

SERVICE HIGHLIGHT REPORT – COVID-19 AND KEY SERVICE UPDATES

SERVICE AREAS:	Communities and Partnerships Service Directorate
REPORT AUTHOR:	Adrian Chapman
REPORTING PERIOD:	December 2020
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Part 1 - COVID-19

NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

THINK COMMUNITIES

Impact for Community Centres (Peterborough)

Under the Tier 4 “Stay at Home” guidance, community centres and halls must close except for a limited number of exempt activities:

- education and training - for schools to use sports, leisure and community facilities where that is part of their normal provision
- childcare purposes and supervised activities for children
- hosting blood donation sessions and food banks
- to provide medical treatment
- for elite sports persons to train and compete (in indoor and outdoor sports facilities), and professional dancers and choreographers to work (in fitness and dance studios)
- for training and rehearsal without an audience (in theatres and concert halls)
- for the purposes of film and TV filming

As a result, the majority of community centres in Peterborough are closed including our own assets including Gladstone Park Community Centre.

REGULATORY SERVICES

- The Safety Advisory Group has approved up to 2,000 spectators at Peterborough United Football Club. The first match took place on 8 December with 750 spectators attending. The ground had over 70 stewards, plus control room staff and Safety Officers. Council officers attended and observed the measures in place, noting that there was no crowding or grouping at turnstiles, social distancing rules were observed, and a Covid-safe seating plan was in place, among other measures and messaging throughout the grounds.
- Cambridge United also had a small crowd for the EFL trophy on the same day. Officers did not attend but have since spoken to the Safety officer, who stated that they had followed the advice given ahead of the match which went ahead without issue.
- The next match at Peterborough United will now be held ‘behind closed doors’.
- The first racing day at Huntingdon Racecourse was 22nd December, racing having only taken place ‘behind closed doors’ to date. 426 people attended the event including owners. Our staff were in attendance to ensure COVID-compliance. Escalation to tier 4 will now mean a halt to racing with the public in attendance.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- The Rapid Response team in Peterborough is supporting increased restrictions across the city. This has seen a review and cancellation of many Christmas events such as the opening of Flag Fen and City Centre Markets. We have geared our workforce to support this over the coming weeks and have developed a ‘Tier 4’ plan to map and track activity across the system. This plan has been shared with District Council colleagues across Cambridgeshire to support their work where helpful.

CULTURE AND LEISURE (PETERBOROUGH)

- Vivacity Premier Fitness, Regional Pool and Athletics Track, and Jack Hunt Pool reopened on 3 December, but had to close again from 20 December due to tier 4 restrictions.
- Community Leisure Centres, Hampton Leisure, Bushfield, and Werrington remain closed through November and December; our plan was to reopen these sites in the first week of January but this will now be tier-dependent.

- All grass roots sports activity has now stopped for children and adults – no physical activity is taking place until further notice from Sport England and the relevant sports' governing bodies.
- Recreational sport, such as Table Tennis and Tennis in Parks, has also stopped.
- Sport England are working on a £100m support fund for public leisure centres and gyms – the details of the scheme were released on 16 December with a closing date for applications of 8 January. We will be submitting an applications to cover the period from December to March.
- At the Key Theatre, lockdown through the month of November led to the suspension of programming. All companies were contacted to move as much of the programme into December, however we were not always successful in doing this. The lockdown and continued restrictions have placed great financial pressures for visiting companies, compounded by reduced capacities, but also interruptions in production schedules.
- Peterborough Museum reopened on the 4 December but has since closed because of the tier 4 restrictions.
- Bretton, Orton, Werrington and Hampton Libraries reopened from 2 December. Additionally, Dogsthorpe and Eye Libraries reopened for the first time since March, as did the Archives Service. However, all but a restricted service at Central Library have now closed again.

