

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

**To:** General Purposes Committee

**Meeting Date:** 14th July 2020

**From:** Chief Executive and Joint Management Team

**Electoral division(s):** All

**Forward Plan ref:** Not applicable      **Key Decision:** No

**Outcome:** The Council's response to COVID-19 and our strategies for county-wide recovery will have a significant impact on outcomes for individuals and communities.

This report provides an update on the Council's ongoing response to the current Coronavirus pandemic.

**Recommendation:** General Purposes Committee is asked to note the progress made to date in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus.

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Across Cambridgeshire people have pulled together to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and the Council has played a key role in protecting and supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities. The Council remains committed to doing everything it can to reduce the risk of a second peak of infections and to supporting Cambridgeshire to recover from this unprecedented emergency. This report provides an update on the Council's ongoing response to the pandemic.
- 1.2 The most recent data indicates that Cambridgeshire has had 2193 COVID-19 cases and overall has a significantly lower rate than the England rate (333.6 cases per 100,000 compared to 439.1 per 100,000). Cases of COVID-19 have declined rapidly since the peak in April. Death rates that account for the differences in the age structure of our underlying populations show that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have significantly lower COVID-19 death rates than England and significantly lower or similar all cause death rates. The most recent weekly data indicates a declining number of COVID-19 deaths across Cambridgeshire: [Coronavirus Data](#)
- 1.3 The Council's Health Committee has the delegated authority to exercise the County Council's functions in respect of public health and monitors the public health COVID-19 intelligence and response in detail. More detailed public health information can be found in Health Committee reports at this link: [Health Committee meeting papers.](#)

## 2. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN

- 2.1 The Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP) was published on the Cambridgeshire County Council website on 30th June: [LOCP](#) and covers the following seven workstreams:
  - Surveillance - daily review of local COVID-19 epidemiology and trends, using national, regional and local sources of data.
  - Testing arrangements and capacity
  - Outbreak management plans for complex settings (including care homes, schools, healthcare settings, workplaces, vulnerable groups)
  - Additional support for more vulnerable people advised to self-isolate as cases or close contacts under 'test and trace' and local community response plans
  - Identifying the new workforce required, including for local contact tracing, and the training requirements for existing staff or volunteers. The District/City Council Environmental Health Officer workforce and support staff will form an important part of this plan, and we are working closely with them.
  - Communications
  - Governance - including the officer led multi-agency Health Protection Board and Member led Local Outbreak Engagement Board.

## 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The latest estimate of the financial consequences of the pandemic is included within the Integrated Financial Monitoring Report (IMFR) presented to this Committee, and summarised on page 25 of the agenda papers. The estimated deficit compared to funding for the costs of the emergency and recovery is £12.7m. This does not include the latest funding announced (£500m nationally + some support for lost Sales, Fees and Charges) where, as at the date of publication of this supplement, the local allocations are not yet known. The IFMR sets out in

more detail that many of the cost consequences still lay ahead and remain uncertain, especially those in relation to Adults and Children’s Services where developments to date may be leading to significantly increased costs in future. The consequences log now also includes the impact (and ring-fenced funding) of the deployable infection control grant and track and trace funding. Individual service committees have received or considered an account of the departmental impact of the pandemic, given the diverse range of consequences across the Council

- 3.2 The COVID-19 crisis has had a significant impact on the Council's current Business Plan. Alongside the work to understand and assess the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council in the current financial year, the development of the 21/22 Business Plan and medium term financial strategy is underway.
- 3.3 In order to enable the Council to make strategic decisions about resources in view of the ongoing uncertainty caused by COVID-19, a number of scenarios have been modelled which project possible levels of disruption as a result of the crisis in order to enable the consideration of both immediate demands and longer term challenges in financial planning. Work is underway to assess the impact of each scenario on current and future services and budgets. Amongst the most significant uncertainties facing the Council is the impact on local taxation growth and collection rates. From this scenarios approach, as well as detailed and systematic consideration by directorates of recovery planning, proposals will come forward to manage and mitigate the financial risk to the Council, and areas of increased risk or opportunity for positive investment.

#### 4. RECOVERY

- 4.1 Our recovery work across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is underway with all Directorates completing and returning response, recovery and redesign templates for coordination through the Joint Strategic Recovery Board.
- 4.2 The first Recovery Board met on 10th June where they looked at the Care Home Resilience and Recovery Strategy, the next board on 14th July will be doing a 'deep dive' into Think Communities recovery and redesign as well as understanding how the behaviour change of staff and citizens will help us design how we could work and use our assets more effectively as restrictions continue to be eased. Forward agenda items include our economic and environmental recovery and redesign.
- 4.3 A cross council group is coordinating ‘return to workplace’ activity to ensure that teams continue to be supported to work safely and effectively. Requests are being reviewed for those services who wish to return to office space, or reopen premises. Work is ongoing to develop appropriate policies and procedures to manage safe returns in line with central guidance.

