported with £6k grants 25x Large Self Catering Accommodation supported with £2k grants 6x Exclusive Use Businesses supported with £10k grants, (1x £4k) |
| TOTAL | | £28,565,490 | |

The introduction of the Level 4 protective measures on 26 December 2020 drove a major increase in demand for the Strategic Framework Business Fund (SFBF) which up until then had been supporting a smaller number of businesses that had been required to either close or operate under restrictions.

A subsequent expansion in Business Support schemes being delivered by local authorities and the enterprise agencies to a wider range of business sectors during the following months saw additional temporary staffing resource deployed and existing staff temporarily re-assigned to administer a total of 18 separate grants assigned for local government delivery.

As at 31 March 2021 over £28.5M of Business Support has been delivered into the East Lothian economy. Following the First Minister's announcement of the planned easing of COVID-19 restrictions the Economic Development Service is prepared to complete the assessment of the third and final tranche of claims for East Lothian Council's Discretionary Business Support Fund and conclude the administration of the (SFBF) by making a combined final 'Supplementary' and 'Restart Grant' payments on 19 April 2021.

Once completed, the Discretionary Grant will have disbursed a total of over £1.96M in grant awards to small and medium enterprises and whilst the SFBF has been closed to new applications since 22 March 2021, the final Supplementary and Restart payments due in April are expected to provide a further £6.4M in business support to the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. The final Business Support Grants total paid to East Lothian businesses since the start of the pandemic is likely to exceed £36.3M.

The Scottish Government initially provided support that would provide the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with 100% relief from Business Rates for the full financial year 2020/21 and the first 3 months of 2021/22. More recently, Scottish Government have confirmed that this relief will be extended for the duration of 2021/22. These relief schemes have been deployed and administered through the Council's Revenues Team.

As the protective measures are progressively relaxed over the coming weeks, our multi-agency Connected Economy Group, from a multi-agency and partnering perspective and supported by Protective Services, Economic Development Services and Finance Services, will continue to ensure that local businesses have timely and accurate information and advice in compliance with the COVID-19 restrictions and Public Health operating requirements.

Active promotion of 'Stay Safe, Support Local, Love East Lothian' will continue to encourage local people to remain within East Lothian for all their retail and leisure needs, actively promoting good behaviours, helping businesses deliver safely – and in so doing supporting our local economy.

Business Recovery Investment Fund: At its meeting of the 2 March 2021, East Lothian Council approved a budgetary amendment totalling £600,000 to establish a Business Recovery Investment Fund for implementation within the current financial year 2021-22. The table below identifies in summary the policy proposals generated through the Connected Economy Group (CEG) Partnership sub groups for approval

by Council in accordance with recommendation 2.1(viii). A fuller identification of the identified interventions is set out within Appendix 4.

| <u>Business Recovery Investment Fund</u> | £ |
|---|----------------|
| - To Support Town Centre Recovery & Renewal | 130,000 |
| - To Support the Tourism & Hospitality Sector | 184,000 |
| - To Support our Rural Economy | 103,500 |
| - To Support Employability | 12,500 |
| - To Support our Love East Lothian Messaging | 10,000 |
| - To Support Businesses, Safeguard Employment and Re-encourage Growth | 160,000 |
| Total | 600,000 |

The budgetary amendment that the CEG sub-groups were working within the parameters of read as follows:

“In response to the Pandemic, to aid recovery in our economy, to identify needs and priorities and opportunities to deliver strategic and sustainable economic development across East Lothian, to intervene in Town Centres, in the rural economy and in food and drink, leisure and tourism, to promote new and existing local businesses, innovation and research. To revise the existing ED and Tourism strategies and structures and partnerships as necessary to develop and enhance skills and create employment in East Lothian.”

Officers will report progress made against the interventions identified and Council is requested to allow flexibility of resource deployment between interventions as required in the context of deliverability.

Business Regulation and Support: On 2 November 2020, The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions and Requirements) (Local Levels) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 came into force. These Regulations set out the restrictions and requirements which apply in the different Protection Levels applied to Scottish local authority areas. The enforcement of the Regulations relate to the:

- requirement to close certain premise to members of the public.
- requirement on a responsible person to take measures to minimise risk of exposure to coronavirus in their premises.
- restrictions on the opening times and sales in certain public houses and food and drink premises.
- requirement to obtain and record visitor information in a relevant hospitality premises.
- restriction on gatherings in public places and private dwellings
- wearing of a face covering on public transport and certain indoor premises

Officers within Protective Services - Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Safer Communities teams - and Police Constables, are authorised to deploy these Regulations.

Protective Services (Business Regulation, Safer Communities and Trading Standards teams) continue direct work in our communities and with the business sector, supporting safe deployment of the Government's COVID-19 Regulations and public health guidelines. The service has been working closely with NHS Lothian Health Protection Team and the Lothian Test and Protect Team to quickly identify and react to outbreaks associated with schools, care settings and workplaces. There is also additional joint working with Economic Development, Licensing Service, and Police Scotland, to provide local businesses with support and advice in the safe operation of retail and hospitality sectors and compliance with Scottish Government Guidelines for public health management and reducing the spread of the coronavirus.

3.9 COVID-19 Vaccine and Mass Vaccination Programme

The first COVID-19 vaccination was administered in the UK on 8 December 2020. NHS Lothian was instructed by Scottish Government to prepare for the deployment of the COVID-19 vaccine across the Lothians; deployment of the vaccine to nationally defined priority groups, e.g. front line health and social care staff and care home residents, began in East Lothian on 8 December 2020.

Following this first phase roll out of the vaccine, a mass vaccination programme rolled out nationwide. In the Lothians, the mass vaccination programme is being led by NHS Lothian and the first East Lothian multi agency Safety Advisory Group 'Plus' meeting, chaired by Iain Gorman, Head of Operations within the East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership, was convened on the 14 October 2020, with a Lothian-wide meeting held on 27 November 2020.

As at 31 March 2021, NHS Lothian had delivered 350,000 vaccine first doses, equivalent to 38.4% of the total adult population (aged over 18) in Lothian. GP practices delivered first dose vaccines to ambulant over 80s and 75-79s. HSCPs delivered first dose vaccines to housebound and Care Home residents. 59,000 Health & Social Care workers have received their first dose vaccines.

Mass vaccination centres have delivered first dose vaccines to nationally set priority groups within the population, with physical operational capacity, by 29 March 2021, to deliver c. 126,000 doses per week over 14 sites across the Lothians. The nearest site to East Lothian operates at the Queen Margaret University Campus.

NHSL are at an advanced stage of planning second dose vaccine delivery, with second dose delivery completed in all East Lothian Care Homes.

3.10 COVID-19 Community Testing Programme

Scotland's COVID-19 Testing Strategy contributes to the overall pandemic strategic intent, set out in Coronavirus (COVID-19) Scotland's Strategic Framework (Updated), published on 23rd February 2021. The strategy remains to suppress the virus – driving the number of cases to the lowest possible level – to support the conditions necessary to allow as close to normal life as possible to resume. Scottish Government published their updated Testing Strategy for Scotland on 17 March 2021: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-testing-strategy-update-march-2021/cot/publications/scotlands-testing-strategy-update-march-2021/>

The implications of this for testing are two-fold: first; that in striving to suppress the virus to as close to elimination as possible, every possible case will be actively sought out using all of the now advanced national testing capabilities to their optimal potential (this includes school and care home testing et al); and second, that testing for COVID-19 is likely to become a permanent feature in our lives – though one whose form will continue to change and adapt as the pandemic does, as evidenced by the First Minister's comments on 06 April 2021 relating to a new 'Universal Offer' affording everyone access to twice weekly home testing should they wish.

East Lothian and NHS Lothian are currently engaged with the Scottish Government's Directorate for Community Testing, seeking to agree a local Community Testing provision for East Lothian, fully funded by the Scottish Government. It is anticipated that this will see enhanced community testing capacity operating county-wide to support both asymptomatic and symptomatic testing. It is hoped that this community testing resource will deploy from both fixed site and mobile provision.