CITY COLLEGE PETERBOROUGH

- When the national Lockdown was implemented in November to run until 2 December, we reviewed the guidance relating to staff and learners and implemented changes in staff bubbles to reduce the number of staff onsite at our Brook Street site to maintain our education services while minimising contact. The majority of courses for adults aged 19+ were moved back online while Day Opportunities and Study Programmes continued as before in line with the guidance.
- We have taken the decision to return in January with staff in bubbles as during the second lockdown and to keep the majority of 19+ courses online until at least the end of January and depending on any new local restrictions and government guidance.
- Following on from DFE guidance issued on 17 December, Study programmes will have a staggered start to the January term with EHCP and vulnerable learners returning on the 4 January and all other learners returning on 11 January.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LIBRARIES

- Whilst Cambridgeshire was in tier 2, the service offered managed browsing and events. However, the implementation of Tier 4 measures has resulted in a reversion to click and collect and managed access to ICT only.

NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

COUNTYWIDE COVID-19 COORDINATION HUB

Winter Support Grant

- This month saw the launch of the Winter Support Grant which has been modelled and is being delivered in close partnership with the Education service directorate. 64,572 meal vouchers were issued to families across Cambridgeshire (20,102 students) and Peterborough (12,184) prior to Christmas.
- Additionally, the Hub had received over 3,200 applications for additional support; all applicants have been contacted, and emergency support with food and fuel vouchers, and other forms of support, were made before Christmas where the need is immediate. Many others will be supported in the New Year with more holistic and longer-term support. Over 500 emergency fuel vouchers have been provided and over 190 families signposted to their local libraries where we had provided basic hygiene supplies. Separately, district and city council colleagues have supported by providing over 250 families with emergency access to food, either through local food banks or food vouchers.
- The hub team has also responded to over 3,500 emails supporting residents and schools.
- Many families are newly facing hardship, their financial situation having changed as a result of COVID and them not knowing what support is available in their community; the approach we have developed uses all of the principles of Think Communities which means we are able to provide far broader support and connectivity other than just voucher support alone.

- Looking ahead, partners from across the system will come together in the New Year to capture learning from the first phase of the scheme but also consider how best to support these families moving forward

Countywide Hub

- In addition to the Winter Support Grant, the Countywide hub has continued to support with self-isolation e.g. for those facing financial hardship as a consequence of self-isolating. This has often been as a result of children being sent home from school and parents being unable to work due to childcare challenges.
- The hub has so far supported 14 people with accessing transport to attend their vaccination appointments, and this offer will be scaled-up in the New Year as we see an increased roll-out of vaccinations.
- The announcement that all of our area has moved to Tier 4 means that Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people will need to be advised to take special care, and for the Hub network to provide practical support where necessary. All CEV residents have been contacted, and we will remain in regular contact throughout this period.

Peterborough Hub and Rapid Response

- 194 contacts were received in November, a significant rise compared to the 96 contacts in October with this trend continuing in to December with 63 contacts in the first week.
- The majority of contacts continue to be for support with food parcels, financial support and medication supplies.
- In order to continue to support struggling families and individuals into the new year the Safer Peterborough Partnership Delivery Group approved funding for 5 temporary case support workers for three months, who will work in the voluntary sector, specifically supporting adults with disabilities, families, the elderly and those struggling with mental health.

Young Peoples Engagement

- As part of the Peterborough Rapid Response Plan, the commissioning of Youth Inspired was completed in December, and, after training on 2 December, youth work has been completed outside identified schools, and youth workers have been engaging around 40 – 60 young people per session 3 times a week after school. Reusable face masks with the slogan “if you can read this you are standing too close” have been used to engage young people in conversations about adhering to ‘hands, face, space’ rules.
- Through December, Cambridgeshire’s Youth Voice Worker has been developing relevant messaging and communication channels for young people between 18 and 30 years of age. This specific age range was chosen due to the limited existing contact channels – in development is a social influencer tool kit which is in test with young people now, and which will be launched in January through relevant vloggers with high numbers of followers. Through December more relevant messaging has been tested with young people to create physical content (posters, leaflets etc) to go to retail, hospitality, and the beauty industry etc reinforcing key messages. Key employer link organisations have been contacted and are ready to support the role out of this in the New Year.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- The number of medium risk domestic abuse referrals has decreased, and high risk referrals have also slightly decreased during November and December.
- Our Peterborough ‘Marshal’ agency service is now embedded and working 7 days a week 9am – 9pm, providing 20 officers supported by a team of 6 community marshals and 10 x redeployed council officers. Initial feedback has been positive – we are providing a vital and visible presence and helping to improve compliance across the city.

RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- The 'Ask ANI' scheme through pharmacies is due to start in January 2020. This will enable anyone experiencing domestic abuse to approach participating pharmacies and 'Ask for ANI' and be directed to a consulting room where they can call the police or support services for assistance.

CULTURE AND LEISURE (PETERBOROUGH)

- We are working with Active Orbit to increase awareness of leisure services by offering free incentives when people complete over 100 minutes of activity. Active Orbit are trialling their app in Peterborough before rolling out nationally, with work having originally started with Opportunity Peterborough. This will mainly be aimed at those that are classified as inactive; currently over 28% of the city fall into this category, with a further 13% not meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidance of 150 minutes of activity per week.

CITY COLLEGE PETERBOROUGH

- Our new course guide for January to March 2021 has now been published. In addition, we have secured funding from the Combined Authority's Adult Education Budget Innovation Fund. Working together with Peterborough Regional College, we will provide a one-stop information centre on learning, training and employment opportunities to residents and businesses to support upskilling and retraining to benefit the workforce and the economy.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SKILLS

- We have launched a volunteering project to offer workplace training combined with traditional learning. We are also partnering with Fenland District Council to offer a recycling course and volunteering course to their current and potential volunteers. This will be launched in April 2021.
- A basic digital skills online training course is to be developed for Cambridge City Council to upskill new workers with a low digital skills base.

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

N/A

NEW COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

N/A

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

- Additional resource has been brought in to support Regulatory Staff in Peterborough on COVID-19 business compliance activity. This resource is working with existing staff to visit businesses which are the subject of complaints regarding non-compliance with restrictions, as well as inspecting areas based on any intelligence received.
- Our new young person Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) and A8 IDVA posts are both being recruited to.
- The Peterborough Prevention and Enforcement Service resource is being heavily abstracted to support Contact Tracing activity. To mitigate this, we are looking to train agency marshals to assist with this task and relieve pressure on both PES and Environmental Health resourcing.

COMMUNICATIONS

- The Private Eye publication commented positively on the Peterborough contract tracing operation, comparing it with the national scheme.
- Domestic Abuse Communications messages for Christmas period were developed for sharing on social media, and a Domestic Abuse Monthly Police Facebook surgery took place on 17 December, supported by partners from both councils.
- The Counting Every Adult Coproduction Group was interviewed by the Cambridge University Student Newspaper 'The Tab': <https://thetab.com/uk/cambridge/2020/11/29/faces-of-cambridge-meet-the-co-production-group-supporting-the-most-vulnerable-in-the-community-142788>.

- We continue to be supported by community and faith leaders to produce a wide range of messages and materials in different languages.

Part 2 – BUSINESS AS USUAL ACTIVITY

KEY SERVICE UPDATES – INTERNAL / EXTERNAL

THINK COMMUNITIES

- **Developing priority activity for Think Communities**

The newly formed Think Communities project group have continued to work through the 66 ideas for priority activity generated through workshops held in previous months, the rationale for this being based upon deliverability, impact, influence, and alignment to initial council priorities.

Through this process we have identified activity under the headings of:

- System / Infrastructure support
- Joined up Communications
- Community Engagement

- **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local**

We continue to socialise Cambridgeshire Local and Peterborough Local as the outward facing brand of Think Communities and have finalised the Cambridgeshire Logo, with Peterborough to follow. We have invited our District colleagues to work alongside us to develop this in their area as part of our planned area engagement events and will be working with Peterborough Parishes in the New Year.

- **Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Contract Update**

A Supplier engagement event took place on 9 December with interested suppliers receiving details on the tender process and main outcomes in the specification. The tender will go live from 5 January until 5 Feb 2021, with evaluation taking place in February and March 2021.