4.4 One of the six steps in our recovery framework is **learning** and it is important that we capture and build on the learning and adaptation that takes place during the response and recovery stages –locally, nationally and globally. This continuous review of ideas, thinking and learning enables the development of evidence based insights that can be used by the organisation to inform recovery and redesign work.



4.5 Learning is being captured in Directorate Management Teams, in all programme boards and by a corporate working group. The corporate group draws not only on Cambridgeshire County Council's experiences during the response phase but is also responsible for collecting and collating responses to COVID-19 from a range of local, national and international sources. To date, sources have included communities and individuals, think tanks, private and public sector organisations, charities, government, Public Health England and a range of media.

4.6 A framework of real time learning principles has been constructed to build on the Council's culture of continuous learning with principles based on values from Emergent Learning concepts: Real Time, Networked, Evolving and Self-Reflective.

4.7 Work so far includes:

- Collating internal real time learning via directorate highlight reports, recovery index submissions and transformation programmes.
- Tracking research and insights from relevant think tanks and organisations
- Identifying peer learning opportunities through monitoring response, recovery and redesign work undertaken by other local authorities.
- Facilitating learning sessions with members of our workforce who are working in the County Co-ordination Hub.
- Identifying service specific challenges and opportunities, undertaking relevant research and providing evidence based insights to support the business planning process.
- Identifying cross services opportunities and challenges grouped around the six Strategic Recovery themes and developing evidence based insights to inform recovery and redesign.

Outcomes are the development of evidence based insights to inform the recovery and redesign process and promoting collective intelligence through organisation wide practice of identifying, sharing and discussing learning.

## **5. WORKFORCE**

5.1 A Staff Survey was issued on 21st May focused on questions around the experience of working during the COVID pandemic, with some key themes around support and wellbeing, communication, working from home, and how people felt about returning to the workplace.

- 2,378 completed questionnaires (1717 for CCC and 661 for PCC) with over 11,000 free text answers including useful suggestions and feedback.
- The responses demonstrated a good level of confidence in the leadership team throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- There was an overwhelmingly positive response to home working for at least some of the time, and having the opportunity to work in a more flexible way.
- Some concerns were raised regarding returning to workplace including factors such as the proximity of desks; hot desking; colleagues being respectful of social distancing requirements.
- An action plan was agreed by JMT and published on 18th June, taking into account the key themes noted from the survey and this will be updated regularly and monitored by JMT.

- 5.2 Hints and tips on a variety of wellbeing subjects have been included in every staff bulletin, initially daily and now three times per week. These cover topics ranging from how to set up a workstation at home to where to find support for financial matters, and dealing with anxiety. The Council's Health and Wellbeing Portal has been updated and now hosts all of this information in one place for ease of access: [Health and Wellbeing](#)
- 5.3 Online mental health training is being rolled out which is being delivered by an external provider and is open to all staff. It is based on a two hour webinar session that has been really well received by all those who have taken part so far. Five sessions per month are being rolled out and these have been well attended. Two sessions will be designed to be specifically delivered for Members in the autumn.
- 5.4 An E-Learning package addressing remote working and managing remote teams has been rolled out to guide people through the different tools and skills required to manage in such a different way.
- 5.5 At the start of the pandemic 370 staff from departments across CCC and PCC that were not operating full business as usual services were deployed into the Community Hub to help with the emergency response. 230 of those people are still supporting that activity for some of their time and a proportion are continuing to do so full time where they are in a vulnerable category and not able to carry out their usual work from home.
- 5.6 The Health & Safety and Property teams have worked together to carry out Risk Assessments of the current building portfolio with particular priority being occupied premises. In addition to this an individual risk assessment process has been established to support members of staff who fall into one of the vulnerable or higher risk categories including BAME groups.
- 5.7 A brief E-Learning module is currently being developed ready for roll out in the next couple of weeks to cover important aspects of health and safety for those currently working in the council offices or likely to be returning to work over the coming weeks and months. This will set out clearly what the expectations are for people around their safety and that of others and also seek to address any anxieties that people may have by showing pictures of what the workplace will look like.
- 5.8 Throughout the COVID period weekly briefing meetings have been in operation with the three recognised trade unions across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. These meetings have provided an opportunity for engaging trade union colleagues on all aspects of the Council's response to the COVID crisis that have a people related connection, including key matters such as the risk assessment process for buildings and individuals and also the guidance for staff on returning to work.

## **6. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 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.

<b>Implications</b>	<b>Officer Clearance</b>
<b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Tom Kelly
<b>Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?</b>	N/A
<b>Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by the Council's Monitoring Officer or LGSS Law?</b>	Yes Fiona McMillan
<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Amanda Askham
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Christine Birchall
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Amanda Askham
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Liz Robin

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Service highlight reports for all Directorates sent to Members weekly.	<a href="#">Highlight Reports</a>