

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO COVID-19

*To:* Health Committee

*Meeting Date:* 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021

*From:* Director of Public Health

*Electoral division(s):* All

*Forward Plan ref:* Not applicable      *Key decision:* No

*Outcome:* To update the Health Committee on the Council's public health response to COVID-19, which impacts on outcomes for individuals and communities.

*Recommendation:* Health Committee is asked to:

- a) note the progress made to date in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus.
- b) Note the public health service response

<i>Officer contact:</i>		<i>Member contacts:</i>	
Name:	Kate Parker	Names:	Cllr Peter Hudson
Post:	Head of Public Health Business Programmes	Post:	Chair
Email:	<a href="mailto:Kate.parker@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Kate.parker@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>	Email:	<a href="mailto:Peter.hudson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Peter.hudson@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>
Tel:		Tel:	01223 706398

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. A series of reports have been provided to Committees on the Council's ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic, our work with partners and communities to protect the most vulnerable and our developing work to help Cambridgeshire to recover from this unprecedented emergency into a 'new normal'.
- 1.2. Officers and teams across the Council continue to work closely with our communities, partners and providers to develop appropriate operational responses to new epidemiological information and guidance as it is issued.
- 1.3. The Council Senior Leadership Team continues to co-ordinate our response, with a Covid-19 Gold Group, which includes both the Chief Executive and Director of Public Health, meeting three times per week. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF), a partnership of local agencies, continues to hold a Strategic Co-ordinating Group to co-ordinate the multi-agency response.
- 1.4. Since the last report to Health Committee in December, there has been a second wave of Covid-19 with a more transmissible new variant of the virus. The level of Covid-19 hospital admissions has considerably surpassed the first wave, both nationally and locally, and we are currently under national lock down restrictions.

## **2. LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Confirmed cases**

Rates of testing and diagnosis for Covid-19 have changed significantly during the course of the pandemic - so the numbers and rates of confirmed cases do not provide a full picture of Covid-19 epidemiology over time.

Since the last report to Health Committee on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, there was a rapid rise of cases in Cambridgeshire in December and early January, reaching a peak of 548 cases per 100,000 population on January 4<sup>th</sup> 2021.

After the start of lockdown on January 5<sup>th</sup>, cases fell, and the latest rate is 186 cases per 100,000 for the week ending 4<sup>th</sup> February. However these rates are still very high compared to those in summer and early autumn so it is essential that the lockdown rules continue to be observed.

Within Cambridgeshire County, the rates for the week ending 4<sup>th</sup> February were highest in Fenland at 286 cases per 100,000 population and lowest in Cambridge City at 131 cases per 100,000.

## Covid19 cases in Cambridgeshire: Week of 29<sup>th</sup> January - 4<sup>th</sup> February

District/City	Weekly case rate per 100,000 population
Cambridge City	131
East Cambridgeshire	159
Fenland	286
Huntingdonshire	188
South Cambs	178
<b>Cambridgeshire</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>213</b>

Source: Public Health England daily Covid-19 Dashboard

## 2.2 Deaths

Sadly, 715 Cambridgeshire residents have died from causes related to Covid-19 in the period from March 2020 to 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Of these, 222 deaths of local residents were registered in the first four weeks of January 2021. The following table provides more detail for the Covid-19 related deaths registered in the week ending January 29<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Week 4 - Covid-19 deaths registered the week ending 29 January 2021

Area name	Place of death						Total
	Home	Hospital	Care home	Hospice	Other communal establishment	Elsewhere	
Cambridge	1	7	1	0	0	0	9
East Cambridgeshire	1	7	2	0	0	0	10
Fenland	1	11	8	0	0	0	20
Huntingdonshire	0	17	2	0	0	0	19
South Cambridgeshire	1	11	5	0	0	0	17
Cambridgeshire	4	53	18	0	0	0	75
Peterborough	4	10	6	0	0	0	20
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	8	63	24	0	0	0	95

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

- 2.3 Statistics on Covid-19 vaccination of patients of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Sustainable Transformation Partnership are released weekly. As of January 31<sup>st</sup> 2020, a total of 153,641 vaccination doses had been administered to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough STP patients, 88.2% of patients aged 80 and over had received a first dose, and 92.9% of 75-79 year olds. This compares well with national vaccination rates at that point.
- 2.4 Further information on the epidemiology of Covid-19 in Cambridgeshire and its Districts is available on [https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus\\_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/](https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/)