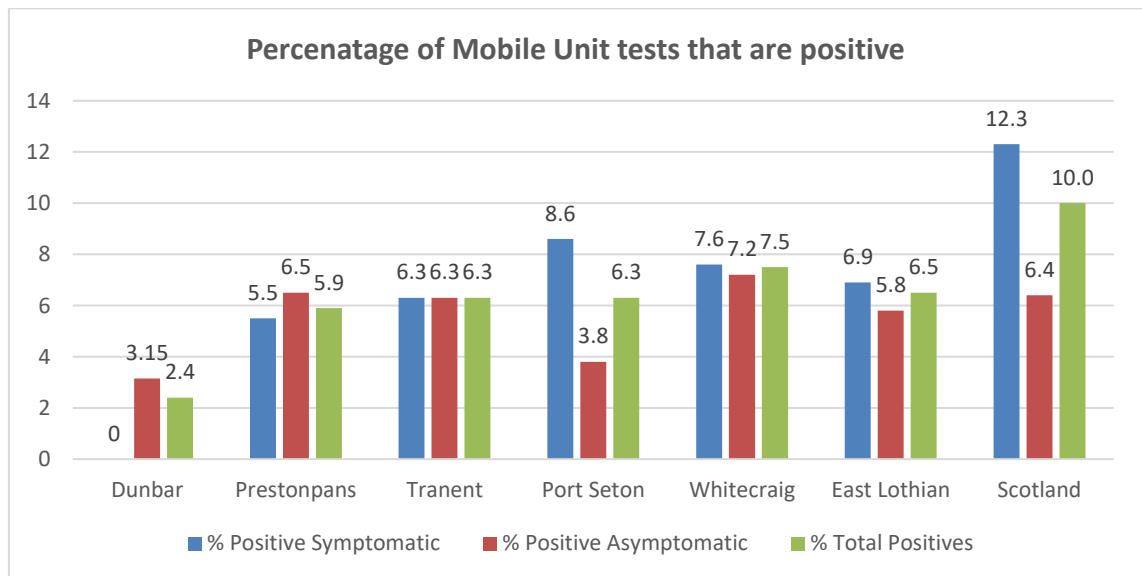
Work is underway in collaboration with the Scottish Government to assess the viability of the former Stoneyhill Community Centre, Musselburgh, being recommissioned to form part of the asymptomatic community testing offer – and possibly the symptomatic testing offer. Proposals have been made to introduce a mobile asymptomatic testing provision which could see a van or bus re-fitted to support 'pop up' outdoor community asymptomatic testing sites in direct reactive response to the incidence of positive covid cases across the county. Officers are engaged in Scottish Government efforts to develop Standard Operating Procedures to enable asymptomatic community testing through both a 'Mobile Testing' and a 'Collect Service', which may deploy for example, from main Council offices or other community building/business. In addition, the Cockenzie site remains functional as a part-time symptomatic testing site, with potential for it to operate over a greater number of days per week.

All of these options are currently in exploration and it is expected that a final suite of proposals could be agreed by Scottish Government by the

end of April, for speedy deployment thereafter. A Community Testing Working Group has been established to oversee and deliver this programme of community testing, chaired by the Service Manager – Protective Services, reporting to the COG.

In the interim period, whilst these discussions progress with Scottish Government, it was agreed late in February 2021, that East Lothian could bid for access to the National Mobile Testing Unit (NMTU) resource, to seek to bring mobile testing into the county, in response to COVID-19 case data and intelligence. A successful bid was made to the Scottish Government at the end of February and very quickly thereafter, 2 NMTUs, operated by the Scottish Ambulance Service, were allocated to East Lothian. These units deployed during March to Whitecraig, Port Seton, Prestonpans and Tranent. Due to the success of their deployment, a further bid was made to extend the use of the NMTUs and agreement reached that they could remain operable in East Lothian through to the end of April. A further data and intelligence review indicated an appropriate shift of geographical focus, resulting in the 2 NMTUs being deployed in Whitecraig, Port Seton, Tranent and Dunbar during April.

Since their deployment in East Lothian at the beginning of March 2021 to 7 April 2021, the MTUs have tested 3653 individuals and have identified 236 positive test results, a positivity rate of 6.5% (whilst the Scotland wide MTU positivity rate is 10.0%), as depicted below.



3.11 Education

Following the first lockdown, schools across East Lothian reopened full-time from August until December 2020. During this time, extensive mitigations were put in place as directed by the Scottish Government. This included ensuring physical distancing between staff and between staff and pupils, increased hand washing and the use of hand sanitiser, enhanced cleaning and the restriction of pupils mixing within the school.

During this time, school staff worked hard to support all pupils with their learning, taking account of the impact of COVID-19 on their wellbeing and learning. Our approach has been focused on 'Nurture, Recovery and Reconnection' and the service has also prioritised mental health, taking account of the impact that the pandemic may have had on children, young people and their families. An additional 24.5 full-time equivalent primary teachers and 15 full-time equivalent secondary teachers have been recruited using additional Scottish Government funding and schools have put in place additional support for those pupils who may need help with their learning. The Education Service, working with all schools, continues to keep this under active review in light of the expected need for further support to be required for some pupils. Work is underway to plan further developments to support children and families who may have experienced hardship through both in-school provision and family support.

During this time, systems were also put in place to deal with cases of COVID-19 in both pupils and staff including working closely with NHS Health Protection teams and ensuring that information was available to support Track and Trace. A senior member of school staff was seconded to support the Education Service with all aspects of dealing with positive test results including responding out of hours. This has ensured the East Lothian response has been swift and responsive and that communication has been issued appropriately in liaison with NHS Lothian.

Immediately before the Christmas break, the First Minister announced that schools would reopen on a phased basis in January 2021 and this was then quickly followed by the decision to move back into lockdown. All East Lothian schools moved swiftly to remote learning during this period, invoking plans that had already been developed during the first lockdown in 2020. From January until early March 2021, 14,600 pupils across primary and secondary schools engaged in remote learning with almost all pupils making use of Google Classroom. School staff also connected directly with families to provide other forms of learning and support that were required. Towards the end of February, very limited numbers of senior phase pupils returned for practical subjects and in early March, children from nursery to P3 were able to return to school. From 15 March, all primary pupils were permitted to return to school buildings with some limited face to face provision for secondary pupils. All secondary pupils will return to in-school learning after the Easter break with the removal of 2m physical distancing between pupils in secondary schools. Mass asymptomatic testing was introduced for staff working across all early years and schools settings and for senior phase pupils from February 2021. The use of testing was then further expanded to include all secondary pupils from after the Easter break.

During the January – March 2021 period, all local authorities were required to put in place in-school provision for children of keyworkers and for those children who could be deemed as vulnerable. During this period, the Education service received 1,342 applications for in-school places totalling

1,974 child places overall. Of those applications, around 75% were approved. In-school provision was provided by school staff alongside providing remote learning for the majority of pupils who were learning at home. Pupils with additional support needs attending all of our specialist provisions were able to access in-school learning. School staff also provided ongoing support for those children who are more vulnerable including ensuring access to learning materials and making weekly calls. By the end of March 2021, school staff were making over 1,000 weekly calls alongside all other contact through remote learning.

Significant work was undertaken with all schools to further improve the remote learning offer for all pupils. The Education Service provided clear guidance and set consistent expectations of the range of activities that were to be provided. This included live and recorded lessons, direct teaching, Google Meets for assemblies and other gatherings, independent tasks and other learning opportunities, such as baking and outdoor learning. The activity on Google Classroom by both teachers and pupils has been significant. Since 1 January 2021, teachers have added nearly a quarter of a million posts to Google Classroom. During the same period, pupils added 37,220 posts and there have been 460,000 Google meets of which 84% were sessions with learners. East Lothian's approach to remote learning has also been praised in a series of Education Scotland national reviews of remote learning carried out during this period.

Following the cancellation of SQA examinations for sessions 2022/21, all local authorities have been required to put in place an Alternative Certification Model that ensures that a range of evidence about pupil achievement is gathered prior to the awarding of final grades by the SQA. Schools will gather the required assessment evidence and make judgements about pupil achievement in the summer term. Working with secondary schools, the Quality Improvement Team have put in place a rigorous and robust quality assurance and moderation process in place that will ensure that all results submitted to SQA accurately reflects the achievement of each pupil.

Early Learning and Childcare: Early Learning and Childcare settings (both local authority and funded providers) have also been impacted during this time. Following the first lockdown, all nurseries were permitted to reopen in August 2020 with significant COVID-19 mitigations in place. Alongside additional cleaning, hand washing and risk assessments, settings also had to restrict the numbers of children playing together and ensure staff only worked with the same group of children in one day. During this time, the Early Learning and Childcare Support Team provided extensive support to settings in helping them implement the new guidance and providing ongoing advice and guidance to support children's development and learning. From January 2021, all settings were required to close other than provision for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. During this time, the Education Service worked closely with all funded providers to continue to provide them with support and advice in respect of their

continued operation and subsequent reopening which was permitted by Scottish Government in early March 2021.

During this period, the Education and Children’s Services Recovery Group has continued to meet very regularly with associated working groups considering any new developments and updated Scottish Government guidance. This group and its associated working groups has full cross-Council representation involving schools, key stakeholders and Trade Unions. Regular meetings have taken place with Trade Unions in order to ensure a collaborative approach is taken to supporting the delivery of education across our schools and nurseries.

