

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

To: Communities and Partnership Committee

Meeting Date: 3 September 2020

From: Adrian Chapman, Service Director: Communities and Partnerships

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: This Service Director report provides an overview of largely non-COVID19 related strategic activity relevant to this Committee, and seeks to assure Members that the agreed direction of travel for the Committee’s business is progressing at pace.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note and comment on the progress made to date in relation to the various workstreams described in this report;
- b) Endorse the expansion of the Food Poverty outcome for the Think Communities unified approach to include Fuel Poverty; and
- c) Comment on the proposed service delivery areas for the Think Communities unified approach, and to delegate the development and approval of the final working set to the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships, in consultation with the Chairman of the Communities and Partnership Committee.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its August Committee meeting, Members agreed to receive a regular Service Director report, setting out information, opportunities and challenges relating to the cross-cutting work that the Committee and its service directorate has responsibility for.

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 the transformation of our approach to ensuring communities and residents are at the heart of our decision making, service design and delivery. Further, it has the responsibility of 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 draws together a range of different but linked workstreams.

2.2 Think Communities

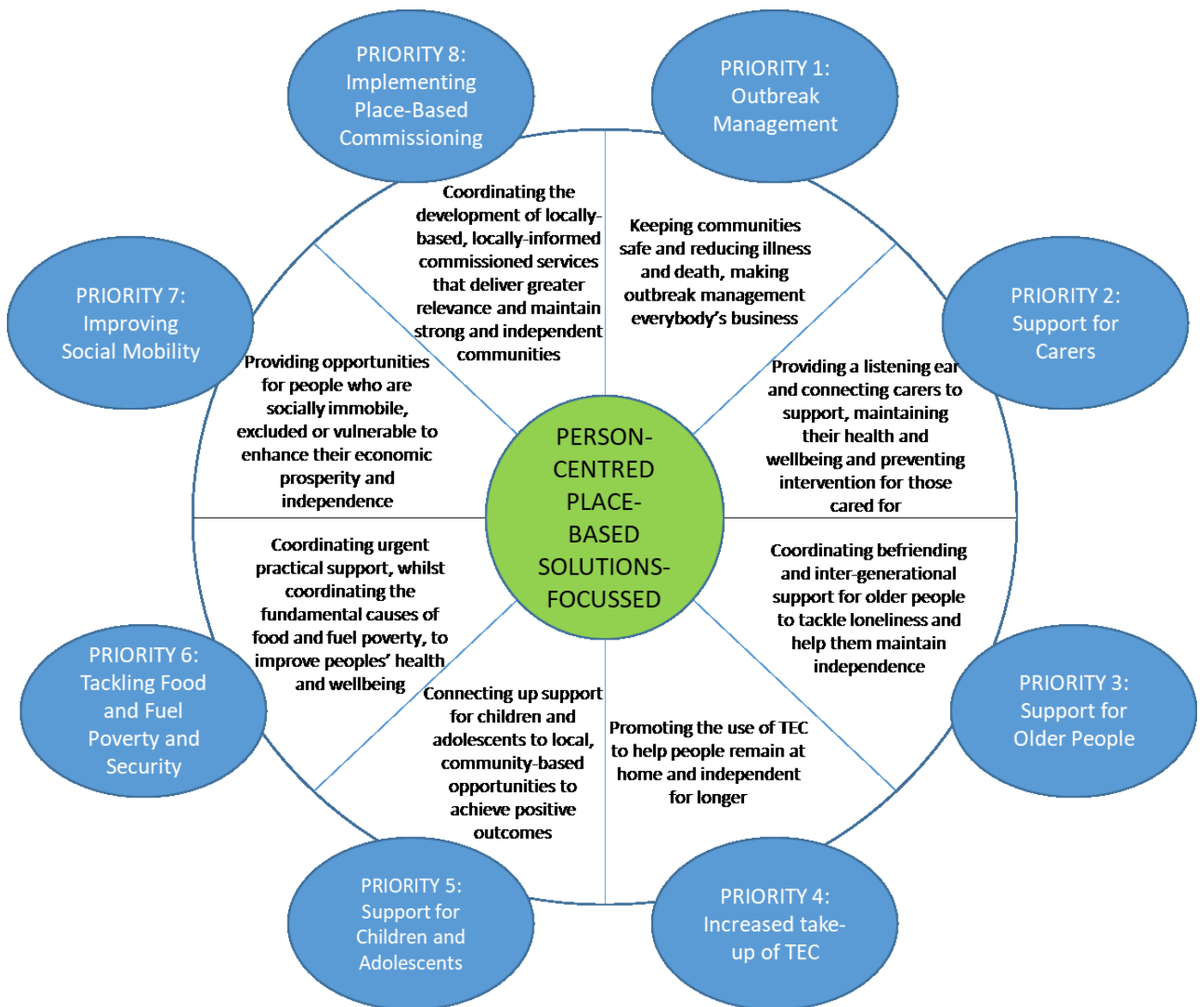
- 2.2.1 The August Service Director report set out the progress being made to mobilise the Think Communities unified approach. It described an initial set of eight priorities for the work to focus on and positively impact, specifically:

