


# Bridgend County Borough Council – Response to COVID 19

Mark Shephard Chief Executive July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020

**Bridgend County Borough Council**  
**Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr**



# COVID -19 pandemic



- March 23<sup>rd</sup> lockdown.
- Majority of businesses closed.
- Change in working practices.
- Working from home.
- Improved sanitation and hygiene measures.
- Social distancing measures.

# Council Response

- Urgent response to changing circumstances, guidance and regulation.
- New services created, some services stopped.
- Many staff redeployed, majority work from home where possible to do so.
- No one furloughed.
- Focus on delivery of essential services, in particular for the most vulnerable in our communities and seeking to prevent the spread of the virus to save lives.
- Service adaptation at a scale and pace that is unprecedented.
- Emergency governance arrangements.
- One council approach.
- Enhanced partnership working.

# Responding to the Covid-19 coronavirus in Bridgend County Borough



Business support grants paid **£29,025,000**  
**2,340** Business grant applications approved



Calls received to customer services **43,827**  
**6,172,763** Social media reach



**1,553**  
Volunteers  
registered



**10,500**  
Hours of domiciliary care  
provided each week



**1,048**  
Individuals supported  
in their own homes



**1,559**  
No of keyworkers'  
children supported to  
enable parents to work



**169**  
Staff redeployed  
to a different role



**2,600**  
Individuals supported  
by Telecare services



**13%**  
Overall increase  
in recycled materials  
compared to this time last year



**1,013**  
Reconditioned  
laptops and devices  
issued to school children



Stats since 23 March 2020.



# COVID-19 in Bridgend

## Cases

	Bridgend	Wales
Cumulative cases	568	16,806
Cumulative cases per 100,000 population	386.3	533.0
Cases in the past 7 days	3	99
Cases in the past 7 days per 100,000 population	2.0	3.1