Employability: In addition to existing grant funding and support activity, **East Lothian Works** (ELW) have received significant additional funding from Scottish Government which will target the following areas in support of employability initiatives:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Parental Employability Support Fund (PESF)</p> | <p>To support parents who are unemployed, or on a low income, in receipt of 1140 childcare hours, young parents and disabled parents</p> |
| <p>Young Persons Guarantee (YPG)</p> <p>To support young people aged 16-24</p> | <p>Targeted support includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DYW School Based Co-ordinators • Support for those who are Pre Stage 1 of the Strategic Skills Pipeline • Support for those with disabilities to improve and support transitions and post school destinations including targeted paid work experience opportunities post school • Establishment of a new supported volunteering programme in partnership with the third sector • Modern Apprenticeship subsidy to support additionality • Kickstart Alternative an ELW offer for young people not in employment or training and who are not eligible for the Kickstart UK Government scheme. • Establishment of a Pre Apprenticeship Programme to prepare individuals for this pathway • Increased flexibility around Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERI) |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Work Grants/Wage Subsidies <p>In addition to existing support, ELW will offer subsidies for the following with the caveat that the employer is required to provide certificated training as part of the subsidy package:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Those employed 8-15 hrs per week – targeted at those with ASN/multiple barriers, care experienced/disabilities, No-one Left Behind (NOLB) progressions, those with caring responsibilities ○ Those employed 16+ hrs per week – offering opportunities for 12 months or up until March 2022 <p>This subsidy can be used at the end of the Kickstart alternative (26 weeks) to run until March 2022</p> |
| <p>PACE support</p> <p>Support for employees and employers facing potential and proposed redundancies</p> | <p>Two new staff are being recruited to support this activity, one will work directly with employees, the other will sit between ELW and Economic Development to support businesses</p> |
| <p>Kickstart</p> <p>(UK Government funding)</p> <p>To support young people aged 16-24.</p> | <p>ELW currently have 70 places to support Council departments and external businesses to offer fully funded paid placements for 6 months</p> |

In terms of enhancements to existing service delivery, ELW have prioritised NOLB Phase 1 funding to create a paid work experience programme (Next Steps to Employment) and refreshed East Lothian's Local Employability Partnership (LEP) which will also see the development of a range of targeted operational groups, for example the 'Schools Transitions Taskforce', which will bring together a range of active partners to provide offers for those young people with multiple barriers to employment.

Universal Credit (UC) - East Lothian has a total number of 3,640 individual UC claimants (most recent data as at February 2021). The highest proportion of claimants sit within the 18-24 year old age bracket, followed by those in the 25-49 year old age bracket. The peak claimant figures were

between May and July 2020. The UC claimant comparison between pre-COVID-19 and February 2021 shows that 16+ claims have increased overall by 2.6%, with the change in specific age group claimant levels being as follows: 16-17 no change at 0.7%, 18-25 has increased by 5.3%, 25-49 has increased by 2.8% and 50+ has increased by 1.9%.

3.12 Care Homes

In line with Scottish Government guidance, the Health and Social Care Partnership has taken on a role of ensuring care home assurance in relation to infection control. This is being managed through regular care home huddles where any areas of concern are highlighted. This includes regular reporting on positive cases within care homes and rapid support offered through incident management teams in the event that homes appear to be at risk of outbreak. In addition, each care home has received an onsite supportive visit to review local processes and help identify opportunities for improvement.

The Scottish Government has now requested a care review of all adults within care homes and the HSCP is mobilising a team to carry out these reviews.

Care Home testing is now routine and local visiting guidance has been created using Scottish Government guidance. This includes definitions on reasons for essential visiting and guidance on how PPE can be used to ensure visitor, staff and residents safety.

3.13 Digital Inclusion

Over the last year, schools have continued to work with parents and carers to determine pupils' requirements for access to digital devices and connectivity to the Internet. Between March and June 2020, schools put in place a lending system to ensure that any pupil with no suitable device was able to access one. This work has continued in light of new Scottish Government funding and by March 2021, 1400 Chromebooks and 196 connectivity devices had been provided to pupils using this additional funding.

Within the community, the Scottish Government's Connecting Scotland initiative (<https://connecting.scot/>), co-ordinated and funded nationally through the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), has seen the Connected Communities Service, working in partnership with local Third Sector Partners and Council services (e.g. Social Work Services), provide 745 digital devices (Chrome Books and i-Pads) and 583 Mi-Fi data packs to local people.

Under the Scottish Government's eligibility criteria, these devices and connectivity packs were allocated to targeted groups across our community:

Phase 1 launched in April 2021 and focused on who were at risk of isolation due to coronavirus because they were in the extremely high vulnerability group ('shielding') or the higher risk of severe illness group.

Phase 2 launched in August 2021: focused on households with children, or where a child is normally resident (this includes pregnant women with no child in the household) and on care leavers up to the age of twenty-six (in line with eligibility for aftercare support).

Phase 2b launched Round 1 of applications in December 2020 and Round 2 in January 2021: referenced as the Connecting Scotland Winter Support Fund, this focused on older people (aged 60+) and/or those who have a disability.

This national investment in digital inclusion has been highly valued across the community, enabling people to connect with services and access information and support, and to participate in virtual meetings and social activities.

People learning to use their digital devices and connectivity packs are supported by a network of Digital Champions across services and partner organisations. Local community partners such as People Know How (<https://peopleknowhow.org/computer-delivery/>), Area Partnerships, Volunteer Centre East Lothian and Scotland's Tech Army in Partnership with Dunbar Traders et al, have actively supported and promoted the digital inclusion agenda county-wide.

3.14 **Social Care**

Delivery of children's services social work functions has continued from the start of the pandemic adjusting to the varying levels of restrictions. The service is still in "response", prioritising face to face meetings for the most vulnerable children and young people. Many third sector partners are providing a virtual service only. This is impacting on the quality and pace of work to keep children safe, support their families to manage effectively and support our care leavers to live independently.

The backlog of children's hearings is significant, meaning decisions about children requiring compulsory measure of care are delayed. Referrals to social work continue to rise and the longer term impacts on the most vulnerable, including those with complex needs, are emerging. The availability of responsive and flexible support for CYP and families will be critical.

The challenges for delivering and sustaining adult social work, social care and justice services have been considerable. Understanding the longer-term impact on service providers, anticipating the re-opening of courts and developing different models of delivering services will be a focus for strategic planning.

Mental Health services continue to see significant pressures from adults in the community. As part of the supportive response the HSCP has introduced a direct access support service which is proving to be well used by the public. There are ongoing discussions to consider how this service and the wider mental health services can be altered in order to meet the expected increased demand caused by the pandemic. A service review is currently underway with a plan to conclude by June 21.

The Drug and Alcohol Partnership (MELDAP) has continued to work with a range of partner agencies to support our communities. Despite considerable beneficial work it has been recognised that the community who benefit from these services are likely to suffer some detriment from the isolation of lockdown. The HSCP has altered operational arrangements with the partner agencies and MELDAP with a view to providing a more joined up and rapid response to people at risk of harm due to drug and alcohol use.

3.15 **Community Infrastructure**

Spaces for People: has completed the work and temporary projects identified within the grant funding application and consideration is now being given to the consultation required to identify measures implemented that communities wish to retain and to develop including the exit strategy. In relation to E-Bikes, unfortunately as the Council had no direct route to tender, the market being new and only two companies responded with delivery times far exceeding grant timelines this component cannot come forward. A Members' Library report has been lodged to reflect the success of Spaces for People thus far.

Assets: have been decommissioned in line with need and national guidance and then recommissioned as services phased in and out of restrictions. Demand needs assessment is used to identify and agree on asset utilisation. Facility Management Services (FMS) are redeploying and utilising staff elsewhere where buildings are mothballed. This has assisted greatly in reducing operational running costs and freeing staff to enhance service provision in other areas within the Council including the temporary redeployment of FMS staff to provide enhanced cleaning across schools, offices and public buildings. All schools are fully operational and this includes 20% enhanced cleaning focusing on touch surfaces and toilets.

3.16 **Community Life**

Sport & Leisure: the Sport & Leisure COVID Recovery Group have continued to meet weekly with key partners from within the Council's Sport Countryside & Leisure Service [SC&L], enjoyleisure, FES Mercat Gait and sportscotland. The Group have continued to consider emerging national announcements and respective sector specific guidance from governing bodies of sport and sportscotland. Staff are supporting East Lothian clubs and organisations with return to sport protocols.

An Active Schools return to activity post-Easter holidays has been agreed and shared with head teachers. A cautious, phased approach, has been planned, with activity focussed outdoors throughout the summer term. However returning activity to schools is certainly deemed both appropriate and important for pupils to aid their wider social development, pupil interaction, health and wellbeing.

Enjoy are preparing their re-opening of sports centres based on the current Scottish Government announcements to open all sport centres on the 26 April. This will include gyms, swimming pools (including swimming lessons), club use, and indoor non-contact sports. These will all be subject to COVID-19 restrictions and protocols (social distancing, bubbles etc.). Enjoy will also be retaining 'at home' Zoom classes.

What will **not** be available, due to enforced guidance, is indoor contact sport, group exercise (classes), health suite, soft play and the climbing wall.

Outdoor sport is currently allowed as non-contact with restricted bubbles – from 5 April contact sport for 12–17-year-olds can resume.

If East Lothian were to be placed into Protection Level 2 from the 17 May date given, then indoor group exercise will commence, as will outdoor contact for adults and small scale outdoor events. Enjoy will also continue with on demand Zoom classes to meet the need of certain customers who may wish to remain on the virtual platform for their exercise.

If East Lothian moves to Protection Level 0 in June – anticipating the resumption of indoor contact sport and larger events indoor are anticipated.

Further assessment and planning is being undertaken regarding seasonal facilities reopening for 2021 as the cost and ability to break-even is compromised due to reduced timeline for access.

FES/Mercat Gait partners are working in tandem with Enjoy in respect of preparing for the re-opening linked to the advised date of 26 April 2021.

