

Report of the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships

- To: Communities and Partnership Committee
- Meeting Date: 21 January 2021
- From: Service Director of Communities and Partnerships, Adrian Chapman
- Electoral division(s): All
- Key decision: No
- Outcome: This Service Director report provides an overview of strategic activity relevant to this Committee, relating to both the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and 'business as usual' activity, and seeks to assure Members that the agreed direction of travel for the Committee's business is progressing at pace. Further, it is envisaged that the support of the Committee towards establishing and leading a clear and ambitious focus on social mobility will deliver sustained positive change and opportunity for our citizens, regardless of their circumstances.
- Recommendation: The Communities and Partnership Committee is asked to:
- a) Note and comment on the key themes discussed in this report; and
 - b) Endorse the proposals to create a clear and ambitious focus on social mobility to support levelling up all communities across Cambridgeshire.

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Committee has agreed to receive a Service Director report at each of its meetings, setting out information, opportunities and challenges relating to the cross-cutting work that the Committee and its service directorate has responsibility for. This includes the service directorate's role in supporting the COVID-19 response.

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 holds responsibility for 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 provides information relating to this.

2.2 Proposed Service Priorities in 2021

- 2.2.1 Throughout most of the 2020 calendar year, the work of the service directorate combined maintaining service delivery for our core services alongside developing and delivering appropriate responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach has been largely effective, and we have struck an appropriate balance between these two dimensions. However, although significant progress is underway towards vaccinating the whole population, we recognise that we will need to continue to strike the right balance for some considerable time to come, as we remain in the response phase of the pandemic.
- 2.2.2 However, the service directorate also has a significant role to play in leading sustained recovery beyond the response phase, for example supporting social mobility and social cohesion, supporting the most vulnerable or excluded groups, and supporting businesses.
- 2.2.3 For this reason, the service directorate is taking the opportunity to consider its approach to this combined work – business as usual, and supporting the response to and recovery from the pandemic – in a different way, which will connect more effectively the various workstreams. The Committee Chairman has requested we embark on a more focussed approach, developing a multi-service offer, with the intention of expanding to multi-agency, with this end in mind.
- 2.2.4 Addressing the impact that the pandemic has had so far on individuals, families, communities and businesses is perhaps the most important aspect of our work going forwards. If we can ensure that everyone has opportunities to thrive, despite the current situation, if we can support businesses to grow, if we can support communities to integrate and remain resilient, and if we can support our colleagues to protect the most vulnerable residents from harm, we will be making a lasting and positive impact as a result of our work.
- 2.2.5 We have laid extremely solid foundations for this approach, largely through the development of our Cambridgeshire Local approach. Strongly supported by the Committee, we have been able to deliver our combined response to the pandemic using all of the Cambridgeshire Local principles, which have now, in most aspects, become business as usual:

- we will always want to work systemically with all of our partners to support people at the most local levels who are vulnerable, isolated or excluded
- we will always want to work transparently with our local partners to find the most appropriate solutions to community challenges and take opportunities regardless of who leads
- we will always want to find ways to help people in immediate financial or other crisis by supporting community-led initiatives
- we will always want to support our statutory partners (social care, health, housing etc) to manage their own service demands by creating opportunities for everyone to remain independent

2.2.6 There are also aspects of work within the COVID-specific workstream that the service directorate is delivering that would benefit from review and alignment – for example, the work we do to support community testing, vaccination centres and rapid response outbreak management all require volunteer capacity, but at present, and largely because of the pace in which we must respond, we have tended to manage each of these in isolation of the next.

2.2.7 Bringing all of these various functions together into a more combined approach will ensure greater resilience, agility and flexibility, and will make best use of our resources. We are also likely to have a far more positive impact on the issues and challenges that are most pressing for our citizens, and to identify and take opportunities that help address them.

2.2.8 Going further, providing a consistent, common and powerful theme to the work the service directorate delivers, supported by the Committee, will help to maintain focus, avoid scope creep, and provide absolute clarity to the rest of the council and our partners for the vital role we must play. The theme that we believe is the most relevant to provide that focus is ‘social mobility’. This clarity of purpose and focus also aligns to recognition within Government of the importance of addressing social mobility, often referred to as ‘levelling up’. In recent weeks, the Government has confirmed that the Social Mobility Commission, previously embedded within the Department for Education, is moving to the Cabinet Office to be at the heart of Government ‘with new structures to ensure that policies are delivered to help the most disadvantaged communities’¹.

2.2.9 The World Economic Forum define social mobility as ‘the movement in personal circumstances either “upwards” or “downwards” of an individual in relation to those of their parents. In absolute terms, it is the ability of a child to experience a better life than their parents. On the other hand, relative social mobility is an assessment of the impact of socio-economic background on an individual’s outcomes in life’.

