

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO COVID-19

*To:* Health Committee

*Meeting Date:* 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020

*From:* Director of Public Health

*Electoral division(s):* All

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

*Outcome:* To update the Health Committee on the Council's public health response to COVID-19, which impacts on outcomes for individuals and communities.

*Recommendation:* Health Committee is asked to:

- a) note the progress made to date in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus.
- b) Note the public health service response

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1. A series of reports have been provided to Committees on the Council's ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic, our work with partners and communities to protect the most vulnerable and our developing work to help Cambridgeshire to recover from this unprecedented emergency into a 'new normal'.
- 1.2. Officers and teams across the Council continue to work closely with our communities, partners and providers to develop appropriate operational responses to new epidemiological information and guidance as it is issued.
- 1.3. The Council Senior Leadership Team continues to co-ordinate our response, with a Covid-19 Gold Group, which includes both the Chief Executive and Director of Public Health, meeting three times per week. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF), a partnership of local agencies, continues to hold a Strategic Co-ordinating Group to co-ordinate the multi-agency response.
- 1.4. The Council's Recovery Framework was endorsed by this Committee on 14th May and a Recovery Board has been established. The Senior Management Team member chairing this board is the Director for Business Improvement and Development, Amanda Askham and all Executive Directors, Service Directors and Corporate Heads of Service are members of the recovery group.
- 1.5. The Local Resilience forum has also stood up a Recovery Coordinating Group to co-ordinate multi-agency actions. This group is jointly chaired by Huntingdon District Council Managing Director, Jo Lancaster and South Cambridgeshire District Council Chief Executive, Liz Watts. This has a number of sub-groups - the Council's Public Health Directorate leads the 'Public Health and Prevention' Recovery sub-group, and provides specialist advice and input to other sub-groups. .

## **2. LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH CONTEXT**

### **2.1 Confirmed cases**

Many cases of Covid-19 are not tested for or diagnosed, particularly where the person infected does not have symptoms. The rates of testing and diagnosis have also changed significantly during the course of the pandemic - so the numbers and rates of confirmed cases do not provide a full picture of Covid-19 epidemiology over time.

Since the last report to Health Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> November, which covered Covid-19 case rates in the week up to November 11<sup>th</sup>, there has been a steep decline in cases.

In the week ending November 11<sup>th</sup> there were 908 new lab-confirmed Covid 19 cases in Cambridgeshire, a rate of 139 cases per 100,000 population.

In the latest reporting week ending 26<sup>th</sup> November, there were 397 newly diagnosed Covid-19 cases, a rate of 61 cases per 100,000 population.

Within Cambridgeshire County, the rates were highest in Fenland at 90 cases per 100,000 population and lowest in South Cambridgeshire at 45 cases per 100,000.

### Covid19 cases in Cambridgeshire: Week of 20-26<sup>th</sup> November

District/City	Number of cases	Weekly case rate per 100,000 population
Cambridge City	89	71
East Cambridgeshire	47	52
Fenland	92	90
Huntingdonshire	98	55
South Cambs	71	45

Source: Public Health England daily Covid-19 Dashboard

## 2.2 Deaths

Sadly, there have been 436 Covid-19 related deaths in Cambridgeshire in the period from March to 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (registered to 28<sup>th</sup> November). There were seven Covid-19 related deaths in the week to 20<sup>th</sup> November, one in Cambridge, one in Fenland, three in Huntingdonshire and two in South Cambridgeshire. All deaths occurred in hospital.

Week 47 - Covid-19 deaths occurring the week ending 20 November 2020, registered up to 28 November

Area name	Place of death						Total
	Home	Hospital	Care home	Hospice	Other communal establishment	Elsewhere	
Cambridge	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
East Cambridgeshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fenland	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Huntingdonshire	0	3	0	0	0	0	3
South Cambridgeshire	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Cambridgeshire	0	7	0	0	0	0	7
Peterborough	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough	0	8	0	0	0	0	8

Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS)

## 2.3 Further information on the epidemiology of Covid-19 in Cambridgeshire and its Districts is available on

[https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus\\_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/](https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/coronavirus_cambridgeshire/cambridgeshire-and-peterborough-public-health-covid-19-reports/)

and is updated weekly on a Thursday.

## 3 PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

### 3.1 There has been ongoing focus on implementation of the Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP), including joint work with the regional Public Health England Health Protection Team to directly manage local clusters and outbreaks.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace#local-outbreak-control-plan-7-0>

### 3.2 The public health led Surveillance Group meets daily to review the latest data from Public Health England, NHS Test and Trace, the local NHS and other relevant sources for

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This information is summarised and passed on to the Outbreak Management Team which works closely with the Public Health England Health Protection Team to oversee the management of local clusters and outbreak of Covid-19, through the work of multi-agency 'cells'. These cells are:

- Care Home Cell
- Education Cell
- Workplace Cell
- Vulnerable Populations Cell
- NHS Healthcare arrangements.

The membership of each Cell includes the agencies relevant to prevent and control outbreaks in that area of work. For example the Care Home Cell includes CCG, Adult Social Care, Public Health and NHS Community Service representatives; while the Workplace Cell has strong input from District/City Council Environmental Health Officers, who can visit affected businesses and provide advice and monitoring of their infection control and other outbreak control measures.

