

## **SERVICE HIGHLIGHT REPORT – COVID-19 AND KEY SERVICE UPDATES**

<b>SERVICE AREAS:</b>	Place & Economy
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<b>REPORTING PERIOD:</b>	January 2021
<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council

### **Part 1 - COVID-19**

#### **NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT**

- New DfT sign diagrams released for directions to Vaccination Centres - colleagues have bulk ordered to ensure we can respond quickly.
- The government updated the relevant guidance for the HRC, 'Managing Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) in England during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic' on 14th December – no changes have been required as a result and the HRCs across CCC and PCC continue to operate well.
- Waste Industry Safety and Health forum (WISH) 'Covid-19 and Waste Management Activities' guidance was reissued (Version 9) on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, however nothing substantive is contained within it to necessitate service alterations.
- In PCC, following the recent government lockdown announcement, closed outdoor sports including football and tennis and outdoor gyms were closed swiftly as per guidance.
- Covid related planning permitted development rights have been variously extended (temporary health uses, takeaways as existing food outlets, hold of markets by / for the council, temporary use for any purpose).
- BEIS have confirmed (11/1/21) that the construction sector should continue under the current lockdown conditions provided it is safe to do so.

#### **NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY**

- Highway teams have provided signage and traffic management for a large number of vaccination centres, ensuring directions are in place before they open and are in close contact with health colleagues to add more as needed. A really good working relationship on this has been established with health colleagues and individual practices.
- In PCC, planning and building control guidance has been provided to Covid vaccination sites and specifically for sites such as Thistlemoor Surgery Lincoln Rd and Napier Place Orton Wistow, to allow swift opening of the centres.
- Continuing recovery in the housing market is placing high demands upon the Searches and Development management teams across CCC and PCC. The level of demand is anticipated to further increase as the end of the Stamp Duty relaxation approaches.
- Aragon Direct Services (ADS) saw an increase in COVID related absence which had a significant impact on the Waste and Recycling crews, with several crews absent they have prioritised the collection of residual waste. Recycling is being delayed but is being collected as soon as possible with teams working weekends and rest days to bring the service back to normal swiftly.
- The restart of the full Garden Waste service in Peterborough is scheduled for 26th of January in the anticipation that staff levels will have returned to normal by then.
- A list of key front line workers has been drawn up in line with guidance to receive vaccinations should they become available. This is to ensure that as soon as possible, workers providing essential services in P and E can be vaccinated to protect those services.
- Risk Assessments are being reviewed in respect of site visits and office access to ensure safety and reduce virus transmission rates.
- Bus patronage is down to around 70% of the same point the previous year.
- Traffic flows are around 60% of normal for this time of year, higher than Lockdown number 1

#### **RECOVERY ACTIVITIES**

- In Cambridge parking enforcement activity is continuing during lockdown to ensure traffic can continue to flow effectively to assist in Covid response and recovery activity.

- Essential site visits are continuing with social distance guidelines to ensure continuity of service.
- A further increase of capacity to the Cambridgeshire HRCs that use a booking system for all users was successfully implemented in January
- Signage to remind of the need for social distancing is being renewed in some areas.
- All highway works are continuing to operate as normal and changed working practices have been introduced where needed to help with this.

#### **DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD**

- The restart of the full Garden Waste Collection service in Peterborough is now due on 26<sup>th</sup> of January.
- Bulky waste collections in Peterborough have been temporarily suspend due to COVID related absence.
- Dodson House closed the week before Christmas due to Peterborough entering tier 4. There is a need for some staff to have limited access so this is being put back in place. Access will be for short time periods e.g. 30 minutes – 2 hours and no one will be working there for the whole day. It is emphasised with staff that the building is only to be used when absolutely necessary.
- All but essential site visits will be stopped to protect staff and services.
- Rough sleepers were successfully moved from the Queensgate Hotel to the Park Inn in Peterborough just before Christmas.

