

SERVICE HIGHLIGHT REPORT – COVID-19 AND KEY SERVICE UPDATES

SERVICE AREAS:	Law & Governance
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REPORTING PERIOD:	March 2021
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council

Part 1 - COVID-19

NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

Peterborough – Election counts have been confirmed: -

1. Thursday 6 May 2021 – Verification only (Local's, Police and Mayoral)
2. Friday 7 May 2021 – Local counting
3. Saturday 8 May 2021 – Police and Mayoral counting

NEW COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- **Peterborough** – Continued pressures for Covid-safe delivery of May elections.
- **Peterborough Planning Highways and Property** – increased pressure for year-end receipts

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

- **Peterborough** – Election team continues to plan and prepare for Thursday 6 May 2021, with support from Health and Safety and Public Health. Constitutional Services teams also supporting aspects of the election planning.
- **Cambridgeshire CC Post Room** – considering options to merge bubbles as service has been unable to keep to demand in split shifts. Also reviewing issue of services sending large scale mailshots to the team without any forewarning.
- **Extension of Virtual Meetings Regulations** – Both Councils continue to await confirmation from Government regarding the extension of the Virtual Meetings Regulations. Contingency arrangements will need to be considered for Cambridgeshire as the Council will not be able to access its new building until late summer. Public Health advice will also be needed for any return to physical meetings.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **PCC Child Protection and ASC team** – The Senior Lawyer continues to have monthly COVID meetings with the Designated Family Judge, with representatives from PCC CSC and CCC CSC, and the Senior Lawyer at CCC.
- **Peterborough – Planning Highways and Property** – continues to have weekly meetings with the Planning and Highways team on Tuesday and Property on Thursday. Staff level returned to normal with the lawyer who had Covid on a phased return to work for half a day

Part 2 – BUSINESS AS USUAL ACTIVITY

KEY SERVICE UPDATES – INTERNAL / EXTERNAL

- **Peterborough – Mayoral Services** - Continuing to support the current serving Mayor and preparing for New Mayor May 2021.
- **Democratic Services** - Planning for post 7 May, with preparation and risk planning for face-to-face meetings, training for new and existing members.
- **Leaders Office** – Continuing to support the Leader and Cabinet members, with preparations in hand for new leader post 7 May 2021.
- **Members Services** – Continued support to all members.
- **FOI** - continue to work with services to respond to FOIs and take into account service demands.
- **Peterborough – Planning Highways and Property** – committees are proceeding as usual

FINANCIAL ISSUES

- **PCC Child Protection and ASC team/Joint Information Governance Services** – It has been agreed that, in light of the increased number of police requests to view CSC records for their criminal investigations and any criminal proceedings, a business case will be presented to JMT for additional support. It is anticipated that these requests will no longer be processed and actioned by the CP team but will come under the CCC side of the Information Governance team. The high number of Court cases held each week in Care cases may still result in the increased use of counsel.
- **Peterborough – Planning Highways and Property** – Recruiting for for a 4-day planning/property lawyer to fill vacancies.

PERFORMANCE ACTIVITIES AND CHALLENGES

- **PCC CP team** - On Tuesday the 9th of March, the formal launch of the President of the Family Division's Public Law Working Group report took place. The report is over 200 pages and sets out recommendations to achieve best practice in child protection cases. The President has expressed his wish that the new recommendations are implemented in all areas by July 2021, which the Designated Family Judge says will be a challenge. There will need to be specific training for the team on the new recommendations. The rollout of the new Public Law electronic Court application system is being trialled, but the implementation is currently on hold as the Designated Family Judge considers the implementation of the new reforms to be the most important issue.
- **Peterborough – Planning Highways and Property** – Teams struggling with capacity issues
- **Peterborough – Contracts/Procurement Team.** High level of instructions coming into team with known additional work arising from ICT contracts which will need to be covered from April.

UPCOMING ISSUES & HORIZON SCANNING AREAS

POSTIVE NEWS STORIES

- **Peterborough** – Flag raised by Mayor of Peterborough for Commonwealth Day, 8 March 2021.
- **Leader of Peterborough City Council** attended and spoke at the new 'Business Buzz' networking event, which is a new platform being rolled out across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.

CONFIDENTIAL BRIEFING AREAS (NOT FOR CIRCULATION OUTSIDE OF THE COUNCIL)

- **Peterborough - Leaders Office** – 1 member of the team has resigned and is leaving on Friday 7 May 2021.
- **PCC** - 2 members of the Mayoral Services team continue to support the Track and Trace programme.
- **PCC** - 2 further members of Constitutional Services team to return end of March from Track and Trace to support the election delivery.