

Report of the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships

To: Communities and Partnership Committee

Meeting Date: 4 March 2021

From: Service Director, Communities and Partnerships

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: This Service Director report provides an overview of activity relevant to this Committee, relating to both the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and 'business as usual' activity, and seeks to assure Members that the agreed direction of travel for the Committee's business is progressing at pace. All of the service directorate's work seeks to achieve the best outcomes possible for our residents through high quality direct delivery and productive, meaningful partnerships.

Recommendation: The Communities and Partnership Committee is asked to:

- a) Note and comment on the key themes discussed in this report; and
- b) Identify and consider further opportunities to provide support to Cambridgeshire's residents affected by the pandemic.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Committee has agreed to receive a Service Director report at each of its meetings, setting out information, opportunities and challenges relating to the cross-cutting work that the Committee and its service directorate has responsibility for. This includes the service directorate's role in supporting the COVID-19 response.

2. Main Issues

- 2.1 The work of the Communities and Partnership Committee is diverse and cross-cutting. The Committee combines responsibility for specific services but also for leading our approach to ensuring communities and residents are at the heart of our decision making, service design and delivery. Further, it holds responsibility for developing meaningful, productive partnerships across all sectors that make a lasting and positive difference to communities and achieves improved outcomes for all. This Service Director report provides information relating to this.

2.2 Service Updates

2.2.1 Cambridgeshire Local

- i. The Cambridgeshire Local model of delivery has continued to develop: new members of the team have taken up their posts; our partnerships with agencies across multiple sectors have continued to grow; our focus on effecting positive change in relation to residents' social mobility has sharpened; and we continue to deliver support to residents and communities affected by the pandemic using the key Think Communities principles.
- ii. A series of partnership events are being held between now and the end of March, across all five district council areas. These events will be delivered in collaboration with District/City Council partners, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils, and others (including Primary Care Networks and other NHS colleagues). These events will set the scene for the Cambridgeshire Local approach at a more localised level, are a further significant milestone in the continued rollout of our Cambridgeshire Local approach. This first round of events will pave the way for more local engagement with our twenty two service delivery areas in Summer 2021 to further develop our place-based approach in co-production with our communities. There will also be similar events in the Cambridge City area.
- iii. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Against Scams Partnership reached the 100 supporters' milestone (102) in January – supporters are typically community groups, local councils etc. and they receive and share scams information to help build local resilience. Five scam alerts have recently been issued, including two audio files of telephone scams occurring in our county. Our alerts are being shared widely on social media – one reaching 5,483 people.
- iv. The 'Giving Carers a Break' pilot project, jointly funded by Ely Primary Care Networks and the council, aims to support exhausted carers through the next 12 months and became operational in January. Caring Together have been appointed to employ a

Short Break Coordinator to oversee the short break offer and to embed themselves in the community to identify carers not known to the system or other providers. The Coordinator will work with Care Network, East Cambridgeshire Parish and Community Forum and the Wellbeing Hub to identify and match volunteers and carers who wish to provide a break or to access a break in their local village or town.

- v. Our Youth and Community Coordinators made eight COVID Recovery Fund enabler grants during January which enabled communities to address and meet some of the needs and issues they were facing as a direct result of the continued pandemic. They included Soham Radio, Cambridgeshire Youth Panel and Hemingford Hub delivering creative, inclusive, and engaging projects that tackle social isolation, emotional health and well-being, food poverty and poor mental health. An additional £15k of external funding has been secured for further outreach work which commenced in February half term, working with local partners to identify key areas where a youth work presence would be beneficial to youth social mobility. This will continue to take place in each school holiday until the end of summer, where we hope to engage young people in positive activity, address anti-social behaviour, offer advice and guidance about local services, and bring in external organisations to focus on issues such as drugs and knife crime.
- vi. Due to the impacts of the pandemic on the workloads and capacity of our voluntary sector partners, we have extended the deadline for submissions to the procurement exercise for the new voluntary sector infrastructure support contract. The deadline for submissions is now April 2021, and this will enable bidders to appropriately prioritise their time and efforts, and therefore submit quality bids.
- vii. Similarly, the pandemic has impacted somewhat on the ability for some organisations to progress with their council-funded capital projects. In summer 2020, the committee awarded £5m to 35 community projects across the county. Despite the impacts of COVID-19, all projects are underway, with several completed and more expected to complete in the next 2-3 months. Many projects were in the early stages of development at the time the committee awarded funding and as a result the pace of development varies from project to project. Covid has also had a significant impact for some projects, with project managers dealing with their own, or family member, illness at times which has delayed progress. In addition, applicants have found in some cases the planning process has been slower than normal and have experienced delays in gaining approval. Although many parts of the economy have struggled over the last year, the building and construction industry has been extremely busy and several parish councils report limited interest from builders in submitting tenders. Despite the various delays and setbacks, projects overall are progressing well and there are no projects that are red rated or that give cause for concern. As the overall picture is positive although slightly delayed, a full update will be provided at the next Committee meeting.
- viii. The immediate focus for the Cambridgeshire Local team is to rapidly organise, coordinate and mobilise services, opportunities and projects that support peoples' social mobility, as agreed at the January committee meeting. The separate Social Mobility progress report sets out more detail about progress and direction of travel.