### 3 PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

- 3.1 There has been ongoing focus on implementation of the Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP), including joint work with the regional Public Health England Health Protection Team to directly manage local clusters and outbreaks.  
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace#local-outbreak-control-plan-7-0>
- 3.2 The Surveillance Group meets daily to review the latest data from Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace, the local NHS and other relevant sources for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This information is summarised and passed on to the public health led Outbreak Management Team which oversees the management of local clusters and outbreak of Covid-19, through the work of multi-agency 'cells'. These cells are:
- Workplace Cell
  - Vulnerable Populations Cell
  - Care Home Cell
  - Education Cell
  - NHS Healthcare arrangements.
- The membership of each Cell includes the relevant agencies to prevent and control outbreaks in that area of work. For example the Care Home Cell includes CCG, Adult Social Care, Public Health and NHS Community Service representatives; while the Workplace Cell has strong input from District/City Council Environmental Health Officers, who can visit affected businesses and provide advice and monitoring of their infection control and other outbreak control measures.
- 3.3 The overall implementation of the LOCP is overseen by the multi-agency Health Protection Board which meets weekly and is chaired by the Director of Public Health. This Board includes membership from Public Health England, District Council Environmental Health, the Clinical Commissioning Group, and a range of Council Directorates, and has a strong focus on the local epidemiology of and trends for Covid-19, as well as current plans and actions to prevent and control outbreaks - in order to provide strategic leadership and planning for the future.
- 3.4 The Health Protection Board is supported by the LOCP Programme Delivery Group, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer of South Cambridgeshire District Council, and by an Operational Group which provides support in areas such as HR, Finance, and IT to the various Covid-19 programmes.
- 3.5 The Member-led Local Outbreak Engagement Board, jointly Chaired by Cllr Roger Hickford from Cambridgeshire County Council and Cllr John Holdich from Peterborough City Council, is meeting on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February. This Board meets in public and provides political leadership and communication with local residents for outbreak prevention, early identification and control. Recordings of the LOEB meetings are available on the Council's YouTube pages.
- 3.6 District Councils make a key contribution to the LOCP, through their Environmental Health function and through their local preventive and rapid response work in the event of a community outbreak in their area. Each District and City Council is now running its own

Covid-19 Gold arrangements for rapid response. District Councils also provide a range of practical support for more vulnerable people asked to isolate at short notice.

#### Local Resilience Forum

- 3.7 The Local Resilience Forum Strategic Co-ordination Group, co-chaired by Gillian Beasley and by Jan Thomas, the CCG Accountable Officer, plays an important role in co-ordinating Covid-19 outbreak prevention and management through bringing together the resources of the wider public sector in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, when the resources needed go beyond the scope of the Health Protection Board. A document describing the roles and responsibilities of a range of organisations involved in delivering the LOCP has been agreed through the LRF Strategic Co-ordination Group and published alongside our LOCP. <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/PCC-CCC-3126a-Local-outbreak-control-plan-V6.pdf>

#### Recent areas of focus

- 3.8 Joint work with District and City Councils has developed further, and public health specialists attend the weekly Covid-Gold meetings in each Council to ensure that they are kept up to date with the latest available public health information on local epidemiology and Covid-19 outbreaks. This enables effective preventive, communications and support work to take place at community level.
- 3.9 The joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough local enhanced contact tracing service, launched in November, has experienced a significant increase in workload due to the increased number of cases in the second pandemic wave. The staffing has been expanded through ongoing recruitment. This service follows up cases who the national Test and Trace Service has not been able to contact. Due to the high workload, the follow up of cases has been prioritised over the development of backward contact tracing. However as case numbers fall, we plan to restart the development of a local backward contact tracing model.
- 3.10 The Digital and Customer Services Directorate has set up a telephone support service for people who are self-isolating with Covid-19. This calls cases pro-actively to check their welfare, and ensures that they are linked to local services provided by District Councils and the voluntary sector.
- 3.11 A major focus of work over the past two months has been to set up our Community Rapid Testing Service, with a grant from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). This delivers rapid lateral flow tests (LFTs) for people without symptoms. By Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February all Districts will have a rapid testing site, open to people who have to leave their home in order to work. Workers are asked to attend twice weekly for a regular test. The launch of the service has been well publicised and successful. We are also providing a train the trainer model and LFTs, for workplaces to implement in-house programmes, and a model for vulnerable population groups through existing services.
- 3.12 Public health staff work closely with the Adult Social Care Directorate and with NHS colleagues to ensure that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Home Support Plan continues to be implemented effectively, with ongoing support for infection control and outbreak management. There has been an increase in cases and outbreaks in care homes, both locally and regionally, associated with the general increase in community prevalence

of Covid-19, so additional public health and adult social care staff have been deployed into the Care Home Cell.

- 3.13 There is ongoing work with the Communications Team to ensure that local people receive the latest information and advice on Covid-19 safety. The 'Stand Firm' campaign emphasises the experiences of local people who have had Covid and the need to stand firm against the virus by continuing to practice Covid-safe behaviours.
- 3.14 Joint work with the Clinical Commissioning Group to support the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination programme is developing further, and the Director of Public Health has recently joined the Strategic Vaccinations Group, which is led by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CCG. The Council is supporting local residents' access to vaccination through community transport options, encouraging care home and other front line social care workers to be vaccinated, developing local communications resources to promote the vaccination programme, and will be increasingly involved in promoting equity of access to vaccinations and addressing vaccine hesitancy across a wide range of population groups.

#### **4 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 4.1 The current Coronavirus pandemic will have both an immediate and a longer term effect on all of the Council's priorities. The impacts will be monitored and managed through our risk logs and recovery plans and will feed into the annual review of Council strategy.

#### **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It is essential to ensure that our local response reduces Covid-19 cases as far as possible at this point, so that when national decisions are made about step-wise relaxation of restrictions, we are in the best position ensure that spread in the community and case numbers are kept under control. Maximising compliance with the lock-down now, as well as the uptake of vaccinations by priority groups, will place us in the best position. Ongoing vigilance will be required over the coming year to minimise and rapidly control outbreaks amongst population groups who are not yet vaccinated, and to identify and control new variants of the virus.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local outbreak control plan	<a href="https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace#local-outbreak-control-plan-7-0">https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace#local-outbreak-control-plan-7-0</a>