REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

To:	Communities and Partnership Committee
Meeting Date:	8 October 2020
From:	Service Director, Communities and Partnerships
Electoral division(s):	All
Forward Plan ref:	N/A
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.
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; and

b) Comment on the information that would be helpful in enabling the Committee to track the impact of the Think Communities approach.

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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.

1.2   The Committee has also been receiving a separate report on relevant activities relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. These reports have been accepted as late reports due to the dynamic nature of the pandemic. However, as these activities are currently more planned in nature, the COVID-19 activity report has been incorporated into this service director report.

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   At the September meeting of the General Purposes Committee (GPC), a proposal to provide financial resources to deliver our Think Communities unified approach was unanimously agreed. Funding of £1.686m in total for two years has been approved from the council's Transformation Fund, to provide the staff resources necessary to ensure comprehensive delivery of our ambitious but critical programme. The funding will also deliver the Community Outreach Vehicle previously agreed by this Committee.

2.2.2   GPC were advised of the context to the funding proposal, which was threefold: (i) it built on an already strong council track record in supporting communities and community-based organisations (demonstrated for example via our Local Council Development Plan, the Innovate and Cultivate Programme, and our recent Community Capital Fund); (ii) it is inspired by, and making best use of the learning from, the two Neighbourhood Cares pilots, which demonstrated the value of connecting council staff with local people, where those staff were given freedom and flexibility to problem-solve; and (iii) it reflected the experiences from the past 6 months, during which the Think Communities principles have been fully deployed in real time to support citizens and communities during the pandemic.

2.2.3   All of these approaches have resulted in some amazing individualised outcomes for our residents and communities. These haven't relied on public sector reform, but a common-sense approach to working smarter together. This unified approach is something we want to build on with our Think Communities approach, as endorsed and supported by this Committee and which has been further enabled by GPC.

2.2.4   The funding allocated will enable Think Communities to be 'turbo-boosted', capitalising on the relationships, working arrangements and processes that have been shown to work well, as well as review where necessary, as we evolve our services to meet the changing needs,

demands and aspirations of our residents. We recognise too that the ongoing pandemic will inevitably lead to new demands on the council or other public services, and we will be in a position to help prevent, delay or reduce that demand.

2.2.5 GPC recognised that resourcing the Think Communities approach in partnership with the rest of the public sector system is the best way to continue to build resilience and sustainability within our communities to mitigate against those challenges and to realise the best possible recovery from the pandemic. As a reminder to this Committee, our model will enable:

- Coordinated place-focused people-centred support alongside local councils, voluntary and faith sector, community groups, housing providers, business, health, police and fire, in order to….

  - Make fast, joint decisions and take rapid creative action to address local issues and prevent escalation

  - Transform our VCS infrastructure support model, featuring:
    - A coordinated system response to supporting volunteers
    - Quality VCS voice and representation
    - Governance support
    - Training and development

  - Ensure timely, meaningful, appropriate, flexible data sharing - to enable a single version of the truth, joined up support and effective problem solving

  - Analyse and interpret data in order to support a focused partnership approach to real time challenges

  - Transform services to evolve to a place-based commissioning model rooted in the community

2.2.6 This Committee previously endorsed the initial eight priority areas of focus at its meeting in September, as follows:
- 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 and fuel poverty and security
- Improving social mobility
- Implementing place-based commissioning

2.2.7 As described, the funding approved at GPC represents an initial two-year investment to build on our existing core-funded infrastructure, embed many of the features developed to date, and deliver highly practical outcomes in support of all service committees. After the two years of transformation investment, it is expected that this approach and way of working will be embedded in the organisation and that ongoing work will be part of core budgets.

This means, in practice, that we will need to demonstrate value to the council from this work equal, at least, to the total investment made, achieved through cost avoidance or cost reductions.

2.2.8 This work is highly preventative in nature – the evidence from mobilising the approach during the pandemic, at least in part, has shown that people have been kept safe and well and have not therefore needed statutory intervention. For example, many people have been 'found' in very poor health through the work of the Hub via home visits, and community based support has been put in place to prevent further escalation.

2.2.9 With the primary aim of improving peoples' lives, the approach will also lead to demand reductions through offering alternative interventions to people already in receipt of services, and by ensuring those not yet known to or receiving services are supported to maintain independence or improve their social mobility. Potential cost avoidance and savings areas include, but are not limited to:

- Cost avoidance relating to increased demand across services from communities living in more deprived areas, or who are more vulnerable to COVID-19
- Some prevention, delay and reduction in Adult Social Care demand as a result of delay to domiciliary care and residential care packages
- Support to deliver TEC savings as part of the Adults Positive Challenge programme
- Reductions in Children's Social Care costs, domestic violence referrals, and Youth Offending Service involvements

2.2.10 Officers are rapidly developing a mechanism for calculating and reporting the value of costs avoided and/or saved, and are taking guidance from the Adults Positive Challenge programme which has developed a useful tracker to monitor the impacts of interventions across their various workstreams. The Think Communities programme will create a similar tool, the details of which will be shared with this Committee. Committee Members are asked to comment on what information they would find helpful in tracking the impact of the Think Communities approach.

2.2.11 Detailed delivery plans for all eight initial areas of focus are being finalised, and plans are being made to bring partners together in a series of workshop-style events in each of the Service Delivery Areas previously discussed with the Committee.

