

LAW & GOVERNANCE COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREA:	Law and Governance Directorate – PCC and CCC
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REPORTING PERIOD:	11/05/20- 25/05/20

KEY ACTIVITY HEADLINES

- At PCC we held our first virtual council meetings following training of officers and members on using Zoom and setting up a PCC You Tube channel-
 - Cabinet – 11 May 2020
 - Planning Committee – 12 May 2020
 - Joint Scrutiny & Overview Committee – 20 May 2020 to focus on council’s Covid-19 responseMembers were able to use Zoom to access and contribute to the meetings successfully
- At CCC we held the first annual council meeting on 19th May which was generally successfully despite a few IT connection issues for some members.
- Other virtual meetings continue
- Democratic Services are working with IT to consider options for facilitating greater public involvement in virtual meetings as part of review of Virtual Meeting Protocol
- Continued testing of both Zoom and Microsoft Teams with officers at CCC and PCC and identifying issues and raising with IT
- Advising on key areas relating to Covid-19 response eg contract and procurement issues
- Assessing forthcoming decision-making at both councils alongside Directors
- Reviewing and advising relevant officers on emerging Coronavirus legislation/guidance across both councils
- Legal teams at PCC & LGSS Law – continuing business as usual including staffing child protection cases in court where a virtual hearing is not possible and attendance for essential sealing of documents
- Supporting the PCC and CCC internal Silver/Tactical and Gold/Strategic emergency planning council-wide groups

RISKS / CHALLENGES (AND MITIGATION)

Key Risks

- Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on major projects against legal requirements
- Assessing security risks of IT platforms for virtual council meetings with ICT and Information Governance teams

Key Challenges

- Continuing to work through technology challenges testing options for different types of virtual meetings and identifying challenges including quality of image and sound alongside security risks and training needs for future member meetings

WORKFORCE UPDATE

- Majority of Legal & Governance staff now working from home
- Those that can have been redeployed to front-line working
- Exceptions to this are child protection lawyers who attend court when necessary

- Moved to weekly Microsoft team meetings and daily catch-ups with managers

FINANCIAL IMPACT (increase in costs / reduction in income)

- None so far

RECOVERY ACTIVITY (plans being considered / future steps)

- Considering how we resume full range and type of council meetings as soon as possible once social distancing requirements have been lifted with increased virtual working for non-formal meetings for members and officers
- Potential for hybrid model in the future where some members and officers are physically present in the chamber once restrictions are lifted alongside those who are unable to be present still joining meetings virtually – model has started being used in Parliament

COMMUNICATIONS

- All Directorate related communications are fed through the daily briefings to staff
- Weekly video team meetings