#### **NEW COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD**

- In Cambridgeshire bus lane income is steady still but will be impacted by third lock down.
- Parking income across the area is still under achieving and will do further as third lockdown impacts.
- There will be an impact on income from chargeable site visits and other services for Q4.

#### **WORKFORCE CHALLENGES**

- There continue to be challenges for staff working from home and feeling isolation and lack of contact with colleagues. A range of flexibilities have been introduced to assist with this and other resources are available to managers to assist staff including mental health awareness training.
- With the closure of schools, home schooling responsibilities for parents whilst also delivering work programmes is proving difficult. Managers are working with staff on this and offering flexible arrangements such as purchasing annual leave and agreeing deliverable work outcomes to ensure colleagues can strike the right balance between home and work
- There have been significant absence in the ADS Waste and Recycling team in Peterborough due to COVID related absence but this is now recovering.
- To deal with the backlog of planning applications awaiting validation in Peterborough, officers are working overtime and this has already halved the backlog of cases. There will, however, then be a bulge of cases for the development management officers that will need addressing.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

- The VMS signs across the area have been set to the Covid lockdown travel message – essential travel only

#### **Part 2 – BUSINESS AS USUAL ACTIVITY**

##### **KEY SERVICE UPDATES – INTERNAL / EXTERNAL**

<b>CCC</b>	<b>PCC</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is to commence on site at the Robin Hood junction in Cambridge on 18<sup>th</sup> January for new signals and pedestrian/cycle facilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work continues on the A605 Whittlesey Road junction improvements.</li> <li>• The Strategic Outline Business Case for the A16 Norwood has been approved by the Combined Authority and funding</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highway works are continuing as normal with changed working practices where needed.</li> <li>Over Christmas and New Year, we deployed traffic marshals to Witchford, Milton, Bluntisham, Alconbury, Thriplow and St Neots HRCs to manage the increased demand at these sites. In addition, we saw increased queuing at March HRC. However activity levels have returned to near normal and traffic marshals have been taken off.</li> <li>A Deed of Variation with Amey has been agreed that will make significant savings for CCC on the waste contract.</li> <li>Officers are working with district councils, Internal Drainage Boards, Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Highways England and local communities to fully map and assess the cause, scope and impact of the Christmas floods, and to determine what lessons we can all take on board. To date, we have over 400 separate flooding reports logged, mainly from Huntingdonshire but also large numbers from Fenland (especially March) and parts of South and East Cambridgeshire..</li> <li>CCC has called a special meeting of the Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Flood and Water partnership in February to review the evidence. We are also looking into the benefits of local initiatives such as community led flood groups to help manage future events.</li> <li>Work will start shortly on the A10 Lancaster Way roundabout following the early and under budget delivery of the BP roundabout scheme on the A10.</li> <li>The Council is lobbying DfT on Streetworks permit fees to increase the ceiling to enable higher fees to be charged to reflect true costs</li> <li>The first two LHI working groups were held in December and the remainder will follow in January.</li> <li>LHI delivery for 20/21 is going as planned despite the Covid restrictions and the team are aiming to complete most of the 20/21 schemes in year.</li> <li>Consultant resource has been secured for the Active Travel Fund tranche 2 and so work is now underway on a range of schemes. Some of the tranche 1 schemes will be considered for either permanent introduction or withdrawal by Highways and Transport Committee and the GCP over the next three months.</li> <li>The £24m investment into the construction of the 29.6MW North Angle Solar Farm was approved at C+I Committee in December</li> </ul>	<p>confirmed to develop the Outline Business Case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active Travel schemes introduced as part of tranche one of the Emergency Active Travel Grant have now been removed in Priestgate, City Rd and New Rd. The Crescent Bridge scheme remains in place and options for retaining this over the next few months are being considered. Options for tranche two are being discussed at the Cross-Party meeting on 14th January.</li> <li>At 62-68 Bridge Street, the purchase was completed on the 15<sup>th</sup> December for the Vine Project. TK Maxx are currently occupying units 64-68 until 3<sup>rd</sup> March and unit 62 is empty (previous New Look).