- ix. Contributing to this theme, the council has partnered with a team of masters students at the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose to understand more about food poverty in Cambridgeshire, and the things that can make a difference in addressing it. The team is undertaking a systems mapping project and will be speaking with local stakeholders to inform the systems map and identify the possible leverage points that could make a difference. We know that food poverty is an issue that has deepened as a result of the pandemic, along with the economic impact that has resulted in more people experiencing financial hardship, and we hope that this research will help shape thinking around how we work together to reduce food poverty as a system in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The findings from this research will be shared with the committee at the earliest opportunity.

2.2.2 Community Safety

- i. An Early Intervention Foundation project focusing on children affected by domestic abuse has started with a systems map of services and processes being developed with practitioners. Further information on this important initiative will be shared with the Committee as the project develops.
- ii. The Domestic Abuse Bill is continuing to make its way through Parliament and is still on track to receive Royal Assent by April 2021. We have received notification of funding to be made available to both upper tier and lower tier councils in the event the Bill is enacted, to support the implementation of the new duties. If the Bill is enacted, a draft delivery plan will be shared with the Committee for comment and assurance.
- iii. A particular focus for the community safety services and its strategic leadership, in the context of the social mobility agenda, will be to ensure that the social mobility of victims of crime is not adversely affected, or, where there is evidence that it may be, to put in place measures to address this, working very closely with our Community Safety Partnership colleagues at district and city level.
- iv. Additionally, the service will be focussing more on addressing the impacts of physical decline in a neighbourhood – for example, where affected by excess flytipping or graffiti, or where roads and pavements appear neglected – working closely with colleagues in the Place and Economy Directorate as well as with district and city council partners and other key agencies. The physical feel of a place is proven to directly impact the cohesion and quality of life of its residents, and, if not maintained at a decent level, can lead to broader social, health and wellbeing challenges, often referred to as the Broken Window Theory.

2.2.3 Regulatory Services

- i. Our Regulatory Services teams have continued to play a vital, front line role, alongside district and city council colleagues, to maintain compliance of COVID-19 rules and guidance in the business sector, as well as respond to service impacts caused by the pandemic.
- ii. The latest lockdown has meant that weddings and civil partnership ceremonies cannot take place unless in exceptional circumstances, for example if one of the couple is terminally ill. As at the point the current lockdown began, the Cambridgeshire

Registration Service had 256 ceremonies booked for January and February, and all couples were contacted to discuss their options. At time of writing, the service has additionally begun to contact couples with ceremonies booked for the first week of March, and will continue to respond proactively to government announcements as they are made.

