

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO COVID-19

*To:* Health Committee

*Meeting Date:* 17<sup>th</sup> November 2020

*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

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## **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. The Council's Recovery Framework was endorsed by this Committee on 14th May and a Recovery Board has been established. The Senior Management Team member chairing this board is the Director for Business Improvement and Development, Amanda Askham and all Executive Directors, Service Directors and Corporate Heads of Service are members of the recovery group.
- 1.5. The Local Resilience Forum has also stood up a Recovery Coordinating Group to co-ordinate multi-agency actions. This group is jointly chaired by Huntingdon District Council Managing Director, Jo Lancaster and South Cambridgeshire District Council Chief Executive, Liz Watts. This has a number of sub-groups - the Council's Public Health Directorate leads the 'Public Health and Prevention' Recovery sub-group, and provides specialist advice and input to other sub-groups. .

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

### **2.1 Confirmed cases**

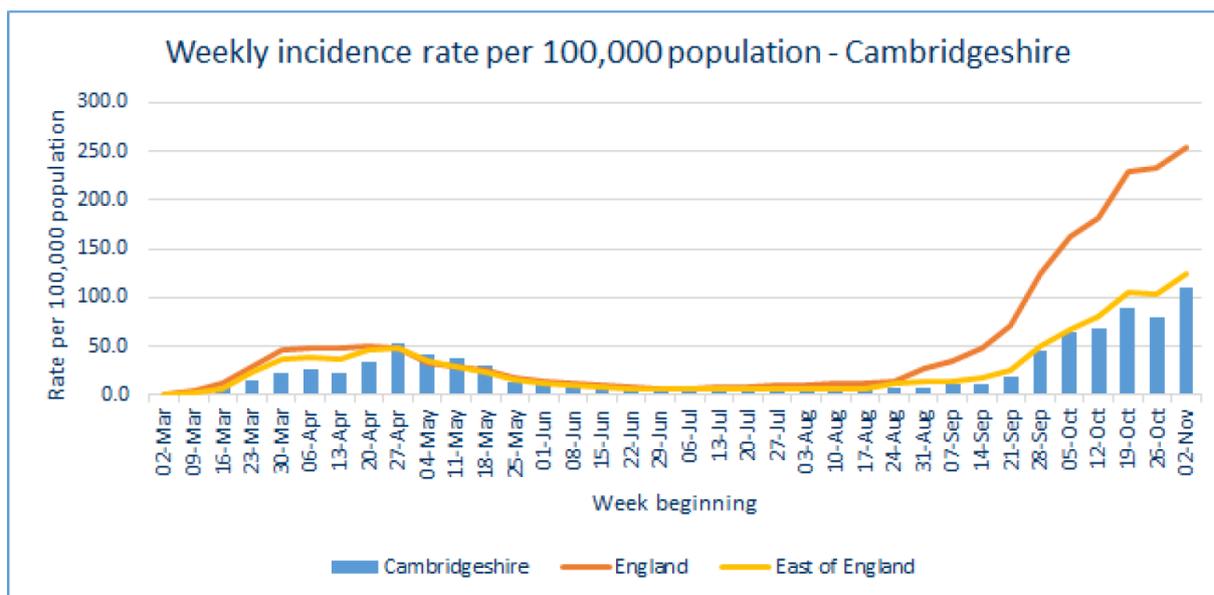
Many cases of Covid-19 are not tested for or diagnosed, particularly where the person infected does not have symptoms. The rates of testing and diagnosis have also changed significantly during the course of the pandemic - so the numbers and rates of confirmed cases do not provide a full picture of Covid-19 epidemiology over time.

In the latest reporting week at the time of writing, i.e. 4<sup>th</sup> November to 11<sup>th</sup> November, there were 908 new lab-confirmed Covid-19 cases with addresses in Cambridgeshire - a rate of 139 cases per 100,000 population. Within Cambridgeshire County, the rates were highest in Cambridge City at 248 cases per 100,000 and lowest in East Cambridgeshire at 80 cases per 100,000. Most of these cases would have become infected during the week before the recent lockdown - as it takes time for the symptoms of infection to show and for people to book a test. All areas saw a significant increase in the numbers of people infected, compared to the previous week - of around 40% in Fenland, Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire, 50% in East Cambridgeshire and just over 100% in Cambridge City.

## Covid19 cases in Cambridgeshire: Week of 4-11<sup>th</sup> November

District/City	Number of cases	Weekly case rate per 100,000 population	% change since previous week
Cambridge City	309	247.6	+102%
East Cambridgeshire	72	80.1	+50%
Fenland	123	120.8	+37%
Huntingdonshire	216	121.4	+39%
South Cambs	188	118.2	+40%

Source: Public Health England daily Covid-19 Dashboard



## 2.2 Cambridge City Cases

The marked rise in cases in Cambridge City between the week of 4<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> November and the previous week is mainly in the 18-22 year old age group. The rate of cases amongst older residents of Cambridge City (aged 60+) who are more likely to become seriously ill with the virus, did not rise over this period.

It coincides with a rise in cases diagnosed amongst students, through the Cambridge University asymptomatic and symptomatic testing programmes. In the week from 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November there were a total of 234 cases identified by Cambridge University - 80 through the asymptomatic testing programme, and 154 through the symptomatic testing programme. More detail is available on <https://www.cam.ac.uk/coronavirus/stay-safe-cambridge-uni/data-from-covid-19-testing-service>

Cambridge University works closely with the Local Authority public health team and with Public Health England. All cases have been followed up and provided with advice and, where appropriate support, to self-isolate.