Source: Public Health Wales dashboard, extracted 21/07/2020

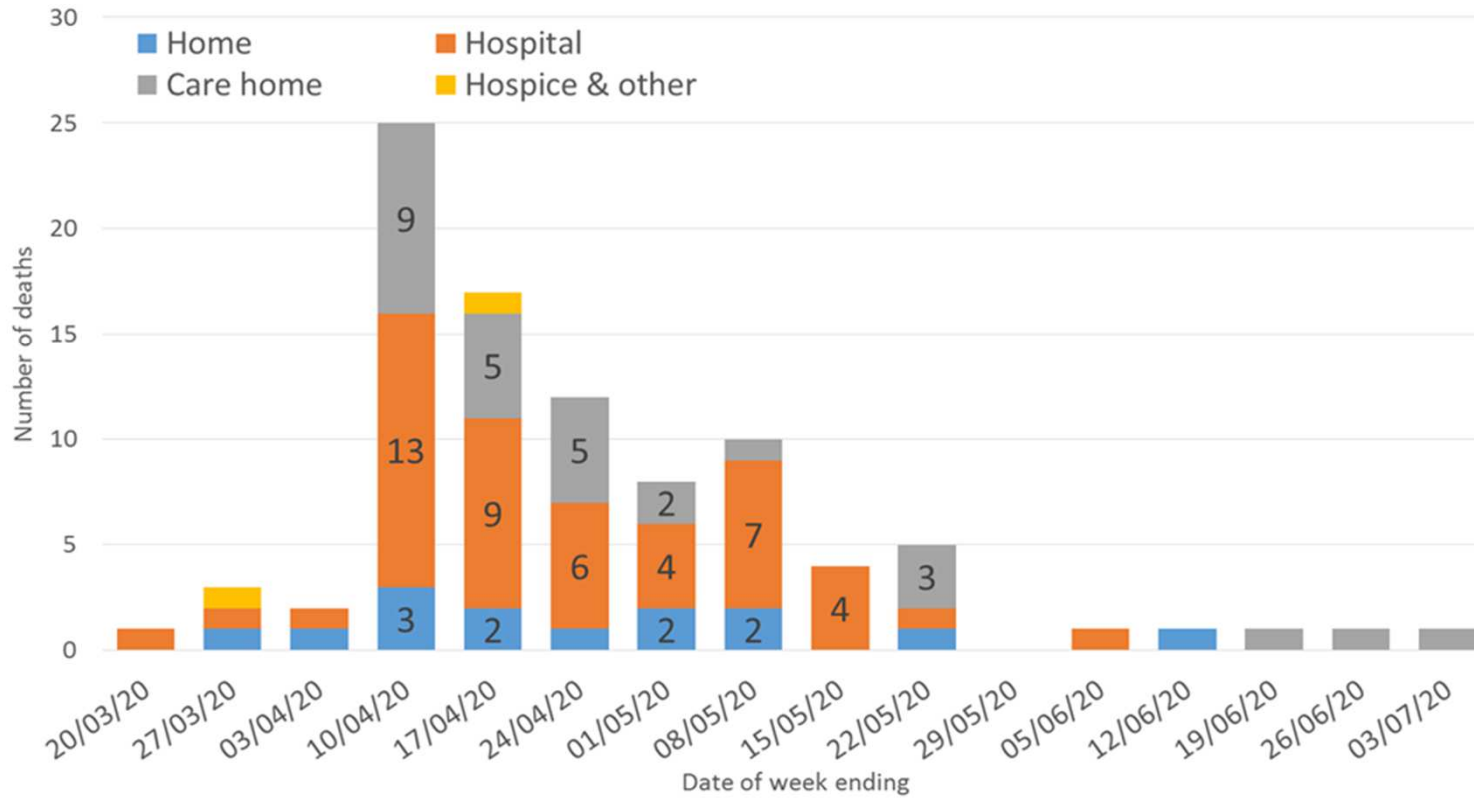
## Deaths

- **92** COVID-19 deaths in Bridgend since the week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> March
- **1** death in the latest week
- **2,470** COVID-19 deaths in Wales
- Death data has a two-week delay
- Deaths included with any mention on the death certificate based on date of occurrence

# COVID-19 in Bridgend

Weekly trends in COVID-19 deaths by location of death in Bridgend

Produced by CTMUHB PHT using ONS provisional weekly death occurrences



Source: ONS, 2020



# Gradual easing of lockdown

- Community Recycling sites reopened.
- Schools check in, catch up and prepare.
- Some libraries for click and collect.
- Town centres.
- Visitor economy and attractions.
- Council meeting calendar.
- Sports facilities, playgrounds, community centres.

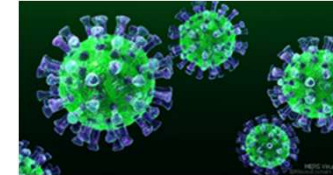
# Ongoing challenges

- Enhanced support for homeless individuals.
- Support for local business.
- Delivery of test, trace and protect.
- Support for staff wellbeing and gradual return to the office environment.
- Nurture and embrace some of the positive new ways of working.
- Delivery of summer free school meals.
- Support for shielded individuals until August 16<sup>th</sup> and identification of any further support required.
- Preparation for the organisational response to a second wave or spike of the virus and lessons learned.



# Financial Challenges

- Council finances impacted:



<b>Additional cost pressures</b>	Some will be one-off and some recurrent. e.g. PPE, ICT, voids etc.
<b>Lost income</b>	Some will be one-off losses, others will be deferred losses (e.g. potentially planning income), and others could be permanent losses. Main areas affected are car parking, school meals and planning fees.
<b>2020-21 MTFS savings not met</b>	Total MTFS savings for the year of £2.413m which may not be achieved (e.g. staffing restructures, remodelling of services, income generation).
<b>Unanticipated savings</b>	For areas where service provision has reduced or stopped and subsequent savings have been made e.g home to school transport, premises and fuel.
<b>Council Tax</b>	There is likely to be a shortfall in council tax collection, especially given the delay in starting recovery, and an increase in council tax benefits.

# Financial Support

WG has announced a range of additional financial support across Wales including:

<b>Business Rate Grants:</b>	
Business Grants	£1.4bn
Small Charities Business Rates	£26m
<b>Local Authority Hardship Fund:</b>	<b>£188.5m</b>
Local Authorities General	£13m
Homelessness	£10m
Funding for Adult Social Care	£40m
Free School Meals	£40.4m
Culture and Heritage	£100k
Increased number of deaths	£7m
Loss of Income	£78m
<b>Others:</b>	
Bus Operators	£29m
Digitally Excluded School Pupils	£3m
Local Authority Cyber Security	£248K
Children's Mental Health	£1.25m

# Financial Challenges

- LA has submitted monthly claims for additional expenditure. Current position:

	£
<b>TOTAL Claimed</b>	<b>2,912,166</b>
<b>Paid</b>	<b>2,015,040</b>
<b>On hold</b>	<b>305,727</b>
<b>Disallowed</b>	<b>591,399</b>



- Disallowed:**
  - ICT funded 50% as longer term benefits.
  - Support provided for residual leisure service costs.
  - Ordinary running costs.
- No decision made to date on distribution of funding for lost income.