- iii. The Cambridgeshire Registration Service has engaged with Approved Venues in Cambridgeshire to gather feedback of their experience of the Registration Service. This is a vital partnership that we want to build and develop, to support the economic development and sustainability of our venues sector as well as enhance the experience for our customers. Overall, the feedback has been positive and will inform further engagement that will take place in 2021, and we will ensure the committee is provided with further analysis of the feedback and how we propose to positively and proactively respond in the coming weeks.
- iv. With an increase in the number of ceremonies expected post-COVID (some already booked for 2024) the Cambridgeshire Registration Service is looking to recruit more Ceremony Officers to meet the demand. Many Ceremony Officers are employed with a sessional contract commitment, allowing flexibility for both the individual and the service. We recognise the importance and significance of ceremonies in peoples' lives, especially in the context of the current severe disruptions to peoples' plans, and this additional recruitment will help us to ensure they are our absolute priority.
- v. A new national Marriage Schedule System is due to be implemented across Registration Services in Spring/Summer this year. The change will mean the current paper-based registration of marriages and civil partnerships will move to an electronic system. While this will be a welcome change to services it will heavily impact on resources at a time when the service is still managing and recovering from the impact of COVID. The National Panel, for which the Cambridgeshire Registration Manager is a member, has highlighted these concerns with the General Register Office, and we will keep Committee briefed on any impacts, not least because of the absolute commitment we are making to our residents to enable them to access the service as swiftly and as easily as possible.
- vi. The Planning Committee has approved the change of use for the Roger Ascham building which is to be used as a Ceremony Office. Further planning consent will be required as the building is listed, and we anticipate the outcome of this decision imminently.
- vii. We have recently received from MHCLG a document outlining the national priorities for Regulatory Services during the pandemic, "Delivering Local Authority Regulatory Services over Winter 2021". The document sets out ways in which local authorities can prioritise their regulatory services responsibilities in the context of significant increased demand during the pandemic. Some of the functions set out in the letter are the responsibility of district and city councils, but the county council has responsibility for many others, as well as wanting to work closely with and support our district and city colleagues at a time when they too are facing immense pressure. Having reviewed the document, which is attached at Appendix 1, we can confirm that we are delivering entirely in the ways set out, and will continue to refer to this useful

framework as the pandemic continues to impact.

- viii. Our Trading Standards service continues to play a vital role in managing risk and harm, for example:
- Trading Standards are leading a regional project to test the efficacy of hand sanitisers being manufactured and imported in the Cambridgeshire area. The regional results will be shared with the Office of Product Safety and Standards as there may well be national implications resulting from the findings.
 - Trading Standards have been working with a surgeon at Addenbrookes Hospital who had to save a small child's life after she ingested some high strength magnetic bracelet balls. Subsequent enquiries revealed that within a short period of time other surgeons also had to deal with similar distressing cases in small children caused by the same magnetic bracelets. Whilst the bracelets meet UK safety standards, it is evident that they are posing a serious risk to small children. Officers are working with the surgeons and the Office of Product Safety and Standards to determine what can be done through legislation to address these risks.
 - Trading Standards management were invited by the National Audit Office to take part in their review of product safety across the UK because of the experience within the team.
- ix. The Chief Coroner and Secretary of State have now authorised the appointment of ten Assistant Coroners in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These appointments will increase the capacity to hold Inquests simultaneously across our COVID-secure venues. Assistant Coroners will work for the service part time and are predominately employed elsewhere. Our caseload is now being mapped to the availability and expertise of Assistant Coroners as well as venues to progress the cases efficiently.

2.2.4 Cambridgeshire Skills

- i. The Cambridgeshire Skills service has continued to adapt to a rapidly changing environment caused by the pandemic. The service has significantly adapted its learning offer, and is now operating a fully online curriculum with fifty five courses now available to support social and economic outcomes. More activities around mental health and wellbeing are being planned to launch, and the service is also starting to work on longer term recovery and growth planning to support the 'Plan for Jobs' approach announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- ii. There is a clear and vital role for the service to play in supporting the social mobility of our residents, and we will continue to develop and refine our service offer to meet the needs of our population, especially those furthest from employment, those with fewer professional or vocational skills and experience, and those newly affected by the pandemic seeking alternative employment.
- iii. In the first 6 months of the academic year, we have recruited c.1,800 learners against our annual target of 4,100. Although this is slightly below profile by 12%, nationally, providers are reporting decreased participation of 15%-43%. We have comprehensive plans in place to meet our target, and are confident of doing so. We also continue to

engage directly and positively with our primary commissioner, the Combined Authority, to ensure they remain satisfied with our performance. Work with the Combined Authority has been particularly positive of late, following the recruitment of new senior staff to their team with experience of local authority-delivered skills training. One of these new team members has agreed to join the steering group for Cambridgeshire Skills which is chaired by Cllr Criswell in his capacity as Chair of this committee.