2.3 **Improving Social Mobility**

2.3.1 The Committee was updated at its September meeting on the work of the cross-party Improving Social Mobility working group, which has agreed to primarily focus on the following four themes:
- Focussed work with socially excluded or vulnerable people to ensure they receive support
- A system wide approach to food and fuel poverty
- A unified approach to community engagement in specific localities
- Ensuring the needs of older people, disabled people and those with learning difficulties are understood and supported

2.3.2 The group has met again, and has further refined the long-list of potential projects to a more focussed shortlist that will ensure qualitative delivery that makes a difference. The details of

this shortlist, along with the mechanisms by which we will assure the Committee that the actions are making a positive difference, will be reported at the next Committee meeting.

2.3.3   When agreed, baselines will be finalised for each theme so that we can closely monitor the difference we're making and the impact we are having. This will enable the Committee to be kept fully informed about progress, to provide constructive challenge, and also to support escalation of any issues or challenges we face as we progress.

2.4   Community Safety

2.4.1   Referral levels to our domestic abuse and sexual violence service continue to be stable following a rise in July and August. Our commissioned outreach services are though reporting higher levels of referrals than normal. We will continue to work closely with all of our key partners on the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Partnership Board to closely monitor and respond to any fluctuations in demand, and will ensure the Committee is kept fully appraised.

2.4.2   Our programmes focussed on working with perpetrators of domestic abuse are being reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose. Again, Committee will be kept fully appraised of progress given the importance of this work.

2.5   COVID-19 Coordination and Response Hub

2.5.1   This Committee has responsibility for oversight of the Countywide COVID-19 Coordination Hub which, up until 1 August, co-ordinated the distribution of support to the shielded group of residents. The national shielding programme was paused from this date, although the Hub continues to provide direct support to anyone previously shielding should they need it. However, the focus of the Hub at present continues to be on supporting relevant aspects of the local Outbreak Control Plan, and this is described in more detail below.

2.5.2   In light of the current national picture, the Hub is planning for the next phase of redeployment in the event it needs to step up activity to support any increases in positive cases locally. An initial group of twenty council officers are being identified to provide flexible surge capacity to support Environmental Health and Public Health colleagues to contact positive cases and possibly their contacts. It is likely that these staff would need to be mobilised to support at short notice and therefore planning has been around how we can build in these types of short-term redeployments into all areas of the organisation and develop a network of staff who can help at short notice, alongside (or, for a short period, redeployed from) their substantive role.

2.5.3   Further requests for staff to support wider outbreak management activity are likely to follow and so work is underway to proactively gather a longer list of staff who can be mobilised to support this and future requests. Alongside this, our human resources colleagues have been leading on conversations with district council HR leads and have developed a memorandum of understanding to enable district council staff to be able to also flexibly respond to a surge in another district if required.

2.5.4   Further, we are seeking to provide structure to the previous volunteering programme, taking learning from the NHS Volunteers scheme and our own use of volunteers, so that people

who want to volunteer and may not have an opportunity available to them in their own community can be engaged to support the continued countywide effort.

2.5.5 The Hub team has been supporting the implementation of the new Outbreak Management Case Management System for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This will enable colleagues from each district and city council, the county council and our partners in the NHS to work together to manage outbreaks and trace contacts as well as giving a single source of information on the outbreak management activity that is happening across the system. Testing of the system is taking place now, with a predicted go-live date of 21 October.

2.5.6 We are supporting the work to prepare a flexible response to winter pressures compounded by COVID-19. Work is ongoing to collate, map and reach out to all possible locations for mobile testing, static testing and flu vaccination sites across Cambridgeshire in order to create a single tool for use in the future.

2.5.7 The Hub has also supported the setting up and running of emergency test sites for critical school and early year settings staff. Running over two sites, redeployed staff with the support of Hub coordinators have marshalled the sites with several hundred members of staff being tested over two weeks.

2.5.8 Developing a short, medium, and long-term approach to supporting safe transport options to and from workplaces in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough has been a further key priority for the Hub. The way that some of our residents travel to and from work is seen as a potential risk factor in spreading the virus – for example, if they are car sharing or are agency workers transported on contracted buses. Some initial practical activity to educate both employees and transport providers has already taken place in Peterborough with a view to that being replicated wherever needed across Cambridgeshire. At the same time, a suite of alternative, safe travel options is being developed to offer choices to employees and employers.

2.5.9 The Committee has previously been briefed on the work led by the Hub to develop a support package for people unable to self-isolate for various reasons. More recently, the launch of a national hardship fund was announced where individuals on eligible benefits can receive a £500 lump sum to encourage and enable them to self-isolate as a result of receiving a positive COVID-19 test result or being contact traced. This therefore requires our own arrangements to be reviewed and re-positioned to support individuals that have been adversely affected by the outbreak more broadly. An example, of how the fund has already been used is set out below:

> The Think Communities Place Coordinator in South Cambridgeshire coordinated arrangements to support a vulnerable father to quarantine safely from his extremely at-risk family upon entry to the country. This involved brokerage between the county Hub, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Children's Social Care team to ensure the hardship fund was used to find and pay for separate isolation accommodation which is now also supporting with food.

2.5.10 A group has been set up to establish a countywide agreed protocol and procedure to deal with the enforcement of non-COVID-19 compliant businesses or events when 'engage,

encourage and explain' has failed. The powers currently sit at the upper tier level with the Director of Public Health and the Chief Executive - the delegation of this power needs to be considered for lower tier district councils to ensure enforcement is effective and legally robust.

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

The report above sets out details of significant implications in section 2.2. In addition, 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 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, 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 deSilva

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