The Sport & Leisure Recovery Group recognise the detail above shows positive progress and provides us with an indicative timeline for the relaxation of restrictions to allow the return to sport. Some of the information does require further discussion with sportscotland partners to confirm the exact implications for sport. We continue to systematically work through this, focusing on the key points aligned to the transition dates and aligning with updated guidance accordingly.

Facility Management (FMS): FMS are continuing to meet all stakeholder needs at this time, the challenge being where buildings and services are recommissioned. FMS priority will continue to be on delivering statutory

services – Education and Homes for Older People, followed by maintaining the public toilets, local offices and key essential services.

| FACILITIES MANAGEMENT SERVICES | | | |
|--|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Schools & Other Buildings Service Status 2021 | | | |
| <i>Updated on 16 March 2021 by HW</i> | | | |
| Building | In Use | Partial Use | Closed |
| Total FMS Buildings 106 | 55 | 27 | 24 |
| Total Public Toilets 30 | 18 | | 12 |
| Total FMS Facilities 136 | 73 | 27 | 36 |

Connected Communities Service: Work continues in support of the Community Councils and Area Partnerships, and the many local community initiatives and projects that have embedded during the COVID-19 response, particularly food provisions, befriending initiatives and digital support.

Since March 2020, most community buildings have remained decommissioned for general public use in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines with the Facilities Management support services resource (cleaning and caretaking staff) redirected to provide enhanced COVID-19 cleaning services required business critical public buildings, e.g. schools.

A few key community buildings, mainly community centres, continue to operate for business continuity and critical service delivery enabling Council staff and statutory services, community volunteers and partners' use operating in support of COVID-19 community response activity. This includes providing support for emergency food etc. provisions, holiday clubs and support, enabling targeted youth work with vulnerable young people, adults with disabilities and providing COVID-safe space for urgent education, child and adult social work meetings.

Essential community-based activities such as youth work, holiday clubs and some group activities have been delivered either online or outdoors in accordance with the current sectoral COVID-19 guidelines.

Further updated guidance is awaited from Scottish Government on the reopening of community facilities for public use. Subject to the awaited national guidance, and capacity within the FM service to safely support services restarting, the Connected Communities Service (in collaboration with Community Centre Management Committees as appropriate) has a recovery plan established to prioritise incremental reopening of facilities to the public and restarting key activities to meet community requirements.

Close partnership working with Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL) has supported wide third sector participation in support of the COVID-19 response, with support to the Third Sector in respect of volunteer recruitment and training, funding pathways, Community Lottery launch et al.

Customer Services: The Brunton Hall and John Muir House have operated as the Council's main customer access points throughout COVID-19. Area offices, libraries and museums had to close under COVID-19 Guidelines but operated on-line services and maintained the Home Library Service throughout 2020. Many staff redeployed temporarily to support the wider council and partnership COVID-19 emergency response, with staff continuing in these roles now e.g. providing administration support for the Community Vaccination Centre at East Lothian Community Hospital, undertaking shielding 'call-outs' to vulnerable people, covering vacancies within the Contact Centre et al.

On 20 July 2020, the John Gray Centre reopened and enabled the Registration Service to operate from this building. As lockdown restrictions eased, libraries re-opened in a phased programme with Haddington reopening on 20 July 2020 initially for click and collect and then browsing: 8 libraries in total reopened with Prestonpans Library reopening at the end of October 2020. The museums opened on a phased basis from mid to end of August 2020, with Musselburgh Museum (a community museum) supported to open during September and October 2020. Dunbar Town House Museum and Gallery and Prestongrange Museum opened and operated until the end of October 2020 at the end of the tourist season. John Muir's Birthplace and the John Gray Centre Museum remained open. On 21 December 2020, with the move into Protection Level 4, the Library Service had to revert to a click and collect service only and museums had to close. Four libraries continued a click and collect service (Haddington, Musselburgh, Dunbar and North Berwick) and a Home Library Service. ELC was one of around only 6 councils to continue to provide a click and collect service during the majority of this current lockdown although some Councils are now starting to provide/re-provide click and collect services.

On 4 March 2021, the Scottish Government announced that libraries could reopen to provide Personal computer sessions only and by appointment from 5 March 2021. Subsequently, it was announced that on 5 April 2020, limited easing of restrictions could begin, including a return of library provision possibly from 26 April 2021. In accordance with the national guidance, a fresh phased reopening plan has been developed for Customer Services, Libraries and Museums. In Phase 1 of this plan, public libraries in Haddington, Musselburgh, Tranent, Prestonpans, Dunbar and North Berwick will return during May in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines and to ensure safe operation, with service provision, hours and days of service incrementally increasing through May. The Mobile Library service will return and the Home Library Service will continue with a focus on rural community service provision. It is intended that museums will also reopen on a phased basis through May

into early June. The return of these services relies on necessary property checks, staffing availability and resource capacity to support COVID-safe public operating arrangements and enhanced COVID-19 cleaning requirements etc., in accordance with Scottish Government guidelines (updated guidance is awaited).

The well-established eResource Service which covers such diverse subjects as genealogy, Theory Test practice, music concerts, certified classes etc., as well as the standard eAudio, eBook and eMagazine/newspaper content, has seen significant increase in users throughout 2020, and this continues. eAudio and eBook offerings continue to see high levels of 'borrowing' with a high level of views and downloads on the PressReader site. Without a doubt one of the best used resources currently is Ancestry, since June 2020 users have been able to access this resource from home and usage has increased by 84% in this time.

A Customer Services Public Library Survey will be carried out for a 6-week period from 10 May 2021 to inform a review of Library Service and opening hours from October 2021 onwards.

3.17 Communication and Community Leadership

Effective external communication continues to be a critical component in support of managing our response to COVID-19. Emphasis continues to be placed upon mirroring national media campaigns through the use of local press, and social media releases, reiterating key public health messages – particularly relating to national travel restrictions between Protection Levels, public safety and the 'FACTS'.

The Chief Executive continues to provide frequent briefings to Elected Members and employees. Regular internal briefings continue with our workforce and also with Joint Trade Unions. Area Partnerships and Community Councils receive regular updates through the Connected Communities Service. The Council's website and social media provide ongoing up-to-date information on the Council's COVID-19 response activity.

Between October and mid-March, the COVID-19 landing page on the East Lothian Council website had 61,000 page views. Our proactive social media messages have achieved a high level of engagement. For example, a message posted on Twitter on November 1 highlighting Protection Level 3 restrictions was seen by almost 34,000 users, with more than 8,000 users viewing the associated video.

3.18 Recovery and Renewal Framework

The Multi-agency Recovery & Renewal Co-ordinating Group (MARRCG) continues to meet on a monthly basis overseeing progress in accordance with our approved Recovery and Renewal Framework and also maintaining a steady state of preparedness to support increased recovery actions as and when Scottish Government imposed restrictions allow.

In practice this means that permitted recovery work has been managed and implemented by relevant service focused sub-groups such as The Education and Children's Services Recovery Group who have been actively managing the phased return to care and learning settings; the Connected Economies Group (CEG) who oversee both response and recovery interventions in respect of the Economy; and management of our countryside and coastline that is supported by the multi-agency Outdoor Open Space Management Group.

In more recent meetings, significant attention has also been given to updating all agencies on the progress of both the Vaccination and Community Testing Programmes. With Scottish Government signalling a more extensive easing of restrictions and a steady stream of restart it is hopeful that as we move further out of response mode, more significant recovery activity will be supported across the full range of key activity areas that include: Economy, Education & Children's Services, Community, Health & Social Care and Infrastructure & Environment.

Version 1.6 of the Recovery and Renewal Framework contains updated Action Cards and was agreed at the MARRCG meeting on 15 March 2021, and is available for reference within the Members' Library Service at https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/16705/members_library_service. The next planned framework update is scheduled for approval by the MARRCG on 17 May.

3.19 **Concurrent Risks**

Brexit: The Council's Brexit Working Group continues to meet and oversee the Brexit Risk Register. No significant matters have arisen in respect of Brexit impact on Council services. Close monitoring of data management, supply chains, costs and immigration controls (including the Settlement Scheme) continue. Support for local food, fishing and freight businesses most affected by ongoing border control issues remains a focus for Protective Services officers.

Current areas of focus relating to wider community and economic impacts relate to national border control issues in respect of trade, and port infrastructure particularly. Border control issues, noting that designations in Scotland are a matter for Scottish Ministers and Food Standards Scotland (with Connected Border Force and HMRC being reserved functions) of current importance relate to:

- animal health and import/export of live animals and products of animal origin, overseen by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)
- plant and plant products including wood and wood products, overseen by Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture and the Forestry Commission

- high risk foods not of animal origin relating to plastics, earthenware in contact with food from China, overseen by Food Standards Scotland.

It was intended that phased import controls for animals and related products will result in risk based checks for all goods entering through a Border Control Post (BCP) by 31 July 2021. The UK Government has announced that the introduction of import checks will be delayed to allow further preparation time. This means that Export Health Certification for Products of Animal Origin (POAO) and Animal By-products (ABP) will come into force in October 2021. Physical checks and inspections of POAO and ABP will take place at Border Control Posts from January 2022.