2.3 COVID-19 Coordination and Response Hub

- 2.3.1 The Service Director and his team are continuing to play a system-wide leadership role in the ongoing COVID-19 response work, with the Service Director continuing to serve as a member of our own Gold command groups and those that form part of the Local Resilience Forum. Alongside leadership of the Countywide Hub, the Service Director is working closely with NHS colleagues and the Director of Public Health to support the rollout of the vaccination programme, the continuation of targeted mass community testing, and the development and delivery of localised rapid response plans that adapt according to the latest epidemiology.
- 2.3.2 The Countywide Hub continues to work with the district and city councils to ensure the c.32,500 residents that are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) are receiving support. In the previous month, there were just over 1,800 CEV residents newly registering on the National Shielding Support Service, of which 501 registered as needing immediate help. They have all been contacted and support provided alongside being linked into local community support where appropriate.
- 2.3.3 On 16 February, the Government announced an increase to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable cohort of 1.7million people nationally. This follows an extensive piece of work to assess the risk to certain people caused by the virus when multiple factors are taken into consideration. The cohort has been identified using an algorithm that combines data relating to age, body mass index, location and medical history.
- 2.3.4 Soon after the national announcement, we received details of the first of Cambridgeshire's proportion of the 1.7m people in this new cohort. In total, 10,707 people have been added to our existing CEV list, aged between 19 and 69. This brings the total CEV residents in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, at time of writing, to 43,768, an increase of 32% on the previous CEV cohort. All of these people are being advised to shield, and at the same time shielding for ALL CEV people has been extended to 31 March 2021. We are advised that a second list of additional CEV residents will be shared with us in the coming days, and will include people aged 70 and above.
- 2.3.5 All newly identified CEV people are being written to by Government, but during week commencing 22 February, the council, along with our district and city council partners, will also be contacting all 10,707 additional people with specific information about our local support arrangements.
- 2.3.6 The table below shows the current analysis of CEV residents by district or city council area:

District	Previous CEV	Newly added CEV	Total
Cambridge	4297	1716	6013
East Cambridgeshire	3567	748	4315
Fenland	4859	1228	6087
Huntingdonshire	7558	1714	9272
Peterborough	6089	4000	10089
South Cambridgeshire	6691	1301	7992
Total	33061	10707	43768

2.3.7 The wards with the highest/lowest percentage increase in CEV residents following the recent additions is as follows:

District	Ward	District percentage change
Cambridge	Abbey and Petersfield – 57% Queen Edith's and West Chesterton – 26%	40%
East Cambridgeshire	Soham North – 41% Woodditton – 8%	21%
Fenland	Medworth – 47%, Clarkson – 45% and Waterlees Village – 43% Wenneye – 11%	25%
Huntingdonshire	St Neot's East – 79% Kimbolton – 6%	23%
Peterborough	Central – 158%, North – 129%, Park – 120% and East – 106% Barnack – 5%	66%
South Cambridgeshire	Cambourne – 71% Foxton – 7%	19%

2.3.8 The age profile of the current CEV cohort is as follows:

Age	Previous number of CEV	Newly added	Total
<19	915	0	915
19-28	1218	880	2098
29-38	2048	2818	4866
39-48	2770	3192	5962
49-58	4916	2496	7412
59-69	7135	1317	8452
>69	14059	4	14063
Total	33061	10707	43768

2.3.9 The NHS-led vaccination programme continues to progress well throughout Cambridgeshire. The council is playing a number of important roles in supporting this work,

including the coordination of transport to and from vaccine appointments for people unable to make their own arrangements, and working closely with a wide range of partners to tackle the issue of vaccine hesitancy and to build vaccine confidence. So far 106 residents have been supported to get to their vaccination appointments by the Countywide Hub where they have no family or friends available to take them, and we anticipate this number increasing significantly as further cohorts are invited to attend their vaccine appointments. We are predominantly using established community transport networks and the team continues to refine the process with the CCG.

2.3.10 Work is ongoing at pace to develop a single vaccine hesitancy and vaccine confidence plan, as we are anxious to ensure that any concerns any of our residents have about taking up their vaccine appointment are rapidly resolved. This includes dealing with the anti-vaccine materials that are circulating on social media, as well as the individual beliefs of some of our residents. We will present the plan at the next available committee meeting, for both feedback and assurance.

2.3.11 Each district and city council is seeing an increase in the number of residents applying for financial support via the National Self-Isolation Support Scheme. The Countywide Hub meets regularly with each area to share learning and ensure people in need of financial support, but who are not eligible for the national scheme, are being referred for local support. To date, the Countywide Hub has supported 66 residents that are not eligible for the national scheme, the most common reason being the impact of education settings being sent home to isolate therefore requiring unpaid leave for parents/carers.

2.3.12 Building on the successful Shielded Case Officer model utilised throughout the pandemic, the Countywide Hub has been supporting both councils' contact centres and Public Health to launch a self-isolation support service. A team of case officers regularly calls priority groups identified as needing to self-isolate to ensure they have the support in place they need. As a result, requests for help come through to the Hub, enabling the team to better understand barriers to self-isolation. In the first week, the Hub has seen only a few escalations which means that levels of self-support are high. Most escalations are linked to financial support, and we have been able to meet that need via either the national or local hardship support schemes.