- 3.3 The overall implementation of the LOCP is overseen by the multi-agency Health Protection Board which meets weekly and is chaired by the Director of Public Health. This Board includes membership from Public Health England and has a strong focus on the local epidemiology of and trends for Covid-19, as well as current plans and actions to prevent and control outbreaks - in order to provide strategic leadership and planning for the future.
- 3.4 The Health Protection Board is supported by the LOCP Programme Delivery Group, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer of South Cambridgeshire District Council. This oversees delivery and monitoring of the LOCP action plan and milestones. This includes identifying and mitigating risks to delivery of the LOCP. A high proportion of the initial actions in the Local Outbreak Control Plan Action Plan have been completed, and an updated Action Plan, with a focus on the key actions required when we come out of lockdown, is in development.
- 3.5 The Member-led Local Outbreak Engagement Board, jointly Chaired by Cllr Roger Hickford from Cambridgeshire County Council and Cllr John Holdich from Peterborough City Council, had its most recent meeting on November 27<sup>th</sup>. This Board meets in public and provides political leadership and communication with local residents for outbreak prevention, early identification and control.
- 3.6 District Councils make a key contribution to the LOCP, through their Environmental Health function and through their local preventive and rapid response work in the event of a community outbreak in their area. This includes practical support for more vulnerable people asked to isolate at short notice.

#### Local Resilience Forum

- 3.7 The Local Resilience Forum Strategic Co-ordination Group, co-chaired by Gillian Beasley and by Jan Thomas, the CCG Accountable Officer, plays an important role in supporting Covid-19 outbreak prevention and management through bringing together the resources of the wider public sector in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, when the resources needed go beyond the scope of the Health Protection Board. A document describing the roles and

responsibilities of a range of organisations involved in delivering the LOCP has been agreed through the LRF Strategic Co-ordination Group and published alongside our LOCP. <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/asset-library/PCC-CCC-3126a-Local-outbreak-control-plan-V6.pdf>

#### Areas of focus over the past two weeks

- 3.8 A new local enhanced contact tracing service was launched in Cambridgeshire on November 19<sup>th</sup>, building on the success of the service running since August in Peterborough. This service follows up Covid-19 positive cases, who the national Test and Trace Service has not been able to contact in the first 24 hours. This is normally about 20% of cases. The service in Peterborough has successfully followed up 85% of all cases referred to them. Cases are interviewed to find out who they have been in close contact with, and these contacts are referred back to the national Test and Trace system.

In Cambridgeshire we have worked across the County Council and all five District and City Councils, together with Peterborough City Council, to construct a joint rota for the new service which runs seven days a week. So far the success rate has been good with over 230 cases (83%) successfully followed up.

- 3.9 Other joint work with our City and District Councils has continued during the past two weeks, and representatives from public health now attend weekly Covid-19 meetings with each of the Councils. This ensures that information collected by the Surveillance Cell, and relevant public health advice, can be fed directly into the work of each local area.
- 3.10 Work has also continued with both universities in Cambridge. Covid-29 case rates among Cambridge University students have fallen significantly and in the most recent reporting week from 23<sup>rd</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> November, only six cases were reported - three from the asymptomatic screening programme and three from symptomatic screening. This compares with 234 cases two weeks previously, reported in the week from 9<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November.

Anglia Ruskin University will be using rapid lateral flow tests, as part of a national programme to test university students before they return home for the Christmas period

- 3.11 We've improved access to Covid-19 testing for some of our most vulnerable residents through a Department of Health and Social Care pilot project, including work with homeless hostels, refuges, and drug and alcohol services to supply swabs which can be used immediately with anyone who reports Covid-19 symptoms.
- 3.12 We've also continued to develop our local model for use of lateral flow testing, combined with backwards contact tracing - and started recruitment for the team to implement this.
- 3.13 During the past two weeks, there was concern that rates in Fenland have been higher than other areas of Cambridgeshire, although these have now fallen below 100 cases per 100,000. The Director of Public Health wrote a joint letter to Fenland residents with the Leader of Fenland District Council, to emphasise how to keep safe from Covid-19 and help stop the spread of the virus, and to highlight the support available from the Council and voluntary sector. The Director of Public Health also recorded a video-blog.

- 3.14 There continues to be a significant workload for both the Education Directorate and the Public Health Directorate working together, to provide advice and support for schools, when they have one or more cases of Covid-19 amongst staff or pupils. These arrangements have been working effectively, with advice and support made available to schools across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 3.15 Public health staff work closely with the Adult Social Care Directorate and with NHS colleagues to ensure that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Care Home Support Plan continues to be implemented effectively, with ongoing infection control support and training for Care Homes where required.
- 3.16 Work continues with District/City Council Environmental Health Teams on prevention and outbreak management with both workplaces and vulnerable/ socially excluded groups. Workplaces have been encouraged to support their employees to work from home whenever possible.
- 3.17 The Communications Team have developed a strategy for coming out of lockdown and for the festive season, which will emphasise what we 'can' do to enjoy the festive season, while staying Covid-safe. Public Health and Communications continue to work very closely to ensure that strong public health messages are conveyed to a range of age groups and communities, in a way which is attractive and encourages people to engage.

#### National issues

- 3.18 On December 2<sup>nd</sup> Cambridgeshire and its Districts moved out of national lockdown and into Tier 2 (High Tier) of national restrictions. Because the risk of transmitting Covid-19 is much higher indoors, the restrictions make clear that people should only mix socially indoors with members of their own household or support bubble. This applies both to private houses and to venues such as restaurants. It's possible to mix socially out-doors with a group of up to six people. Pubs will not open unless they serve substantial meals as well as alcohol.

## **4 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 4.1 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.

## **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Following the Government's recovery plans for the UK, it is important to balance the requirements for people to get back to school and work, for communities and services to rebuild and for businesses to reopen, with the ongoing monitoring and control of risks from Covid-19. The work outlined above describes how this is being taken forward in Cambridgeshire.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local outbreak control plan	<a href="https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace#local-outbreak-control-plan-7-0">https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/coronavirus-covid-19-test-and-trace#local-outbreak-control-plan-7-0</a>