- Supporting the COVID-19 Outbreak Control process
- Support for carers
- Support for older people
- Increasing the take-up of Technology Enabled Care (TEC)
- Support for Children and Adolescents (including care leavers, young people not in education, employment or training, and young carers)
- Tackling food poverty and security
- Improving social mobility
- Implementing place-based commissioning

Further work has been carried out to expand on these priorities to ensure that they are positioned to achieve positive outcomes, and it is proposed that the priority focus on food poverty is expanded to also include fuel poverty. A household is considered in fuel poverty if they have fuel costs above the average and, if they were to spend that amount, they would be left with residual income below the official poverty line. Committee is asked to endorse the expansion of this priority as described.

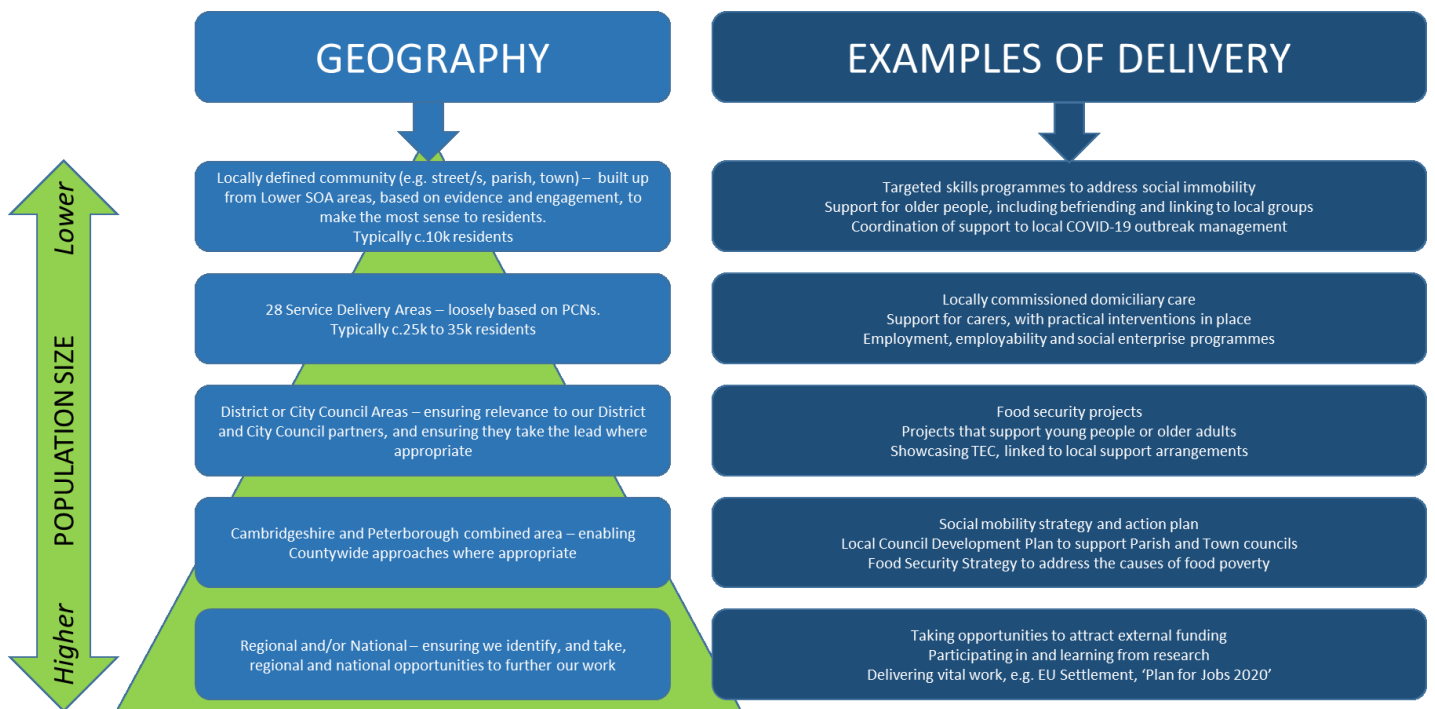
- 2.2.2 The details behind the approach we are taking has continued to be shared across our organisation, and we now need to expand the list of priority areas of focus described at section 2.2.1 to include relevant priorities of other Committees and directorates – for example, priorities linked to climate change, economic renewal or public health. Directors have agreed to consider this and discuss with their Committees so that we can further develop the Think Communities work plan.