- **Think Communities Recruitment**

The recruitment process for Place Coordinators and Community Connectors concluded in December. Two place coordinator posts were filled for Huntingdonshire and Fenland, starting on 1 February.

As well as this the process for Community Connector positions concluded with 6.5 out of the 9 posts being appointed; a second round of recruitment will be run in the new year to fill the remaining positions, including the new Armed Forces Covenant Officer.

Also in December, successful recruitment of our Think Communities Communications Officer, Business Intelligence Manager and Senior Analyst across both councils took place.

These appointments are a significant step forward in our Think Communities approach and will give us the operational resource needed to continue building system join up alongside our public sector, council and community partners.

- **Support for Carers**

In recognition of the vast amount and range of work being undertaken to reach out to and support known and unknown carers, a single system plan for carers is being developed. Governance will sit with the Carers Steering Group with co-production and reference coming from a widened carer's partnership board which Think Communities resource will support.

- **Embedding research in to Think Communities work**

The Think Communities project group have been working through the recommendations of the CUSPE report on the effects of Council decision making on the ability of communities to develop initiatives that lessen the need for formal health and social care services, as well as the recommendations for local government from the Collaborate community needs assessment. These will be taken into consideration alongside our own internal learning from wave 1 of the pandemic to feed into our priority activity.

- **Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Programme (Peterborough)**

The formal phase of the CAT programme is due to complete at the end of March 2021, however, progress this year has been significantly impacted by Covid.

48 facilities went through the programme and at the time of writing, of these facilities:

- 26% have successfully transferred
- 30% are within the legal process, and are likely to complete before 31 March 2021

- 15% are at an advanced stage of negotiation, and will reach the final legal stage before 31 March 2021
- 6% have recently been awarded and are progressing through initial negotiations
- 11% have elected to stay on existing terms
- 6% have been withdrawn from the CAT programme and repurposed as other operational centres
- 6% are awaiting decisions from third parties, are centres that have received no successful bid, and/or are being advertised to new bidders.

We continue to work with community groups to support their development of business cases and identify opportunities to secure the long-term viability for community venues.

- **National Citizen Service (NCS)**

All Autumn NCS delivery has now been completed, with 308 young people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough completing the programme in this run. This is an excellent result given the adaptations which had to be made to make the programmes COVID-safe.

- **Youth Voice**

This month we have been working with the Children in Care participation team to deliver recruitment panel training to their young people, as well as supporting Centre 33 to create their own Young Carers Advisory Board.

- **Supporting the 2021 Census**

We have begun work to support the Census 2021 team, to ensure maximum completion of Census returns.

REGULATORY SERVICES

- Peterborough's Licensing Committee endorsed the officer recommendations to continue with the Cumulative Impact Policy based on the evidence, though only to apply to off-licences. Evidence provided during consultation indicated that sales of alcohol with meals for example wasn't an issue; the problem was with sales of alcohol to take away. Full Council approved the recommendation on 9 December. This means from 7 January 2021, only applications (new and variation) which request 'Off' sales will be subject to the Cumulative Impact Policy.
- The council's business intelligence team is currently gathering data for a review of the private rented sector Selective Licensing Scheme in Peterborough. The indication so far from the evidence is that there will be a recommendation to continue with the scheme, though this will be based on the existing area, possibly with some minor tweaks. A report will go to Cabinet in the New Year.
- Trading Standards have seen a rise in the number of puppies illegally imported, most recently a St Bernard puppy has been seized after it came from Poland with no rabies vaccine. The puppy has been placed into quarantine, at the cost to the owner. The communications team are sharing information with the public to make them aware of the risks and costs associated with buying a puppy from abroad, while also providing advice on what to look for when buying one.
- Following interviews for additional Assistant Coroners, 10 candidates were successful and will be appointed subject to Chief Coroner approval. This will mean more resources to run multiple Inquests and continue to make progress in clearing the backlog of cases. The Assistant Coroners are used as required and are not on full time contracts.
- A second confirmed case of Avian Flu within Leicestershire has resulted in the Surveillance Area crossing the border into Rutland (where we deliver a shared service). Trading Standards continue to work with Rutland County Council's communications team and the Leicestershire Local Resilience Forum to push out information and raise awareness, especially to those who are not required to register as a keeper, and to encourage members of the public to report any breaches.
- Planning permission for the Roger Ascham building in Cambridge to be used as the Registration Office has been delayed and is due to be heard at Planning Committee in January. It has been confirmed that the use of Castle Lodge has been extended to 31 July 2021. This will allow the team to take more bookings, although any beyond this date cannot be made until a new venue has been confirmed. The service is keeping the public as up to date as possible.
- As part of the shared service agreement with Rutland, our Housing Enforcement team has been responding to an electrical installation issue at a Park Home site in Oakham. While electricians were on site completing required Electrical Certification, they identified some remedial works which are required. Officers are working with the park owners and their Health and Safety manager to ensure the required works are completed and residents are kept up to date on potential disruption so they can plan for being without power.

