

SERVICE HIGHLIGHT REPORT – COVID-19 AND KEY SERVICE UPDATES

SERVICE AREAS:	Customer and Digital Services Directorate: including Communications, IT and Digital, Emergency Planning, HR, Learning & Development, Health & Safety and Customer Services
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LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council

Part 1 - COVID-19

NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

Revised COVID 'at risk' groups – in the light of the revised list of 'at risk' groups work has been undertaken by HR to identify all members of staff over the age of 60 who cannot perform their duties from home and make sure there is a risk assessment in place for them in response to this change in government advice.

Moving from national lockdown into Tier 2 – Communications carried out a comprehensive programme of press, media and marketing campaigns to ensure our communities understand what they can do in Tier 2. The Local Outbreak Control Plan has been revised to reflect the current position and preparation is underway to ensure residents know how to prepare for the change of regulations over Christmas.

Roll out of rapid (lateral flow) testing and preparations for mass vaccinations – the Head of Communications and the Director of Customer and Digital Services are supporting the planning for both of these developments working closely with colleagues in Public Health, Communities and Partnerships and Adult Services so we are prepared to roll out rapid testing and ready to support mass vaccinations.

NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

Customer Services – are working on a plan to develop our contact centre capacity across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to carry out welfare calls to follow up on COVID cases and their contacts to ensure they know what support is available to help them to self-isolate, and to help them to access this support. This additional capacity will focus on areas of high infection/risk so we offer targeted support to help mitigate the spread of the infection. We are planning for this extra capacity to be rolled out early in the New Year. Where more in-depth support is required the customer service advisors working in this team will pass people over to the network of local community hubs where there is more extensive local knowledge about the support that is available through the District and City Councils and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Emergency Planning – a watching brief is being maintained on the modelling of anticipated infection rates through the Winter period so that the COVID supplementary body stores can become operational if required. A contract is being finalised with a commercial funeral director to operate the additional Fletton Store on behalf of Peterborough City Council – this capacity will add to that already sited at Peterborough City hospital.

HR Advisory – are supporting the planning for the additional testing, contact tracing and customer service activity to ensure that arrangements are planned and in place to engage and train a new set of workers within a tight timescale.

RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

HR Advisory – continue to support teams and individuals back into workplaces as and when restrictions allow, either for front-line service delivery or wellbeing reasons. There is a strong focus on staff wellbeing with twice weekly wellbeing updates, guidance and tips issued in the staff bulletins and providing up to date advice and FAQs to staff as the COVID situation evolves and guidance changes. Online mental health awareness training continues to be rolled out, five sessions per month, this has been very well received by those who have attended. Additional dates have been put in for November and December in response to the further challenges presented by the second lock down and subsequent Tiers' arrangement. There have been three sessions specifically for managers to enable them to support their team members who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health as a result of this pandemic. Throughout this period regular briefing meetings have continued with our trades union colleagues. The meetings provide an

opportunity for answering questions and engaging trades union colleagues on all aspects of the Council's response to the COVID crisis that have a people related connection. This includes key matters such as the risk assessment process for buildings and individuals and the guidance for staff on returning to work.

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

NEW COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

The Government's announcement of further investment in Outbreak Management is being used to support the development of rapid testing and additional contact tracing and customer services' staff, referred to in this report.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

See above for the HR support for staff wellbeing.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications and Information – weekly updates continue to be sent to all Members highlighting key Covid activity – these updates are also sent to MPs and Mayor James Palmer.

A comprehensive Communications Plan was produced to support communications activity throughout the second lockdown. This promoted the national messages around do's and don'ts, as well as local messages asking people not to invite Covid home, as well as providing advice and support for people who are more vulnerable. Linked to this we have:

- Published video blog translations of the revised key messages during lockdown on social media and on our website.
- Published a media release, a letter from Dr Liz to local businesses and created social media videos and messaging which urge informal carers to seek help if they need it.
- Encouraged people to mark Remembrance Day at home – with a 'facebook live' event for people to follow from home, and video message from the Chairman of the Council.
- Promoted a video detailing the personal experiences of members of the south Asian community who have suffered from Coronavirus to encourage their own communities to follow the rules.
- Development of social media posts to support parents struggling to feed their children and heat their homes during Christmas with links to the hub.
- Adapted our radio campaign to delete mention of event planning, but instead encouraging people to book a test if they have symptoms and to self-isolate if they are positive or if they are a close contact - with the message that there is no reason not to.

In addition Communications have:

- Issued a release and worked with local radio and TV to highlight the help available from the county-wide hub for all vulnerable people – including low income families who may have faced difficulties feeding their children during the half term break.
- Continued to engage and support younger people with our #CancelCovid campaign.
- Delivered a Halloween and Bonfire Night campaign advising people to celebrate differently.
- Finalised a feature in The Moment magazine about the work of the Peterborough Hub and public health advice due to be published online and in print.

A further Communications Plan was developed to support the move out of Lockdown into Tier 2 focusing on what people can do in Tier 2.

Media and major reputational issues COVID proactive media on start of second national lockdown, local contact tracing, self-isolation support roll out across Cambridgeshire, COVID cases in schools – and first whole school closure, Halloween, Bonfire Night, free school meals over half term, schools and HRC's remaining open, registration information, Remembrance Sunday virtual events, targeted video for Asian communities, business grants promotion across the county.