- 2.2.3 As described above, further work has been carried out to provide detail behind each of the initial eight priorities. The diagram below provides a summary of the primary outcomes to be achieved for each of the priorities.



This high-level work has been further developed, to describe the rationale, methodology, intended outcomes and further motivations for each priority, and this work is set out in **Appendix 1**. Committee is asked to comment on this more detailed work in particular.

2.2.4 In addition to developing the priorities, work has also continued to define the place-based aspects of the Think Communities unified approach. In the August committee report, we described the different ways that services would need to respond to needs, demand and opportunities within communities of differing sizes dependent on the nature of those issues. Again, further work has been completed on this in order to secure agreement on a final opening set of geographically-based service delivery areas. The diagram below summarises this work:



The diagram sets out to show how the Think Communities unified approach will need to be flexible and adaptable, and work within the most appropriate geographical boundaries that make sense to our residents based on the issues being addressed. Some situations may require a focus on a street or number of streets, others may require a whole parish or town approach, and others may work best at a district or countywide level. However, defining these boundaries are important in order that we can ensure we bring together all of the resource and capacity relevant to an area, and that our key partners know who to work alongside.

2.2.5 Most of the boundaries described in the diagram above are fixed – e.g. Lower Super Output Areas, district council, Cambridgeshire – but there is likely to be a need to operate, in some circumstances, within a more flexible boundary that makes more sense to our residents or that aligns better to the way our partners are organised. For this reason, we have drafted proposals to cluster parishes together into 28 service delivery areas across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. A similar exercise will need to be done for non-parished areas. These informal areas will enable the organisation of services to be better managed, and will provide a population size that falls between single parish and whole district. From the list of proposed clusters, those relevant to Cambridgeshire are set out in **Appendix 2**, and Members are asked to comment on them (n.b. the reference numbers used to describe each service delivery area random and do not signal a prioritisation sequence). It is intended that these areas are finalised by the end of September in order not to delay the delivery of our work, and so Committee is also asked to agree the delegation of the production of the final working set, based on feedback from Committee, to the Service Director in consultation with the Chairman. It is worth noting that these areas will need to remain flexible and subject to change as our county and our communities change.

2.2.6 Finally, further work has been carried out to define the role of the pilot Community Outreach Vehicle, as previously discussed at Committee. The vehicle will support the delivery of our Think Communities unified approach at the most local level, targeting work in isolated

communities or communities with specific issues and challenges where targeted interventions are likely to help.

- 2.2.7 Through the work in the COVID-19 Co-ordination Hub we have been in contact with thousands of people who were shielding or vulnerable in other ways. Through analysing the data we found that those who are financially stretched were over-represented on the NHS shielding lists and that there were over 2,700 households in which residents were not known to council services and not accessing any support. Many of these were found to be physically isolated due to living in rural areas and/or socially isolated through lack of engagement with the local community or a lack of local provision.
- 2.2.8 The Community Outreach Vehicle will supplement fixed, place-based county council and broader service delivery with a more flexible, agile and adaptable street-level model. It will provide preventative support by offering residents and communities the opportunities they need to help themselves and each other earlier than they are currently able. The vehicle will also create opportunities to meaningfully engage residents in long-term discussions to develop resilience in their local community and as such will further enable delivery against the Think Communities priority areas.
- 2.2.9 In its immediate iteration the Community Outreach Vehicle will focus on responding to the most pressing needs emerging as a result of COVID-19, including responding to local public health surveillance data to enable the vehicle to give a physical presence to raise awareness of social distancing measures as well as support local outbreak management. Beyond that, the space will be used to offer information and advice and skills development opportunities (digital and taught), promote public health programmes, tackle digital exclusion and increase confidence in using digital tools, demonstrate and support TEC products, deliver drug and alcohol, mental health and other wellbeing-related services, and provide opportunities for social interaction, performance, arts and culture in places where there is a deficit
- 2.2.10 It is intended that the pilot Community Outreach Vehicle will be a converted mobile library vehicle. There are currently two mobile libraries due to be decommissioned in September 2020. In making best use of existing council assets, this vehicle will be refitted inside to create a flexible working space, complete with an awning for external use. The vehicle will be operated by the Think Communities staff team and will be focused towards areas where isolation and deprivation mean less take up of support services or opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and economic independence.
- 2.2.11 Both the work of Think Communities and the Community Outreach Vehicle will require investment that is not yet in place. Resourcing is currently being explored by officers and if necessary will be included as part of the 2021/22 Business Planning process.