</li> <li>The Heads of Terms for the Towns Fund have been signed by Peterborough and is now awaiting signature from MHCLG. Projects and funding profile to be confirmed by the Board at the end of January. PCC in discussion to secure the first financial drawdown from MHCLG in the country.</li> <li>The Fengate HRC was very busy between Christmas and New Year however user numbers have now reduced to a more manageable level. The situation will be kept under review.</li> <li>Streetlights continue to be dimmed by 40% across the network. A proposal for minimum lighting levels is being developed for implementation when traffic levels increase.</li> <li>Legal agreements were all agreed just before Christmas for the University of Peterborough project and construction of Phase 1 is underway. Planning submission for Phase 2 is expected this quarter.</li> <li>Two new Assistant Director appointments made in P&amp;E. Michael Kelleher as AD Housing (start date 1 Feb), and Emma Gee as AD Growth and Regeneration (start date TBC).</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A £635,000 Development budget was approved in December by C+I Committee for the new project 'Fordham Renewable Energy Network Development Project'</li> </ul>	
<b>FINANCIAL ISSUES</b>	
<b>CCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future levels of capital funding for highways maintenance from DfT is still awaited. Teams, however, are working with finance colleagues to ensure budget build can take place, and any amendment to figures will be made when the final settlement is received.</li> </ul>	<b>PCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued high waste volumes will put pressure on treatment budgets this financial year.</li> <li>Future levels of capital funding for highways maintenance from DfT is still awaited. Teams, however, are working with finance colleagues to ensure budget build can take place, and any amendment to figures will be made when the final settlement is received.</li> </ul>
<b>PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES AND CHALLENGES</b>	
<b>CCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Quarterly Monitoring Report for energy programmes delayed and will be circulated January 2021.</li> <li>Highways performance and the winter gritting service remain good and many incidents were responded to during the current flooding incidents.</li> </ul>	<b>PCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highways performance remains good and Skanska are largely hitting their normal contract KPI's.</li> <li>Incoming service requests for planning enforcement continue to be high .</li> <li>Development Management continues to meet Government set performance targets</li> </ul>
<b>UPCOMING ISSUES &amp; HORIZON SCANNING AREAS</b>	
<b>CCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service providers are starting to furlough staff under the new lockdown rules. Resources will be regularly monitored with the service providers to mitigate impacting service delivery.</li> <li>Officers are working with Skanska on the transfer of their highways business to M Group. This is set for 1<sup>st</sup> April.</li> <li>Passenger Transport Powers are due to be retained by the CPCPA from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Officers from both authorities are working closely with the CPCPA to ensure a smooth transition.</li> <li>The Energy White Paper was published in December 2020</li> <li>New committee template including Climate Change and Environment implications approved with staged implementation, starting with key decisions for committees initially to test the template</li> </ul>	<b>PCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers continue to work with Skanska to ensure a smooth transfer of the business on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The volume of work involved in the change may be substantial but will become clearer as meetings progress.</li> <li>Passenger Transport Powers are due to be retained by the CPCPA from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Officers from both authorities are working closely with the CPCPA to ensure a smooth transition.</li> <li>Legislation due to come into force in April requiring residential properties gaining consent through the permitted development regime to meet as a minimum the nationally prescribed space standards</li> </ul>
<b>POSITIVE NEWS STORIES</b>	
<b>CCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of the BP roundabout scheme on time and under budget and the imminent commencement of the Lancaster Way roundabout scheme.</li> <li>The work that is being done to support the vaccination centres</li> </ul>	<b>PCC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The work that is being done to support the vaccination centres.</li> <li>Planning permission recently granted for 100 homes, 127K sq m of employment floorspace, new special school at Helwaite</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• £2.5m Public Sector Decarbonisation Funding secured for low carbon heating programme for 15 CCC buildings</li><li>• LGA Low Carbon procurement project starts Jan 2021</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Planning approval and start on site for Phase 1 of the University,</li><li>• Next Steps Accommodation Funding secured to support provision and support for homeless and rough sleepers in Peterborough.</li></ul>