2.3.13 So far, we have received 3,873 applications for support from across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough via the Winter Support Grant Scheme. This is in addition to over 32,000 children and young people receiving food vouchers for each of the two weeks of the Christmas holiday and for the February half-term week. These applications have so far resulted in:

- A team of over 100 people coming together to ensure everyone that applied was contacted and offered emergency support before Christmas
- 782 emergency fuel vouchers being issued
- 300 households being provided with personal hygiene supplies via local libraries
- 412 households being provided with emergency food supplies via district/city hubs
- 400 referrals to the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme and Citizens' Advice
- 73 referrals to the East Cambridgeshire District Council Advice team
- 278 financial awards in December from the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme

2.3.14 The Think Communities Manager and the Countywide Hub have been supporting the Education Service Directorate to design, develop and deliver projects which result in

laptops being available for children. Cambridgeshire Local service representation in a task and finish group has resulted in the agreement that libraries will be used as local donation points for new or surplus equipment. Libraries will also manage the collection of those items and deliver them to the teams who will be refurbishing them.

2.3.15 Linked to this work, and as part of planning for recovery, a specification has been developed alongside the Cambridgeshire Digital Partnership which will support the mapping and co-ordination of digital support for residents in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as well as enabling the publication of a single view of these opportunities and signposting to support. The Partnership will focus on devices, data and skills to ensure a robust enablement offer.

2.3.16 Work is currently underway with the CCG, voluntary and community sector partners, and district/city council colleagues to establish a process for identifying volunteer support to vaccination and community testing sites. Building on the Think Communities principles, the Hub is developing a model that is sustainable and will form part of future ways of working beyond the pandemic. We continue to see a real enthusiasm within our communities to help, and therefore this pathway will enable this whilst linking them into established voluntary opportunities.

2.3.17 Finally, and as a reminder, the contact details for anyone affected by the pandemic are as follows:

- Countywide coordination hub:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or 0345 045 5219
- For people in the Cambridge City area:
www.cambridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-ask-for-help or 01223 457000
- For people in the East Cambridgeshire District Council area:
www.eastcambbs.gov.uk/content/coronavirus-community-support or 01353 665555
- For people in the Fenland District Council area:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or 0345 045 5219
- For people in the Huntingdonshire District Council area:
www.wearehuntingdonshire.org/ or 01480 388388
- For people in the South Cambridgeshire District Council area:
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or 0345 045 5219

3. Alignment with corporate priorities

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

The Committee's focus is on leading positive change, in collaboration with partners, which benefits our residents and their communities, offers opportunity for all, and ensures no community is excluded or disadvantaged. By focussing on these objectives, which the various workstreams set out in this report seek to do, we can ensure that the quality of life outcomes for everyone are improved.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

For citizens to be confident, healthy, safe and secure, they need to live in communities that mirror those attributes, and where there is a strong sense of local identity and cohesion. The workstreams set out in this report seek to support the development of a strong local identity, helping to create thriving places for people to live in.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children

All of the workstreams set out in this report affect all residents, regardless of age. Moreover, building communities that are vibrant and have opportunity, and enhancing the social mobility of families, will directly and positively create the best possible start for our children.

3.4 Net zero carbon emissions for Cambridgeshire by 2050

All of our work is cognisant of the net zero carbon emissions target.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There have not been any significant changes in the projected financial consequences of the pandemic within the remit of this Committee since the previous report.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Any purchases to support the service directorate's work will be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are a number of communications and engagement aspects to this report that our Communications team are aware of, and they are working closely and proactively with relevant officers where appropriate.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local Members remain at the heart of our work and at the centre of the Cambridgeshire Local principles.

4.7 Public Health Implications

This paper clearly lays out the diverse contributions that are being made through the work of the Communities and Partnerships Service Directorate to health and wellbeing, and to

the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. It acknowledges that key to Public Health is the improvement of health and wellbeing which needs action across many determinants.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial Officer: Martin Wade

Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement? Yes

Name of Officer: Gus De Silva

Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law? Yes

Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?

Yes

Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications? Yes

Name of Officer: Christine Birchall

Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact? Yes

Name of Officer: Adrian Chapman

Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health? Yes

Name of Officer: Val Thomas

5. Source documents

5.1 None