2.3 Local Councils Strategic Partnership

- 2.3.1 The Local Councils Strategic Partnership, comprising the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils (CAPALC), Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England), and the County Council, has continued to develop its collaborative approach.
- 2.3.2 Significant planning is underway for the annual Local Councils Conference, which this year

will be a fully digital event. Taking place on 23 October, the event has an almost unlimited number of potential attendees, and will comprise a series of keynote presentations, case studies showing the hugely significant role that parish and town councils have played over the past year, a panel discussion, and breakout workshops. The event will also include our traditional marketplace where delegates can speak with, and pick up information from, individual organisations. All of this will be facilitated on a professional digital event platform, and will remain available to view for 30 days after the event itself.

- 2.3.3 Partnership discussions have also focussed on the role that both CAPALC and ACRE can play in supporting parish and town councils to contribute to the Think Communities unified approach, and more immediately, the continued efforts to fight the pandemic. We recognise that local council leadership is not homogenous and whilst some local councils have successfully developed their own crisis response programme, others have not. Research and learning over the last months has helped identify the elements required to support rural communities to be active and resilient in times of crisis and to understand if and how those elements can be transplanted into those communities that have perhaps struggled.
- 2.3.4 We wish to build on this learning to deliver the next phase of support to local councils and rural communities. Those parishes that are willing would start to develop Emergency Plans that prepare them for both COVID-related responses but also to deal with any future pressures that communities may face. The plans would be enabled through a digital toolkit with templates to follow, as well as online training sessions to aid development. Support would be provided through videoconferencing to help plans progress over time and to enable the sharing of experiences between local council areas, the County Council, and other partners.
- 2.3.5 Those parishes that are not able to immediately develop a plan would still be encouraged to join networking opportunities and training sessions to start to build elements of a plan which would be equally as valid in supporting their community through the further phases of COVID-19 crisis and beyond.
- 2.3.6 Finally, the Partnership has discussed the theme of the Green Recovery – ways in which our recovery from the pandemic and its impacts can be advanced through the green agenda. The Green Recovery is linked to the Natural Cambridgeshire’s Doubling Nature Strategy, of which the council is a partner, and the ‘Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment’, which sets out what we will do to improve the environment, within a generation. A model Parish Nature Recovery Plan has been reviewed, and we will be working with partners and internal colleagues to ensure that other areas are aware of this approach and the potential for attracting external investment into their areas that plans such as this may unlock.
- 2.3.7 Finally, we will be working together to develop the next Local Council Development Strategy, with a review of the existing strategy underway. We will be working with our partners as well as consulting widely to refresh the strategy next year, once we fully understand the needs of Local Councils and their leadership role in community recovery. The new proposed strategy will come through the Committee process during consultation and in its final form.

2.4 Improving Social Mobility

2.4.1 We reported in the August Committee meeting that the Improving Social Mobility cross-party working group had met to expedite its work. The working group meets again just after publication of this report, and so a verbal update on progress will be provided to the Committee when it meets on 3 September.

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. The food security project in particular, set out in this report, is especially focussed on achieving a sustainable and local food supply network.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Any purchases to support this project 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

There are no significant implications within this category.

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 Directorate to health and wellbeing. It acknowledges that key to Public Health is the improvement of health and wellbeing which needs action across many determinants.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of 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 Officer: Amy Brown
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: Sarah Silk

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

Source Documents	Location
None	N/A