- A local farmer appeared in court earlier this month for a long-awaited appeal hearing relating to his ban on keeping animals. Unfortunately, halfway through the hearing the farmer announced he had symptoms of COVID-19, although had not been tested. The hearing was stopped immediately, and the team await a new court date.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- A centralised Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process has been agreed and most statutory Community Safety Partnership partners have agreed to contribute financially to this process. This will be managed through the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership, and will ensure that whenever a DHR is required, resources will be in place to support it.
- All staff in specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services have received Stop Suicide training from MIND.
- Peterborough’s CCTV service recorded 196 incidents in Peterborough (crime and disorder, including anti-social behaviour) during November leading to 45 arrests (267 incidents and 54 arrests including the Fenland Area).

CULTURE AND LEISURE (PETERBOROUGH)

- Prior to the more recent announcement that Peterborough has moved into tier 4, the Theatre was continuing to work through its service plan where possible and working with City Culture Peterborough colleagues in identifying how we can also align activities through the arts to supporting vulnerable residents in the city. Programming for spring of 2021 was continuing to be challenging, in particular for live productions. However, companies are becoming more upbeat and confident following news of vaccine roll outs, and therefore we are now seeing greater interest in the summer programme. It is however believed that the reduced programme does present some opportunity for community engagement, therefore we plan to identify quick programming wins such as films where we can generate greater participation, especially within excluded or vulnerable communities.
- Historic England’s Regional Capacity Fund has awarded Peterborough the 60% funding requested towards the costs of tanking and preserving the Must Farm prehistoric log boats. Peterborough City Council have provided 40% match funding.
- Work has begun on re-accreditation for the Archives Service, as well as on an Architects brief for the new Library and Archives building.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SKILLS

- We have successfully set up and delivered a Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP) for the DWP across Cambridgeshire to support the recruitment of work coaches and for general vacancies within the civil service. There have been 112 participants to date, and a 97% retention and achievement rate. The DWP have approached us to repeat this.

CITY COLLEGE PETERBOROUGH

- Enrolments on Adult qualification courses are strong, particularly in ESOL, English and Maths and Level 1 qualifications. We have significantly increased our digital delivery, for example, by providing training to learners with no / low skills to access online delivery and in a new upskilling offer to people on furlough or recently made redundant.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

N/A

UPCOMING ISSUES & HORIZON SCANNING AREAS

- In Regulatory Services - managing and implementing any legislative changes and requirements as a result of the EU Exit deal, both in terms of the council’s statutory regulatory responsibilities as well as support to those businesses affected.
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has announced a new fund for local areas to develop systems change for those who face multiple disadvantage - [Changing Futures programme](#). The prospectus aligns very closely with the existing Counting Every Adult work in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) have offered to

support our application. Expressions of Interest need to be submitted by 21 January. We have obtained support from both the Sub-Regional Housing Board and also the Public Service Board to co-ordinate and lead this bid on behalf of the system.

- In Cambridgeshire Skills, the March Community Centre refurbishment tender opened on 18 December. Works are scheduled to be carried out during February and March 2021.