Winter Emergency: Winter emergency work has seen a long and protracted winter with 64 pre-treatments and 66 morning patrols. 7899 tonnes of salt have been used - more than the 7058 used in the winter of 2017/18 when the “Beast from the East” occurred.

Winter maintenance was very busy over the Christmas holidays which carried on into what was an exceptionally cold January followed by heavy snowfall in early February. This peaked during the week beginning Sunday 7 February 2021 when ELC Multi-agency Severe Weather Group was called and stood through until Friday 12 February. The winter maintenance teams including Roads Services, VPMU and Amenity Services worked in shifts to keep local roads open for key workers and those making essential journeys. We also ensured communities remained accessible particularly around medical centres, the QMU vaccination centre which opened on the 13 February and on priority routes and town centres. VPMU staff provided a continuous response service throughout the emergency period.

Waste Services were unable to operate fully for two days and routes were rescheduled with minimum disruption and no additional staffing costs to facilitate catch up process.

Coast and Countryside Summer Visitor Demands: The Multi-agency Coast and Open Space Working Group flexed to a strategic overview group between November and February in preparation for the 2021 season ahead which included a consultation on Land Management Rules to assist with visitor management: the outcome will be reported in May alongside recommendations. In March 2021 the group morphed back to an operational platform and the work streams to manage visitor destinations and risk includes:

- Road safety planning (Roads and Police Scotland)
- Use of TTRO
- Signage
- Parking attendant enforcement (DPE)
- Police enforcement and community wardens
- Additional parking provision
- Additional Road Services provision – road duty team deployment

- Additional Amenity provision – Ranger and Amenity Services staff deployment
- Additional waste collection
- Comms plan
- Visitor records
- Incident log
- Use of volunteers

The operational group now meets weekly to review the management of coast and open spaces as visitor demand increases and provides a platform to react and respond as issues arise.

3.20 COVID-19 Lessons Learned

A Lessons Learned Log has been maintained since the Council went into Business Continuity in March 2020. The large number of entries in the log have been summarised in single document which is updated regularly (latest version v0.9). This summarises positive comments and comments about the challenges experienced or things that could be done differently. Appendix 5 provides examples of the positive lessons learned and the challenges identified by the Lessons Learned Log.

The Log summary is reviewed by the Council Management Team and has been used by the officer working group established to prepare the Council and services for return to post COVID 'normal work'.

The Council Management Team undertook an Interim Structured De-brief in August 2020, which drew on the Lessons Learned Log and Summary. The aims of the structured debrief were to: reflect on personal experience of involvement in East Lothian Council's response to COVID-19; highlight learning from work completed relating to COVID-19; and share and discuss personal experience and that of staff in order to establish learning and future positive use of this learning.

An interim Structured Debrief Report was prepared, which highlighted what participants felt were the most challenging aspects of the response to COVID-19 from a Council perspective and the most positive aspects of the response, together with the most significant lessons participants had learned from working in the response to COVID-19 and how these would be used positively in the future. The report highlighted key outcomes (challenges and positive) and incorporated feedback on lessons learned from the Council's operational COVID-19 Oversight Group (COG).

Council Management team will undertake a second COVID-19 Interim Lessons Learned Structured Debrief in May 2021. It is also proposed to hold an Interim Structured Debrief Workshop for all Elected Members in June 2021. This debrief with Elected Members will explore the experiences – positive and negative – of Members and to capture their lessons learned in order to ensure the Council, Elected Members and communities are better prepared for any future pandemics or similar emergency incidents.

The learning and outputs from these Structured Debriefs will, in turn, inform developing strategies and plans progressing during 2021/22, supporting COVID-19 recovery and renewal within the Council and county-wide. A final Structured Debrief will be held by the Council Management Team once the Council ceases to be in Business Continuity mode.

3.21 COVID-19 Financial Impact

The financial implications being faced by the Council as a consequence of COVID-19 have and will continue to impact on the Council both during 2020-21 and beyond. During 2020-21 the Council has continued to receive a number of financial update reviews setting out the financial implications being faced by COVID-19, the impact on the 2020-21 budget, and potential options for mitigation.

The most recent in-year financial update report considered by Council on 23 Feb 2021, provided an update on the ongoing discussions with our Group partners, and approved the award of additional grant funding to both Enjoy and Brunton Theatre Trust commensurate to a proportionate share of funding received through the national Loss of Income Scheme. In addition, further financial intervention has been provided in 2020-21 to both partners in recognition of the financial implications being faced by COVID-19, and in line with Council delegated approval, taking the collective financial intervention support provided to these partner bodies in 2020-21 to just under £0.5 million.

As highlighted in previous financial reports, a significant package of national financial intervention has been provided to date to support the Council's response to COVID-19 with around 100 new funding streams to manage during 2020-21, and many of these placing a wide range of new interventions to both administer and support to our communities. Whilst recognising the Council's vital position in working collectively with its communities, the collective scale of these has in turn led to a very complex financial environment that places significant additional financial obligations on the Council to manage and support.

Council Finance officers are currently consolidating a very complex 2020-21 financial year end position, and more details setting out the implications for the Council will be reported in the financial year end review and 2020-21 draft accounts to be considered by Council in June 2021.

3.22 COVID Recovery Context – Easing of Restrictions through to June 2021 and Beyond

As previously been reported, the COVID-19 pandemic is very different from any of the civil emergencies that have been experienced, planned for and rehearsed. Emergency Planning Recovery and Renewal will continue for a long time and will inform the reshaping of Council priorities, resource allocations and services in the years ahead.

East Lothian Council has and will continue to work fully within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations, 2005. As a Category 1 responder, the Council works closely with all Category 1 and 2 responders, particularly through the East Regional Resilience Partnership (RRP) and Lothian & Borders Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) Groups.

As referenced earlier within Section 3.18 of the report, all of our key activity areas will need to closely monitor the easing of restrictions and related operational implications upon direct service delivery to our communities but also by giving due consideration and support to the return of our workforce to the workplace that will embrace new ways of working, and will require extensive review on the most effective use of assets. This will also require that consideration be given to the phased reopening of our community facilities and future planned events, Subject to the extent of progress that is actually realised, it will also be necessary to consider formal deactivation of Business Continuity Plans when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Informed by the Council management Team's COVID-19 Initial Lessons Learned Structured Debrief outputs, and from the Council's ongoing response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, current key areas of corporate policy and plans under review include:

Re-opening of Local Town Centres, Retail, Tourism and Hospitality: The Connected Economy Group (CEG) will oversee key milestones during release of lockdown restrictions and re-start activity including 5 April and 26 April which will see the wider re-opening of local centres and retail activity and components of the tourism & hospitality sector with control measures in place.

New Ways of Working: A cross-service working group has been preparing advice and guidance on how the Council can encourage, support, and benefit from flexible home working and make it the norm for staff who are able to work from home. The working group has considered HR issues, including the development of the new Homeworking Policy; information technology and digital technology requirements; staff health and wellbeing; staff development; processes and procedures; supporting customers; and the use of Council buildings.

The maximisation of benefits from flexible home working include: improved work life balance for staff; reducing the Council's carbon footprint to support achievement of the net zero emissions target; financial efficiencies; reduction in the Council's buildings and assets portfolio; and greater productivity from digitising processes.

Poverty Plan: A multi-agency Poverty Working Group has been established with the following remit:

- To review progress with the Poverty Plan (recommendations from Poverty Commission)
- To review the Child Poverty Action Plan and agree 2020 report
- For both to take account of the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic and the experience of people living in poverty/being negatively impacted by the pandemic
- Merge the two plans into a single East Lothian Poverty Plan (which includes a Child Poverty Plan) 2021–2023 – taking into account the impact of COVID-19

Draft Objectives for the new Poverty Plan have been drafted and will be used as the basis for a Draft Plan to be considered by the Working Group before going out for wider consultation in the spring.

Equality Plan: The Council and Integration Joint Board are reviewing their current Equality Plans (2017-2021) and are preparing draft new Equality Plans for 2021-25. The IJB has carried out consultation on new equality outcomes and the Council is using the results of this consultation to inform the development of new outcomes for the new plan.

NB: Both the Poverty Plan and Equality Plan will take account of the 20 Calls for Action that have been made in the Social Renewal Advisory Board's report 'It Not Now, When?'.

Council Plan: The current Council Plan 2017-2022 and the East Lothian (Local Outcome Improvement Plan) 2017-2027 will need to be revised to take account of the 'lessons learned' and impact of COVID on society, the economy and public health.

Work is underway to produce a new Strategic Needs Assessment that takes account of the impact of COVID and identifies new priorities.

This will also take into consideration the calls for action made in the Social Renewal Advisory Board's report, 'If Not Now, When?' and the Programme for Government of the new Scottish Government elected in May 2021 elections. The East Lothian Partnership and the Council will consider the new Strategic Needs Assessment and draft revised plans in the autumn. Area Partnerships will take these developments into account when revising Locality Plans in readiness for 2022/23.