# Financial Challenges

Main Covid Related Projected Overspends not currently funded by WG, partly offset by Covid Underspends:

Directorate/Budget Area	Covid Related Overspends £'000	Covid Related Underspends £'000	Net Overspend £'000	Comments
<b>Directorate</b>				
Education and Family Support	1,349	337	1,012	Loss of school meal income and special school recoupment, offset by reduced payments to bus contractors.
Social Services and Wellbeing	1,221	0	1,221	Reduction in personal contributions
Communities	597	121	476	Reduced income from car parks and civil parking enforcement, and costs of providing rent free holidays, offset by net reduction in seasonal staff costs for parks and playing fields.
Chief Executive's	1,133	0	1,133	Additional costs of facilities for homeless plus lower income from registrars, licensing and public health.
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>3,842</b>	

NB: These are included in quarter 1 projections alongside other 'usual' over and underspends.

# Financial Challenges

## Council Tax

Support has included:

Deferral of council tax to latter part of financial year

Spread of council tax over 12 instead of 10 months

Limited recovery – only 'soft' reminders

Impact on council tax collection – 1% reduction = loss of income of ≈ **£1 million**

## Council Tax Reduction Scheme Support

Increased UC and Housing Benefits claimants impacts on CTRS

Current estimate is increase in costs over budget by at least **£300k**, but could be between £500k and £1m for financial year.



# Restart, Recover and Renew

- Approved Cabinet report June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee July 13<sup>th</sup>, establishment of a Cross Party Recovery Panel.
- Potential reset of 2020/21 budget and Corporate Plan in September taking account of circumstances and revised priorities.
- Potential Recovery Fund to be established for one off investment priorities.
- Restart – immediate and up to next 6 months.
- Recover –next 12-18 months.
- Renew – new operating model for next 5 years plus.

# Recovery Priorities

- Reopening schools in September.
- Responding to the economic crisis based on the Local Economic Recovery Plan and establishment of a local taskforce.
- Future sustainability of culture and leisure venues.
- Safe streets, active travel, public transport.
- Homelessness provision and services post lockdown.
- Continuing support for the most vulnerable and those who care for them, including nurturing the relationship with the third sector and enhancing community resilience.

# Recovery Priorities (continued)

- Stopping the spread and return of the virus, enhanced health and safety and changed operating procedures, stockpile of PPE, ongoing contact tracing.
- Continued reopening of all Council services including community hubs and libraries and Council offices from 1<sup>st</sup> September with hybrid model likely with greater support for WFH.
- Digital services, increased appetite from the public for digital services but recognition of enhanced risks of things such as cyber fraud.



# Coordinated response to recovery

- PSB - Community impact assessment.
- Local Economic Taskforce.
- Audit Wales- Fit for the Future.
  
- Seek to avoid duplication and make swift and meaningful recommendations based on a sound evidence base.

# Embrace the 'New Normal' but understand the opportunities and risks

- Some positive changes need to endure
- Staff, trade union , public views important to shape and inform the Council's recovery plan and future operating model
- Opportunities for investment from WG grants and capital initiatives
- Staff wellbeing crucial, risk of burn out
- Green recovery opportunity
- Not likely to return to pre March 2020 situation

# Conclusion

- Uniquely challenging 4 month period.
- Unprecedented change, often at breakneck speed.
- Council response has largely been excellent, some staff response and performance has been heroic.
- Change is probably forever.
- Economic hit is likely to be severe with increased unemployment and benefit claimants.
- Crucial Council role in recovery and renewal for foreseeable future centred on community leadership and support to enhance community resilience, support for the most vulnerable particularly around social care and promotion of public health and economic recovery focussed on our town centres and support for local businesses.