## 2.3 Deaths

Sadly, there have been 424 Covid-19 related deaths in Cambridgeshire in the period from March to 6<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (registered to 14<sup>th</sup> November). There were four Covid-19 related deaths in the week to 6<sup>th</sup> November, three in Fenland and one in South Cambridgeshire. All deaths occurred in hospital.

Week 45 - Covid-19 deaths occurring the week ending 06 November 2020, registered up to 14 November

Area name	Place of death						Total
	Home	Hospital	Care home	Hospice	Other communal establishment	Elsewhere	
Cambridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fenland	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Huntingdonshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Cambridgeshire	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cambridgeshire	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Peterborough	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	0	7	0	0	0	0	7

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

- 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/) and is updated weekly on a Thursday.

## 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 public health led 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 Outbreak Management Team which works closely with the Public Health England Health Protection Team to oversee the management of local clusters and outbreak of Covid-19, through the work of multi-agency 'cells'. These cells are:
- Care Home Cell
  - Education Cell
  - Workplace Cell
  - Vulnerable Populations Cell
  - NHS Healthcare arrangements.

The membership of each Cell includes the agencies relevant 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 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. This oversees delivery and monitoring of the LOCP action plan and milestones. This includes identifying and mitigating risks to delivery of the LOCP.
- 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, had its most recent meeting on November 6<sup>th</sup>. A video of the meeting is available on [link to Local Outbreak Engagement Board](#). This Board meets in public and provides political leadership and communication with local residents for outbreak prevention, early identification and control.
- 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. This includes 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 supporting 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>

#### Areas of focus over the past month

- 3.8 A key focus of the past month has been the development of Covid-19 Local Action Plans by Cambridgeshire's District and City Councils. These are jointly signed off by the District/City Council Chief Executive and the Director of Public Health, and will be at the heart of our local approach to prevention of the spread of Covid-19 and the support of local residents who need to self-isolate. The Plans build on the range of excellent work that has already been carried out at District, City and community level, and they will be monitored through the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Health Protection Board as part of the wider governance of the Local Outbreak Control Plan.

- 3.9 Close working with universities has continued over the past month, with involvement of the Council's public health team in management of cases, clusters and outbreaks at colleges within Cambridge University. An outbreak at Homerton College resulted in isolation of students within an accommodation block, and appropriate isolation arrangements have also been made for clusters or cases within other colleges. Numbers of cases had been falling until the most recent week, and the university's symptomatic and asymptomatic testing programme has enabled early identification of the recent increase in cases, most of whom became infected in the week before lockdown, so that appropriate controls could be put rapidly into place. We are also working with universities to plan for the end of term, including work with Anglia Ruskin University on asymptomatic testing of students using lateral flow tests, before they return home.
- 3.10 There has been a significant workload for both the Education Directorate and the Public Health Directorate working together, to provide advice and support for schools, when they have one or more cases of Covid-19 amongst staff or pupils. These arrangements have been working effectively, with advice and support made available to schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 3.11 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 infection control support and training for Care Homes where required. A letter has been sent to all Care Homes from the Director of Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group Chief Nurse, to thank them for their efforts to support and care for residents during a very challenging time, and to summarise the national guidance received regarding visits to care homes on 5 November.
- 3.12 There has been ongoing joint work with District/City Council Environmental Health Teams on prevention and outbreak management with both workplaces and vulnerable/ socially excluded groups. Workplaces have been encouraged to support their employees to work from home whenever possible.
- 3.13 A range of public health advice was prepared, working closely with the Council's communications team, to encourage safe celebrations at Halloween and for Remembrance Sunday events. This was modified appropriately following the national lock-down.
- 3.14 Public health staff have worked with the Communications Team on a range of other campaigns, and shared the latest Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) evidence base on behavioural change, working with community champions, behaviour change and young people, and on transmission routes with the wider Health Protection Board, to promote the use of this evidence in campaigns and community engagement work.

#### National issues

- 3.15 A new national lockdown was announced on October 31<sup>st</sup> for implementation on November 5<sup>th</sup>. As described earlier there was a significant rise in cases in Cambridgeshire in the week immediately after lockdown, most of whom were infected in the week before lock-down. It is too early to assess the effect of the lockdown on cases going forward. In response to a request from the Local Outbreak Control Board, public health staff have been working with the wider system to develop a strategy and operational plan to ensure that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are in the best possible position for coming out of lockdown, with Covid-

19 case rates reduced. In addition we are working on a communications and engagement strategy for the end of lockdown, to promote enjoying the festive season in ways which are Covid-safe.

- 3.16 Mass-testing pilots using the new lateral flow testing technology were announced nationally, with one element of this being use of lateral flow testing as prioritised by local Directors of Public Health. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough put in an expression of interest, but were not selected for the first wave, which was more focussed on local authorities with high Covid-19 prevalence rates. We continue to develop our local model for use of lateral flow testing, for future implementation, and intend to combine this with a local approach to 'backwards' contact tracing - which aims to identify clusters of community transmission which can then be addressed at source.
- 3.17 The large amount of work being delivered by Local Authorities to control the spread of Covid-19 is being recognised nationally, and all upper tier Local Authorities have been allocated an additional £8 per head through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to last until the end of the 2020/21 financial year. For Cambridgeshire this will be a total of £5,228,296. This will support strengthening the outbreak control functions across County and District/City Councils, enhanced communications and community engagement, support for vulnerable individuals and those needing to self-isolate, and local developments in contact tracing and testing.

#### 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 Following the Government's recovery plans for the UK, it is important to balance the requirements for people to get back to school and work, for communities and services to rebuild and for businesses to reopen, with the ongoing monitoring and control of risks from Covid-19. The work outlined above describes how this is being taken forward in Cambridgeshire.

Source Documents	Location
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>