Council Financial Strategy: As referenced earlier within the report, the financial implications facing the Council in relation to the management of COVID-19 will continue to have significant implications for 2021-22 and beyond. Much of this will remain dependent on the on-going national response and financial intervention provided to support COVID-19. The on-going implications may have a significant impact both in terms of current management of response and wider recovery, and this wider risk

is recognised within the Council's approved Financial Strategy, and will continue to be a prominent feature in the financial management of the 2021-22 approved financial plans and the implications going forward.

Emergency Planning and Events: The Scottish Government's publication of the timetable proposed for the easing of national lockdown restrictions, has underpinned growing confidence in the events sector. A number of significant community, sporting and tourist events have come forward for consideration through the multi-agency Safety Advisory Group, where safety planning for large events must take place months in advance of the event itself – whether or not the event is able to proceed nearer the time dependent on coronavirus prevalence at that time COVID; examples of events proposed include The Scottish Open Tournament planned for 5-11 July 2021, Fringe by the Sea 5-15 August 2021, Tour of Britain Cycling Event 11 September 2021. An updated national Coronavirus (COVID-19) Events Sectoral Guidance – Operational Guide – Checklist has been developed to aide SAG event risk assessment processes, and is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-events-sector-guidance/pages/operational-guide-and-checklist/> .

Digital Strategy: digital capacity across the organisation has been at the heart of the Council's COVID-19 response, and will be so in respect of recovery and renewal – internal to the Council and in supporting digital inclusion across communities. A review of the Digital Strategy and Digital Inclusion Strategy will progress during 2021/22. Customer habits have changed, with 'channel shift' now an accepted part of people's work and home lives. The Council must grasp the opportunity to review its Customer Strategy and methods of customer access and service delivery, maximising the potential from digital service provision to help delivery of strategic priorities in respect of climate change, asset rationalisation and realisation of service transformation and necessary budgetary efficiencies.

Elections: over the period January to June 2021, the Scottish Parliamentary Election on 6 May 2021 generates a significant demand upon Council resources that are already significantly 'stretched' as a consequence of ongoing COVID-19 response and developing recovery activity. The Returning Officer, supporting the administration of a national election, concurrent with the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery demands, will work to ensure that all aspects of the election progresses both in accordance with statutory requirements and also in a COVID-safe manner.

Council Decision-Making: formal governance and decision-making within the Council will be further reviewed to assess the earliest opportunity for the safe return of Elected Members and Officers to the Council Chamber although at this stage, it is not considered likely that this will be fully enabled this calendar year. Maximising digital provision, options to be considered will include both whole and partial physical return, with due consideration to a blended approach with some in attendance in person and others attending remotely. Consideration of this hybrid approach will,

however, require investment in a suitable technical solution and options setting out the operational and financial implications will be brought back to Members when available.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications associated with the report recommendations, although it is anticipated that response and especially recovery and renewal activity may result in significant future policy alterations for the Council and other stakeholders. Any such policy implications will be subject to the appropriate governance and approval arrangements of each organisation.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The specific recommendations made within this report do not directly affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy. Recovery and Renewal Plans developed will however be subject to Integrated Impact Assessments.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial: The financial implications associated with the Council's response and recovery actions to date are considerable and are likely to increase significantly over the coming months and are also likely to have implications for future financial plans.

With funding from national governments very much a moving feast, it is virtually impossible to advise what this will ultimately mean in net terms for final outturn performance for 2020-21 nor the extent of the impact upon future budgets. The overall impact on 2020-21 will be presented to Council at the end of June, and this will also be important to assist in the wider strategy to support the financial implications being faced going into 2021-22.

The approved 2021-2024 budget has been prepared on the assumption that the financial implications arising from COVID-19 will be fully funded. This position will require on-going monitoring during 2021-22, and should this not prove possible, there will be a requirement to consider further targeted intervention to ensure that Council services can be provided within approved financial limits.

The proposed deployment of the Business Recovery Investment Fund is in accordance with the budgetary amendment approved by Council on the 2 March 2021.

- 6.2 Personnel: Council staff in essential direct service delivery services and roles e.g. Social Care, Connected Communities, Customer Services, Waste service et al., continue to deliver direct business critical service across the community throughout the emergency response to COVID-19 and in support of recovery efforts.

Homeworking remains a significant and necessary feature, especially for those who are office based and whose workplace remains unavailable or under constraint. It is estimated that approximately 800 members of staff, some 17.5% of the workforce, are still working from home and it is likely they will be doing so for some time.

This is a considerable change as to how we work as a Council and many HR policies are currently under review to reflect this. Regular Joint Trades Union meetings ensure timely and open dialogue over any workforce issues generated by COVID-19 response.

- 6.3 Other: Continued positive and collaborative working relationships with community planning partners e.g. Police Scotland, Volunteer Centre East Lothian, Area Partnerships, Community Councils and our wide network of community groups and organisations, has ensured effective cross-agency co-operation and deployment of resources to meet the COVID-19 challenges experience across East Lothian.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

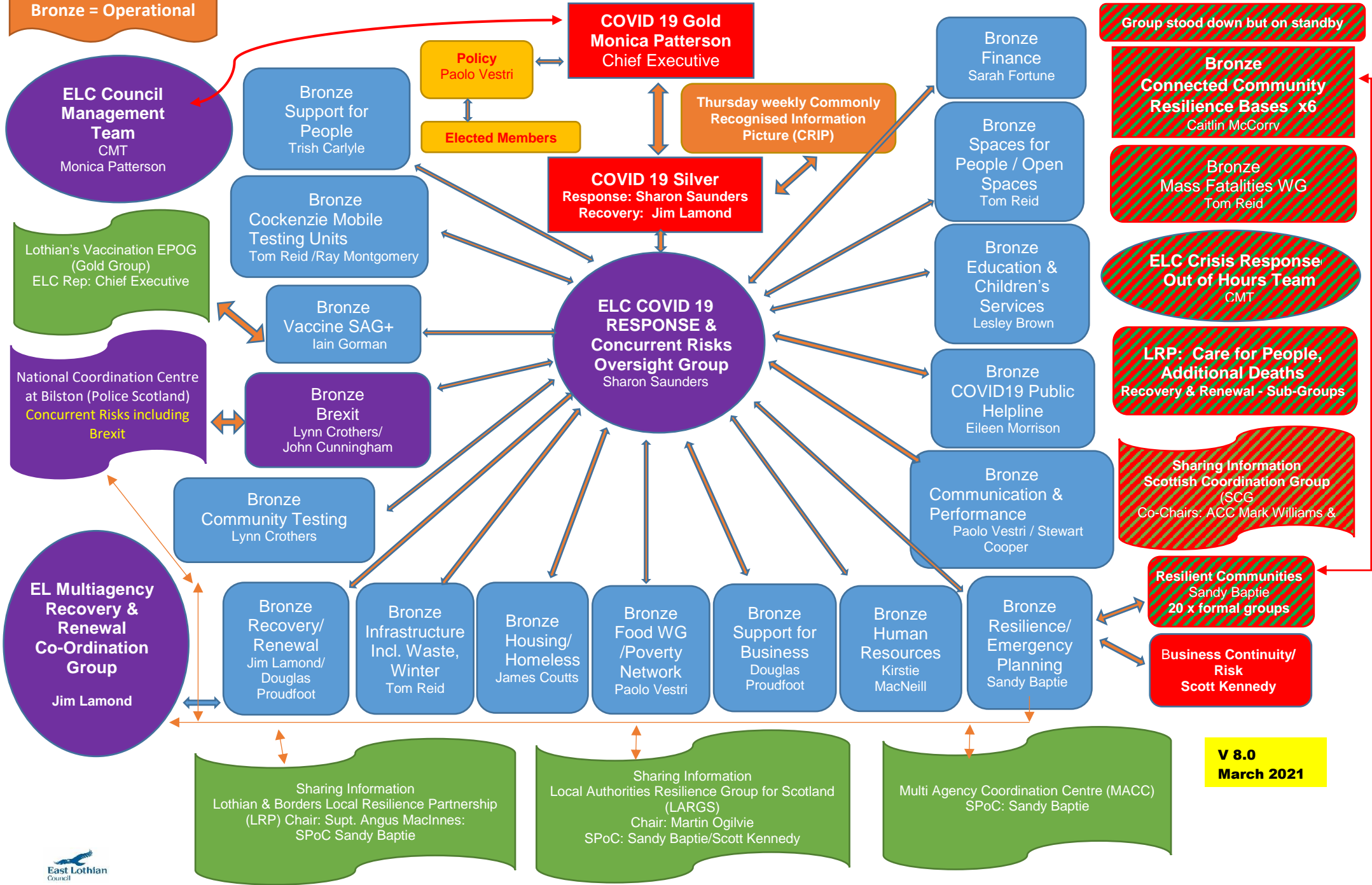
- 7.1 COVID – 19 – Management of Council Response and Recovery – Report by the Chief Executive dated 25/08/2020.
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/16617/east_lothian_council
- 7.2 East Lothian Council COVID 19 Recovery and Renewal Framework Document, Version 1.6 – Report by Head of Council Resources to the Members Library Service dated 31 March 2021.
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/16705/members_library_service
- 7.3 COVID-19 – Update on the Management of Council Response & Recovery - Report by the Chief Executive dated 27/10/2020:
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/22117/3521_east_lothian_council_covid_19_recovery_and_renewal_framework_document_version_16
- 7.4 COVID-19 – Update on the Management of Council Response & Recovery – report by the Chief Executive Members - Library Service – Report Submitted 4 December 2021:
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/21950/13420_covid-19_-_update_on_the_management_of_the_councils_response_and_recovery