Part 2 – BUSINESS AS USUAL ACTIVITY

KEY SERVICE UPDATES – INTERNAL / EXTERNAL

Emergency Planning – have been working to on our business continuity planning to incorporate the developments and learning from our experience of COVID within individual services. The team are contributing to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough preparations for the EU Exit in January providing assistance to EU Exit planning within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum.

Customer Services – the contact centres are now delivering business as usual support across all services. The only exception being the cancellation of Registration ceremonies during the lockdown period.

In October there were a number of areas where the Cambridgeshire team experienced large increases in phone contact volumes compared to last year. Overall there was a 21% increase in contacts compared to last October. The contact centres are now delivering the Covid 19 support line to members of the public.

IT & Digital Services – Cambridgeshire IT continue to carry out extensive testing of our Disaster Recovery systems and processes to ensure we are prepared to decommission the data centre at Shire Hall so we can move our data centre to Sand Martin House in 2021 – during this move Cambridgeshire County Council's IT services will run in this Disaster Recovery mode. The latest Microsoft desktop, Office 365, has been rolled out across Cambridgeshire County Council following its roll out in Peterborough City Council. This means officers who work across both Councils can use the Teams system (within Office 365) more easily for video conferencing, sharing documents and collaboration. Following the exit from the Serco ICT contract in Peterborough and the repatriation of the LGSS IT service to Cambridgeshire, and the appointment of the new Assistant Director for IT, plans are now underway to bring our IT & Digital teams together into one integrated service so we are better able to support our Officers and Members in a consistent and more efficient way across our Councils.

HR Advisory - The HR and Learning and Development Teams are starting to release staff to support the Community Hub activity again, and in doing so will pause some of the non-critical business as usual functions. In Cambridgeshire fortnightly working group has been established to focus on equality, diversity and inclusion matters to drive the Council's agenda forward in a timely and collaborative, with colleagues from the Equality and Diversity Network, HR and Communications. Work is underway to extend this approach across both Councils with officers from both councils already attending key meetings. A new monthly survey for staff has been launched with the first being focussed on wellbeing. A new Head of Learning and Development has been appointed to commence in the New Year following the repatriation of this service from LGSS.

Health & Safety – have worked with HR and Property colleagues to simplify and make clear the process staff need to undertake if someone in a workplace experiences COVID symptoms. This is so we ensure we are doing everything to protect and support them and other members of staff.

Communications and Information

Media work

- Highlighting Avian Flu risk, promoting fostering opportunities and a study which found the Family Safeguarding model to be a success.

Ongoing campaign work

- Working with the outbreak management team exploring campaign options regarding how we can target particular areas where COVID cases are high to share information to keep people both safe and to stop transmission. Also to encourage people to adhere to the lockdown rules and find alternative activities people can do that are Covid safe.
- Launched Alcohol Awareness Week activities for mid-November.
- Developing the second phase of the youth campaign – Cancel Covid.
- Developing a range of materials for the Christmas period to keep people Covid safe.
- Developing our 500,000 reasons (loneliness) and assistive technology Christmas materials to work alongside the Covid communications.
- Continuing to work with Jawaid Khan, community organisations and the interfaith groups to target cultural specific information to keep communities safe.

Internal Communications

- Daily staff updates throughout the first week in November to support staff around emerging information around lockdown.

- Regular weekly update on Covid specific issues for staff released including info about the Working Well initiative encouraging staff to take breaks, move more, allow yourself to switch off at the end of the day. Support for staff around Armistice Day. Support for long COVID and information about health and safety checks and inspections during COVID-19.
- Friday Focus magazine issued to all staff each week to highlight good practice information and good news stories.
- Regular well-being information for staff in newsletters and on the intranets. New monthly wellbeing hour promotion.
- Continue to review accessibility issues on our intranet.

Social Media Stats

- CancelCovid - 16 posts, 99 clicks, engagement rate 2.50%
- Test and trace - 63 posts, 279 clicks, engagement rate 2.78%
- National messages – 93 posts, 558 clicks, engagement rate 1.78%
- Keep caring – 94 posts, 570 clicks, engagement rate 2.30%
- Coordination Hub – 4 posts, 75 clicks, engagement rate 2.03%
- Domestic Abuse – 12 posts, 48 clicks, engagement rate 2.12%
- Scams or Trading Standards – 8 posts, 93 clicks, engagement rate 2.22%
- Schools PR – 12 posts, 85 clicks, engagement rate 1.93%
- Alcohol Awareness – 12 posts, 25 clicks, engagement rate 2.17%
- Community translation videos – 44 posts, 676 clicks, engagement rate 7.98%
- Self-isolation – 52 posts, 126 clicks, engagement rate 0.72%
- Carer support – 9 posts, 32 clicks, engagement rate 1.92%
- Do Halloween differently – 84 posts, 661 clicks, engagement rate 1.39%

*2% is seen as a good engagement rate. Anything above 3 is considered great.

Planning for next month

- Chisolm Trail /Major infrastructure communications
- Census communications
- CCC budget consultation communications – launch end of November
- Communications for the end of lockdown.
- EU exit communications.
- Continuation of Covid-19 messaging (depending on Government restrictions).

FINANCIAL ISSUES

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES AND CHALLENGES

UPCOMING ISSUES & HORIZON SCANNING AREAS