2.2.10 The time feels right to take these definitions and apply strong and consistent leadership at the local level, utilising the strength and power of the Cambridgeshire Local approach and the diversity and absolute commitment of our incredible partnership of public, voluntary, community and faith sector partners, to provide a concentrated focus on social mobility for all of our citizens and businesses.

2.2.11 The themes defined by inequalities are the same today as they were before the pandemic, but COVID-19 has exacerbated them, and new forms of inequality are emerging – for example, fewer opportunities for young people, impacts on informal carers, more people suffering anxiety and depression, and the inequalities identified through studies suffered by

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-mobility-commission-brought-into-heart-of-government>

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic citizens.

2.2.12 Alongside the features described in 2.2.11, the Communities and Partnerships service directorate and Committee are ideally placed to lead this work and develop this focus because of the other core services we have responsibility for. For example:

- our community safety services will ensure that victims of crime or abuse are supported to recover from those situations, with new potential victims prevented from actually becoming so, in order that their social mobility is significantly enhanced
- our work with businesses through Trading Standards will help ensure local businesses are supported with the right information and advice to remain compliant and to thrive in the context of the new EU Trade Deal
- our work with families at challenging moments – for example, during inquests or when registering deaths – will help us to build a better picture of the issues and trends that our citizens face
- creativity and agility within our Cambridgeshire Skills service will help to ensure we provide the right opportunities for all of our residents to improve their employment and earning prospects
- our growing libraries and archives service will help to place vital council and other services within the heart of our communities
- our youth and community workers will help ensure we hear from and respond to the needs and aspirations of the next generations for whom social mobility will become even more vital

2.2.13 We have the opportunity now to take these unique circumstances and events to drive the levelling up agenda, with the support and strength of our partners, across our county. We need to coordinate initially a council-wide approach that enables citizens themselves to thrive – the engine room that will help to ensure our work is sustainable is formed by our citizens, and they will drive the change we are seeking if we provide the opportunities and infrastructure, such as that set out in 2.2.12. A clear recognition of this being our sole focus will help to create a strengths-based narrative, rather than seeing a set of insurmountable or challenging problems. Building on the solutions-focussed and common-sense approach we've taken over the last nine months, we have the opportunity to help our residents and businesses recognise us as convenors and enablers, rather than bureaucrats.

2.2.14 In seeking endorsement from the Committee for this new, ambitious and focussed approach, agreement and support is also sought for the concept of establishing a clearly defined package of practical support that the council, initially, can offer to citizens and businesses across Cambridgeshire, gradually increasing to incorporate a partnership-wide package incorporating the role and work of, for example, parish and town councils, district and city councils, the police and fire services, the NHS, voluntary sector organisations, faith groups and private business. We want our work to be informed by the multitude of research that exists in the field of social mobility, and we can take direction or inspiration from, for example, the Social Mobility Commission, but we also want our approach to be practical and accessible, right now as people begin to emerge from the pandemic and consider their longer term futures.

2.2.15 If the Committee supports this approach, it is recommended that time is dedicated at a Committee workshop to practically explore the themes in more detail, enabling the officer team to rapidly work up initial options, leading to a comprehensive report at the next available Committee meeting.

2.3 Service Updates

2.3.1 Think Communities

i. Developing priority activity for Think Communities

The officer team has continued to work through the numerous (sixty-six) ideas for priority activity generated through the recent staff and Committee workshops, with a focus on ensuring deliverability, impact, influence, and alignment to corporate priorities. This will lead to the production of a practical delivery plan which will be presented back to Committee, although this work will be reviewed in the context of the decisions taken from the discussion relating to social mobility.

ii. Cambridgeshire Local

We continue to socialise Cambridgeshire Local as the outward facing brand of Think Communities and we have invited our District and City colleagues to work alongside us to develop this in their areas as part of our planned area engagement events which will be taking place over the next few weeks. These important events will seek to:

- lay the foundations for a more integrated and place-focused way of working
- share what we see via data relevant for each area
- ask partners what they see, from their perspective
- establish how we can work in partnership to help people take the opportunities or get the support they need at the earliest point possible
- establish how we can continue to work with partners to build a more integrated and place-focussed way of working that makes sense to our citizens

iii. 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 went live on 5 January and will remain open until 5 February, with evaluation taking place in February and March 2021.

iv. Think Communities Recruitment

The recruitment process for Place Coordinators and Community Connectors concluded in December. For information, the following represents the current recruitment and appointments status:

- Cambridge City:
Place Coordinator – Paul Connelly (to 31/3/21), then Diane Lane (from 1/4/21)
Community Connectors – Karen Reid (from 1/2/21) and Joanne Hunt (from 1/4/21)
- East Cambridgeshire:
Place Coordinator – Wendy Lansdown
Community Connectors – Caline Easey (from 25/1/21) and Christian Swarbrick (from 1/2/21)
- Fenland:
Place Coordinator – Adam Garford (from 25/1/21)
Community Connectors – Hayley Wynn (from 1/2/21) and 1 post remains vacant
- Huntingdonshire:
Place Coordinator – Sophie Terrill (from 26/2/21)

- Community Connectors – Posts remain vacant
- South Cambridgeshire:
Place Coordinator – Anita Howard
Community Connectors – Cath Sharman (from 25/1/21) and Scott Liddle (from 25/1/21)
 - Peterborough (funded by Peterborough City Council, and for information only):
Place Coordinator – Nicola Francis
Community Connectors – Jessica Kennedy and Steve Harknett

n.b. where posts are still vacant, a second round of recruitment will run shortly and we are also in discussion with local partners to explore the possibility of secondments.

Also in December, we successfully recruited to our Think Communities Communications Officer, Business Intelligence Manager and Senior Analyst posts.

- v. **Support for Carers**
In recognition of the vast amount and range of work being undertaken to reach out to and support known and unknown informal 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 Cambridgeshire Local resource will support.
- vi. **Embedding research in to Cambridgeshire Local work**
The Cambridgeshire Local team has been working through the recommendations of the CUSPE report presented to Committee in December 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. These will be taken into consideration alongside our own internal learning from the pandemic to feed into our priority activity.
- vii. **Youth and Community Work**
All Autumn National Citizen Service 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. We have also 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.
- viii. **Repurposing Disused Land**
Adjacent to the March Community Centre, there is a disused piece of council-owned land. We were approached by a local community group, supported by the local Members, to see if there was any possibility of them utilising this land for a food-based project to be known as Grub Growers. The project seeks to enable local people to organically grow produce, learning in the process, that can be used to support local people. Alongside the benefit of converting disused land to good use, the project also supports our adult skills priorities and our health and wellbeing priorities. The council is in the process of issuing a licence to enable the group to use the land to deliver their project.

2.3.2 Community Safety

- i. The number of medium risk domestic abuse referrals has decreased, and high risk referrals have also slightly decreased during November and December.
- ii. 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.
- iii. All staff in specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services have received Stop Suicide training from MIND.
- iv. 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 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.
- v. As part of the performance report to Committee in December, we reported the latest hate crime levels, and Members requested further information including a fuller analysis and context. At time of writing, the required information hasn't yet been received, and so the Assistant Director for Community Safety will attend Committee in January to provide a verbal update.

2.3.3 Regulatory Services

- i. As part of our ongoing work to support our Coroner Service, following interviews for additional Assistant Coroners ten 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 generated through the pandemic. The Assistant Coroners are used as required and are not on full time contracts.
- ii. 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.
- iii. The service remains focussed on 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.

2.3.4 Cambridgeshire Skills

- i. We have successfully set up and delivered a Sector Work Academy Programme (SWAP) for the Department of Work and Pensions 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.

2.4 COVID-19 Coordination and Response Hub

2.4.1 The Service Director is continuing to play a system-wide leadership role in the ongoing COVID-19 response work, as a member of our own Gold command groups and those that form part of the Local Resilience Forum. Alongside leadership of the countywide Hub, the Service Director is working closely with NHS colleagues and the Director of Public Health to support the rollout of the vaccination programme, the introduction of targeted mass community testing, and the development and delivery of localised rapid response plans that adapt according to the latest epidemiology.

2.4.2 Following the announcement of a national lockdown, Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people are once again being advised to shield. There are in the region of 32,500 CEV people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and the countywide Hub along with our district and city council partners are coordinating support for anyone on this cohort that needs it.

2.4.3 The Government has issued a national Shielding Framework for local councils to deliver against, which identifies five core functions:

- To make and maintain contact with CEV residents, identifying support and other needs
- To deliver practical support, including access to food and essential supplies
- To provide regular reporting to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- To support the process of clinical review points for pausing or relaxing shielding measures
- To prepare for the end of Shielding and to support people to transition

In Cambridgeshire, we are very well placed to deliver these requirements, and indeed go further to ensure that any of our CEV residents are fully able to remain at home and protected from the virus.