- Appendix 1 COVID-19 Business Continuity Response – Governance Chart
- Appendix 2 COVID-19 Recovery & Renewal - Governance Chart
- Appendix 3 Scotland’s Strategic Framework – Extract Easing of Restrictions
- Appendix 4 Business recovery Investment Fund
- Appendix 5 COVID-19 Lessons Learned Log - Examples

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|----------------------|--|
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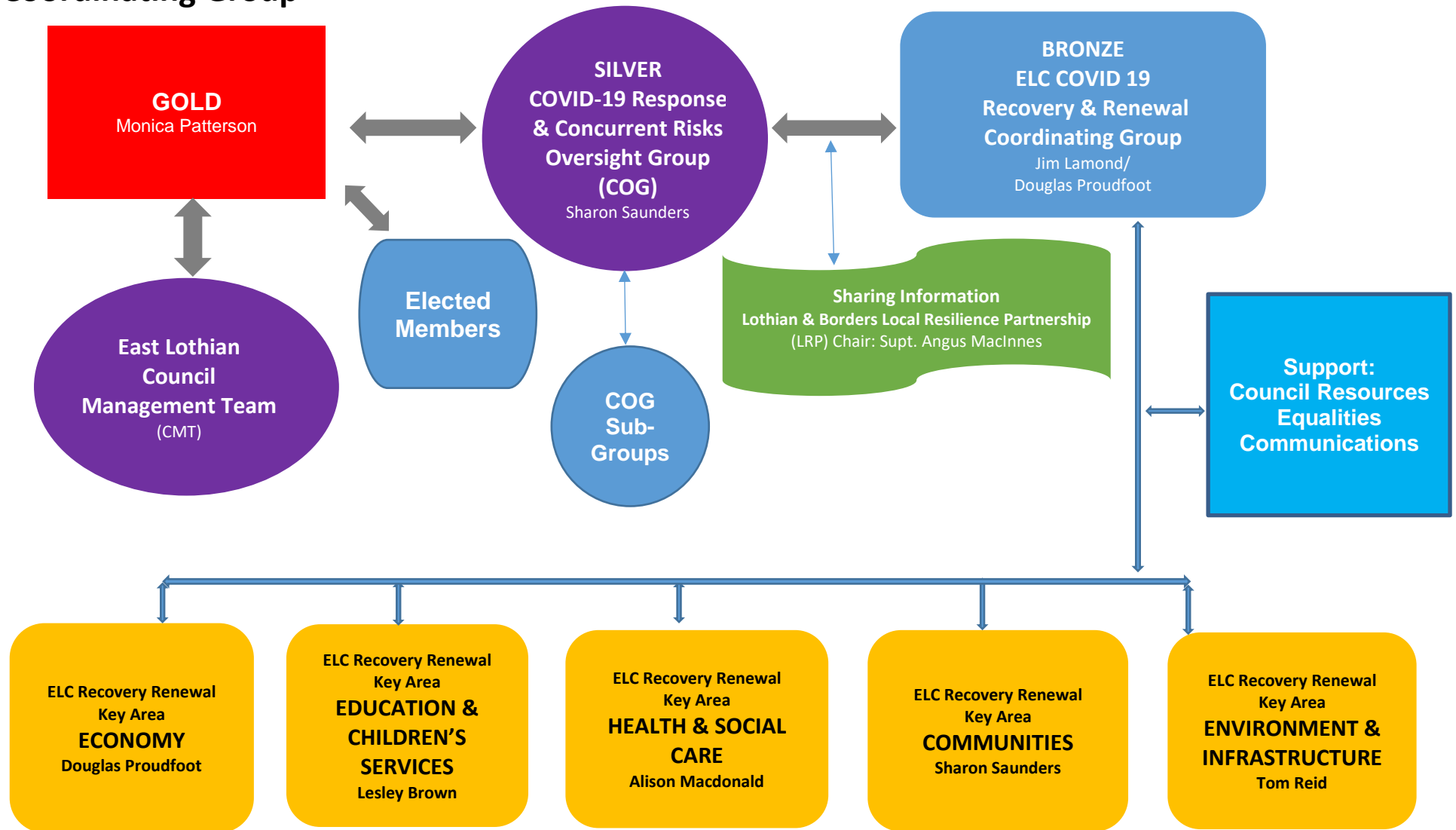
East Lothian Council COVID 19 & Concurrent Risks Command and Response Structure

Gold = Strategic
Silver = Tactical
Bronze = Operational



**V 8.0
March 2021**

Appendix 2 – ELC Command/Activity Structure for COVID 19 Recovery & Renewal Coordinating Group



Timetable for easing coronavirus restrictions

Indicative dates are conditional on supportive data.

Appendix 3

12 - 15 March

Up to **4** adults from up to **2** households may socialise **outdoors**.
4 12-17 year olds from up to **4** households may socialise **outdoors**.

Non-contact outdoor group sport/exercise permitted in groups of up to **15** people (for both adults and 12-17 year olds).

12-17 year olds can also take part in other **organised activities** in groups up to **15**.
Travel across local boundaries to participate allowed.

Return of remaining primary school pupils and senior secondary school pupils part-time.

24 March

Communal worship can take place subject to physical distancing capacity requirements (maximum capacity of 50 until 26 April).

2 April

Stay at home measures become stay local - travel within local authority for a non-essential purpose allowed.

5 April

More retailers and click and collect permitted to open.

More **university** and **college** students to return to in-person teaching.

Hairdressers and **barbers** can reopen (appointment only).

Outdoor contact sports for 12-17 year olds resume.

12 - 20 April

All pupils **back** at school **full-time**.

All restrictions will be kept under review to ensure that they remain proportionate and necessary to address the ongoing public health emergency. This graphic is for reference purposes only and may be adjusted. Regulations in relation to each level will be published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) and relevant public health advice (such as physical distancing and enhanced hygiene measures) applies.

Find relevant guidance on [gov.scot/coronavirus](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus)

Timetable for easing coronavirus restrictions

Indicative dates are conditional on supportive data.

16 April

Up to **6** people from up to **6** households, plus children under 12, can socialise outdoors.

Removal of **travel** distance limit within Scotland for outdoor, small group recreation, socialising or exercise (but not stay away from your local authority area overnight for that purpose).

26 April

Up to **6** people from **2** households can socialise **indoors** in a public place such as a café or restaurant.

Unrestricted **travel** within Scotland, England and Wales (subject to other local restrictions in place)

All **shops, stores** and **close contact services** can open.

Hospitality venues like **cafes, pubs** and **restaurants** can open until:
20:00 **indoors** (no alcohol)
Local licensing laws apply **outdoors** (alcohol permitted).

Non-essential childcare permitted.

Non-essential in-house work permitted.

Tourist accommodation to reopen (self-catering accommodation to be restricted in line with rules on indoor gathering).

Driving lessons and tests can take place.

Funerals and **weddings** including post-funeral events and receptions can take place with up to **50** people (alcohol permitted).

Gyms and **swimming pools** can reopen for individual exercise.

Indoor attractions and public buildings such as **galleries, museums** and **libraries** can open.

Takeaway food can be collected indoors.

17 May

Up to **4** people from **2** household can socialise **indoors** in a private home and up to **6** people from up to **3** households may socialise in an indoors public space.

Up to **8** people from up to **8** households may socialise outdoors.

Hospitality venues can open until:
22:30 indoors (alcohol permitted, 2 hour slots)
Outdoors - local licensing laws apply.

All organised sport and exercise activity permitted except adult indoor contact sports.

Cinemas, theatres, concert halls, music venues, comedy clubs, amusement arcades, and **bingo halls** can open, subject to capacity constraints.

Outdoor and **indoor events** can resume. Maximum capacities - indoors (100), outdoors seated (500) and outdoors free-standing (250) subject to physical distancing capacity requirements.

Universities and **colleges** can return to a more blended model of learning.

Adult organised non-professional performance arts can **resume outdoors**.

All restrictions will be kept under review to ensure that they remain proportionate and necessary to address the ongoing public health emergency. This graphic is for reference purposes only and may be adjusted. Regulations in relation to each level will be published on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk) and relevant public health advice (such as physical distancing and enhanced hygiene measures) applies.

Find relevant guidance on [gov.scot/coronavirus](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus)

Timetable for easing coronavirus restrictions

Indicative dates are conditional on supportive data.

Early June

Up to **8** people from up to **3** households can socialise indoors in a public place and up to **6** people from up to **3** households in a private dwelling.

Up to **12** people from **12** households can socialise outdoors.

Hospitality can remain open (indoors) until 23:00 and local licensing laws outdoors.

Attendance at **events** can increase with maximum capacities of indoors (200), outdoors seated (1000) and outdoor free-standing (500) subject to physical distancing capacity requirements.

