

Subject: COVID-19**Report to: GLA Oversight Committee****Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat****Date: 7 May 2020****This report will be considered in public****1. Summary**

- 1.1 The pandemic of COVID-19 spread to the United Kingdom (UK) in late January 2020. Following the outbreak of the disease in China. On 15 March 2020 the Government stated that everyone should avoid all "non-essential" travel and contact with others, avoid crowds, and work from home if possible. Those with symptoms, and their household, were asked to self-isolate. Pregnant women, people over the age of 70, and those with certain health conditions were asked to self-isolate for longer.
- 1.2 On 20 March 2020 all schools, restaurants, pubs, clubs, and indoor leisure facilities were ordered to shut, with some exceptions. On 23 March 2020, the Government imposed a lockdown on the whole population, banning all "non-essential" travel and contact with people outside one's home, and shutting almost all businesses, venues, facilities and places of worship. Police were given power to enforce the lockdown, and the Coronavirus Act 2020 gave the Government emergency powers not used since the Second World War.
- 1.3 On 16 April 2020 the UK-wide lockdown extended for "at least" three more weeks.¹ The Lockdown measures are due to be revised by no later than 7 May 2020. While reports say the UK Government could subsequently decide to relax the measures in some respects, while strengthening them in others;² there are also warnings the lockdown could be extended to June 2020.³
- 1.4 The Government has outlined five factors that must be met for the lockdown measures to be lifted:
- Confidence that the NHS can still provide sufficient critical care and specialist treatment across the UK;
 - A fall in deaths to prove the UK is past the peak;
 - Reliable data that the infection rate has decreased to manageable levels;
 - Testing capacity and PPE is ready to meet supply for future demand; and
 - No risk of a second peak that overwhelms the NHS.

¹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52313715>.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2020/apr/16/coronavirus-uk-live-news-covid-19-lockdown-extension?page=with:block-5e9881408f0895d83068f5ab#block-5e9881408f0895d83068f5ab>

³ <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/uk-coronavirus-live-latest-updates-lockdown-cases-toll-a4416636.html>

1.5 London is dealing with an immense challenge in trying to tackle the pandemic of COVID-19. London is the hotspot for cases in the UK, accounting for 44% of confirmed cases.^[1]

2. Recommendations

2.1 **That the Committee notes the report as background to putting questions to the invited guests on the Mayor's response to the crisis, and notes the subsequent discussion.**

2.2 **That the Committee delegates authority to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members and Caroline Pidgeon AM MBE, to agree any output from the discussion at the meeting.**

3. Background

3.1 The Mayor has varying responsibilities and powers in relation to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, reflecting his usual responsibilities and powers. These range from direct control over the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Transport for London (TfL) to limited control over health services and the economy.

3.2 The London Resilience Forum (LRF), chaired by Fiona Twycross, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience (DMFR), has statutory responsibility for preparing for and managing the strategic co-ordination around any major incident in London. The LRF is part of a wider London Resilience Partnership that includes members from private and public sector organisations, local authorities, the NHS, utilities and transport providers.⁴

3.3 Under the LRF, a London COVID-19 Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) has been established. The SCG is responsible for determining the strategic aim, objectives and priorities of the response to COVID-19 on behalf of London. The SCG has four co-chairs:

- a) John Barradell, City of London Corporation;
- b) Fiona Twycross, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience;
- c) Eleanor Kelly, London Borough of Southwark; and
- d) Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) Laurence Taylor, Met Police.

^[1] https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/londons_economy_today_no211_260320.pdf

⁴ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/london_resilience_partnership_strategy_2016.pdf

- 3.4 Public Health England is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. It provides Government, local Government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. It is responsible for:
- Making the public healthier and reducing differences between the health of different groups by promoting healthier lifestyles, advising Government and supporting action by local Government, the NHS and the public;
 - Protecting the nation from public health hazards;
 - Preparing for and responding to public health emergencies;
 - Improving the health of the whole population by sharing information and expertise, and identifying and preparing for future public health challenges;
 - Supporting local authorities and the NHS to plan and provide health and social care services such as immunisation and screening programmes, and to develop the public health system and its specialist workforce; and
 - Researching, collecting and analysing data to improve understanding of public health challenges, and come up with answers to public health problems.⁵
- 3.5 The UK Government has announced an unprecedented package of support measures. The Mayor has considerably more limited resources and remit to provide targeted action for Londoners. Some examples of mayoral action taken include the temporary suspension of all road user charging schemes, the establishment of dedicated support funds, and the temporary suspension of rents across Transport for London's (TfL) estate.
- 3.6 The meeting will seek to examine the actions taken by, and options open to, the Mayor in responding to the COVID-19 epidemic in London. This meeting also offers the opportunity to scrutinise how effectively the Mayor is using his powers and the resources at his disposal to support the national response. The meeting will consist of two sections with the following objectives:
- **Public Health England** - To gain in-depth insight into London's coordinated response to COVID-19 between Public Health England, the Mayor, and other partner bodies, and the current and future challenges facing London; and
 - **COVID-19 and Resilience in London** - To examine the actions taken by, and options open to, the Mayor in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in London. This section has a particular focus on the effectiveness of resilience planning in supporting Londoners and adapting to new challenges of COVID-19.

⁵ Public Health England: [About us](#)

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The following guests have been invited to attend the meeting to discuss the COVID-19 response:

Public Health England

- **Professor Kevin Fenton**, Public Health England Regional Director for London and statutory health adviser to the Mayor and GLA.

COVID-19 and Resilience in London

- **Fiona Twycross**, Deputy Mayor, Fire and Resilience and Co-Chair of the London Resilience Strategic Coordination Group; and
- **John Barradell**, Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation and Co-Chair of the Strategic Coordination Group (TBC).
- **Eleanor Kelly**, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Southwark and Co-Chair of the Strategic Coordination Group

4.2 The Committee will discuss the Mayor's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Greater London Authority arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

None

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| Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 |
| List of Background Papers: None |
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