2.4.4 In the spirit of our Cambridgeshire Local approach, we have worked with our district and city council colleagues to establish the most appropriate ways for CEV people to get the help they need. The offer of help will be consistent across the county – for example, it will provide access to food and essential supplies, will ensure that CEV people can safely obtain their medication, will ensure that people receive timely information and guidance, and will connect CEV people to local support arrangements where they exist. We will once again offer a 'no wrong front door' approach for CEV people to access help and support, although we have also established the following access arrangements:

- For people in the Cambridge City area: www.cambridge.gov.uk/coronavirus-ask-for-help or 01223 457000

- For people in the East Cambridgeshire District Council area: www.eastcambs.gov.uk/content/coronavirus-community-support or 01353 665555
- For people in the Fenland District Council area: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or 0345 045 5219
- For people in the Huntingdonshire District Council area: www.wearehuntingdonshire.org/ or 01480 388388
- For people in the South Cambridgeshire District Council area: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or 0345 045 5219
- Countywide coordination hub: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/coronavirus or 0345 045 5219

2.4.5 Our support model for the current period continues to be based on four main principles:

- Supporting people to be independent (our offer will give people the information and resources they need to help themselves)
- Local is best (individuals will be linked into local support in their area wherever it's available and appropriate)
- Building on existing relationships (we will work with and support our partners to provide the most appropriate support possible in ways that make most sense to those that need it)
- Data and Intelligence led (we will use our data, with our partners, to understand our CEV population and better tailor our offer of support)

2.4.6 All of the CEV residents across Cambridgeshire have been contacted by the Hubs with information about Shielding and the support available. They have also received communication from the Government. CEV people remain able to register for support via the National Shielding Support Service, which provides direct access to priority supermarket delivery slots as well as enabling CEV people to request help from their local council. Details of this service can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-shielding-support>. The national NHS Volunteer Responders service also remains available for people to access, and further details can be found at <https://nhsvolunteerresponders.org.uk/>.

2.4.7 Alongside support for CEV residents, the countywide Hub has continued to coordinate the provision of safe transport options for people with vaccination appointments that can't get to their vaccination centre, and is working with colleagues to provide redeployed staff or volunteers where necessary – for example, to support some schools with the need to carry out testing.

2.4.8 The Hub has also been delivering the Winter Support Grant Scheme, working closely with the Service Director for Education. In excess of 60,000 food vouchers were issued to eligible households before the Christmas holiday, and the Hub has separately received 3,610 individual requests for additional support (across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough). Cambridgeshire-specific applications so far total 2,044.

2.4.9 The District breakdown of the 2,044 requests is as follows:

- Cambridge City: 457
- East Cambridgeshire: 220
- Fenland: 427

- Huntingdonshire: 554
- South Cambridgeshire: 386

2.4.10 All 2,044 Cambridgeshire individuals have been contacted by the Hub team for an in-depth conversation, to determine the nature and urgency of need. Of those:

- 234 households have been supported with emergency food, typically via our partners in district and city councils
- 442 households have been supported with emergency fuel vouchers
- 98 households have been supported with personal hygiene boxes
- 9 households have been supported with replacement household appliances

All other households confirmed a less urgent but still vital need for support, and these requests are being triaged and resolved through the various arrangements we have established as part of the scheme – district and city council hubs, the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme (including our local Citizens' Advice partners), and various voluntary and community sector organisations.

2.4.11 We are now planning for the next wave of support, to cover the February half-term and the period up to the end of March. At time of writing, we are awaiting confirmation of funding from April onwards.

2.5 Business Planning 2021/22

2.5.1 At the December Committee meeting, Members received the outline business case for a saving across the Service Directorate of up to £200k in 2021/22. Committee requested further information about how that saving was to be realised.

2.5.2 The key principle for confirmation is that the saving anticipated will not have a negative impact on existing service levels. A review of spend in comparison to similar councils shows that, in the main, Communities and Partnership's services represent good value for money, although there is a higher comparative spend in our Archives service than in other councils. Even then, any saving to be realised within the Archives service will be achieved through process improvements and better use of technology, as opposed to service or staff reductions.

2.5.3 Instead, a thorough review will be carried out across the Service Directorate to realise the savings through identification of efficiencies and process improvements. These areas include:

- Review of all budget lines to identify areas of historical underspend
- Review of vacancy savings targets, recognising the increased directorate size in recent years
- Review of support functions across the directorate
- Maximising income in the Registration Service
- Cost reduction and income generation in the Archives service

2.5.4 Anything that will result in a reduced level of service delivery is out of scope. The review will focus solely on areas where efficiencies and process improvements can be made. To provide further reassurance to Members, an Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed, and this is attached at appendix 1.

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.

4. Significant Implications

4.1 Resource Implications

There have not been any significant changes in the projected financial consequences of the pandemic within the remit of this Committee since the September report.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Any purchases to support the service directorate's work 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

If agreed, the proposed enhanced focus on social mobility will help ensure that our equality and diversity obligations are fully met.

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

Local Members remain at the heart of our work and at the centre of the Cambridgeshire Local principles.

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 Service Directorate to health and wellbeing, and to the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. It acknowledges that key to Public Health is the improvement of health and wellbeing which needs action across many determinants.

Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance? Yes

Name of Financial 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 Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

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: Christine Birchall

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

5. Source documents

5.1 None