Increased numbers at life events (100).

Funfairs and **soft play** can open, subject to capacity constraints.

From end of June

Up to **10** people from up to **4** households can socialise indoors in a public place and up to **8** people from up to **4** households in a private dwelling.

Up to **15** people from up to **15** households can socialise outdoors.

A phased and limited **return** of some office staff.

Events increase numbers - indoors (400), outdoors seated (2000) and outdoors free-standing (1000) subject to physical distancing capacity requirements.

Increased numbers at life events (200).

All **sport activities** permitted.

All restrictions will be kept under review to ensure that they remain proportionate and necessary to address the ongoing public health emergency. This graphic is for reference purposes only and may be adjusted. Regulations in relation to each level will be published on legislation.gov.uk and relevant public health advice (such as physical distancing and enhanced hygiene measures) applies.

Find relevant guidance on [gov.scot/coronavirus](https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus)

Business Recovery Investment Fund

Appendix 4

| To Support Town Centre Recovery & Renewal: | Cost Estimate (£) |
|---|-------------------|
| Explore the potential to expand the East Lothian gift card offer: <i>Secure greater utilisation, contactless, ability to recharge with credit, use as local currency, design configuration for each town centre area linked with traders associations.</i> | 15,000 |
| Explore further roll-out of digital town centre (piloted in Dunbar) across East Lothian: <i>Licence funding, training and set-up and maintenance x 6 main towns.</i> | 42,500 |
| Provide 1 year core funding for town based traders groups <i>£1,500 x 6 [Funds can be used for any purpose that supports the local economy].</i> | 9,000 |
| Project based Towns and Villages COVID recovery funding <i>[based on review of 2020 scheme, available from August 2021 to allow for development of projects] £6,000 per ward.</i> | 36,000 |
| Road Licensing Fees <i>Provide grant support to allow businesses to meet the licence costs to allow expansion onto pavements and outdoor areas based upon last year's demand.</i> | 5,000 |
| Town Centre Investment Support <i>Increase understanding of the needs of individual towns and their value to local communities and the economy, targeted analysis and health checks to expand data collection and develop performance metrics to help prioritise and secure investment.</i> | 22,500 |
| To Support the Tourism & Hospitality Sector: | |
| Establish a Tourism Recovery Grant Scheme for Sector Groups: <i>Develop and implement a one off COVID Recovery Grant Scheme specifically for the key sectoral tourism groups in East Lothian, namely Scotland's Golf Coast, East Lothian Tourism Attractions Group. Grant scheme would enable the groups to develop and grow their tourism offering to target visitors as East Lothian recovers and goes forward in 2021. An application process including, but not limited to, information on the following: project proposal; budget; evidence of match funding; key performance indicators; organisation constitution/set up business plan and marketing plan. Funding would be allocated 50% on submission of approved application and 50% final claim once the project had completed and all outcomes had been submitted.</i> | 100,000 |
| Destination Visitor Marketing <i>Continue to develop a range of marketing assets for East Lothian in line with the national approach to maintain and grow Scotland's share of the domestic market. Operating under the banner Visit East Lothian marketing will be targeted at East Lothian's key audiences using appropriate channels to promote businesses when those are ready to open and welcome visitors back. Messaging will look to ensure responsible tourism.</i> | 30,000 |
| Visit East Lothian Website www.visiteastlothian.org <i>The website requires significant changes to ensure that it is market ready in a post pandemic travel market. The call to</i> | |

| | |
|--|--------|
| <p><i>action for all marketing activity is the website and although changes have been made over the last few years the ability to track consumer journeys through the site, provide better visual representation of the tourism offering and increased engagement with consumers and businesses is lacking. Visiteastlothian.org is the only website that represents all tourism sectors in East Lothian and provides a diverse representation of all there is to offer. With increasing reliance on digital resources to both aid consumers in planning their holiday and to assist the travel trade in developing their packages, the website requires changes to ensure that it remains the key source of destination information including our towns and villages.</i></p> | 25,000 |
| <p>Support Visitor Beach Management <i>East Lothian Council is currently undertaking a pilot project with Edinburgh University using sensor technology linked to a mobile app to monitor visitors to East Lothian's beaches and is linked to visitor movement in and between visitor attractions and destinations e.g. town centres. Sensors located in carparks will allow data collection to inform both council departments and visitors. This will assist with visitor management and flow as well as marketing decisions to help move visitors throughout the county. East Lothian Council will not own the project collateral. Funding is required to continue this initiative post pilot.</i></p> | 29,000 |
| To Support our Rural Economy: | |
| <p>Rural Toilet Provision: <i>To secure additional cleaning / FM staff & vehicle resources to re-open all rural toilet provision. Access to public facilities is required to fully reopen rural areas of the County and ensure undue pressure is not put on the environment and local businesses. Provision will be delivered through ELC Facilities Maintenance.</i></p> | 23,500 |
| <p>FEAST Event <i>Undertake preparatory work to host an East Lothian Food & Drink festival to promote East Lothian produce and Food & Drink providers and encouraging visitors to East Lothian in 2022. / Explore the establishment of a Community Interest Company (CIC) and fund initial equipment to facilitate the delivery of a mobile market that would provide stalls for the provision of a local produce in our towns.</i></p> | 20,000 |
| <p>Drive Digital Connectivity <i>Engage digital champion resource through 2021/22 to push forward digital connectivity and address rural shortfalls.</i></p> | 60,000 |
| To Support Employability: | |
| <p>Careers Event: <i>Host Autumn employability event at the Brunton (businesses, FE / HE, vocational partners) with capacity to deliver virtually.</i></p> | 2,500 |
| <p>Vocational Hospitality Training – Skills Shortfall <i>Explore Hospitality Vocational proposal in partnership with the Ridge.</i></p> | 10,000 |
| To Support our Love East Lothian Messaging: | |
| <p>Local Business Promotion / Marketing: <i>To encourage residents to continue to support local businesses as we move out of lockdown and to give businesses a promotional platform, we would look at the production of a bespoke issue of Living. This would be dedicated to highlighting local businesses and trader offers. The run is 50,000 copies, delivered free to every</i></p> | 10,000 |

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| <p><i>home in East Lothian. The physical publication would be complemented by an online presence which could extend the promotional opportunities being offered to the business base. Social media channels would be used to highlight the initiative and drive traffic to the online promotion.</i></p> | |
| <p>To Support Businesses, Safeguard Employment and Re-encourage Growth</p> | |
| <p>Provide expert support to business: <i>Based around ERDF support previously offered - HR support, marketing support, support with branding and packaging (sustainable), accreditation support (ISO 1101, 1400, SALSA and BRC). Linked to digital connectivity intervention.</i></p> | <p>60,000</p> |
| <p>Provide grant funding support (50% match funding) to enable job creation: <i>5 large grants of £20K directly linked to projects that would secure job creation e.g. companies locating into East Lothian, upgrading of equipment to ensure competitiveness and create jobs. Application process 3 yrs accounts, business plan, cash flow, bank statements etc</i></p> | <p>100,000</p> |

Appendix 5: Examples of the Positive Lessons and Challenges identified in the Lessons Learned Log

| Issue | Positive Lesson | Challenges/ Need to do Things Differently |
|--|---|---|
| Meetings and new groups established to respond to and mitigate negative impacts of COVID | Skype has enabled / facilitated meetings and keeping in touch with people / teams. | Training required on how to use platforms such as Skype |
| Resources | Staff flexibility to work differently with minimum impact on productivity | It took some time to ensure all staff working from home had the equipment and access to software necessary to operate efficiently |
| Information Technology | IT support and provision of equipment and software | The lack of a common shared IT platform for communicating with community groups (e.g. Zoom) presented issues for Area Partnership and other meetings with community / 3 rd sector groups |
| Communications – quality/ consistency/ regularity of messages | Regular briefings for elected members and staff from the Chief Executive | Cascading messages to all staff without access to ELC email needs considered |
| Children’s and Community Hubs | Staff from various services and volunteers worked well to mobilise and deliver the hubs at pace | Poor signal/ connectivity in some community facilities resulting in non-participation in Skype meetings |
| Partnership Working | Excellent strategic and operational working relations with key partners including NHS, Police Scotland and Volunteer Centre East Lothian | Uncertainty about the length of time Local Resilience Partnerships would be expected to operate through the first lockdown |
| Shielding | Local Resilience Partnerships, Community Councils and a large number of community and voluntary organisations rose to the challenge of supporting vulnerable people and people who were shielding | Data security and information sharing requirements and processes slow to adapt, resulting in ELC adopting manual processes to meet reporting requirements and delays in getting information out to staff and volunteers assisting vulnerable people and ‘shielders’ |

| | | |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Home Working | Around 1,000 council staff have been working effectively and productively from home throughout the pandemic | New Homeworking Policy needs to be put in place to encourage, facilitate and support staff to permanently work from home in order to maximise the long term benefits to staff and the council of homeworking |
| Business Continuity | Business continuity arrangements put in place very quickly and effectively | Business Continuity Plans need to be reviewed to take account of long term incidents such as a pandemic |