

## Report of the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships

To: Communities, Social Mobility, and Inclusion Committee

Meeting Date: 8 July 2021

From: Service Director for Communities and Partnerships, Adrian Chapman

Electoral division(s): All

Key decision: No

Outcome: That the work of the service directorate supporting this Committee is delivered at pace and aligned to the council's priorities in order to achieve lasting positive change to the outcomes of our residents and neighbourhoods.

Recommendation: The Committee is asked to:

- a) Note and comment on the key themes discussed in this report; and
- b) Comment on and approve the key priority areas of focus described in the report, identifying additional priorities if relevant.

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# 1. Background

- 1.1 This Service Director report will be a standing item at each Committee meeting, and sets 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, Social Mobility and Inclusion 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. Aligned to the Joint Agreement of the new council leadership, the Committee has a fundamental role to play in delivering to many of the new priorities set out in that document, most notably to improve social mobility, to eradicate poverty, to ensure equality and inclusion are at the heart of our service and organisation, and to develop a library service in public ownership. This Service Director report provides information relating to this.

## 2.2 Proposed Service Priorities in 2021

- 2.2.1 The Joint Administration of the County Council has set out, in their Joint Administration Agreement, some of their early priorities under the core themes of COVID-19 recovery and tackling the climate emergency. The relevant section from the Agreement for the work of this Committee is as follows:

“We will tackle poverty, create opportunity, promote diversity, and do all we can to foster inclusion across the county. We will revive, further develop, and implement an anti-poverty strategy for Cambridgeshire. We will encourage and participate in place-based partnerships with District Councils and the Greater Cambridge Partnership where possible, to avoid duplication in local arrangements. We will task officers to consult with District Councils and other partners on ways to devolve more of the Council's budget to be managed locally. The CJAC model in Cambridge, with County and District Councillors sitting on a committee together to make decisions for their area, has worked well in the past. This model could be expanded to include more services and to include parish councils. We will continue to develop the concept of community hubs, and along with our partners seek to offer a broader range of services from them. We will aim to offer more accessible services such as youth services and children's centres, to provide more help for young people and families. We will keep the county's libraries open, in public ownership, and ensure their services remain free for everyone on Universal Credit.”

- 2.2.2 However, the cross-cutting nature of the Committee's work, particularly that relating to communities and working with partners across all sectors, means that there is a pivotal role to play in supporting delivery of many other priorities set out in the Agreement, including, for example, early health and care prevention strategies, community-based models of care, ensuring support for children and young people eligible for free school meals, and

supporting innovative ways to consult with residents on key issues including those relating to highways activity.

- 2.2.3 The work we have done historically to develop and embed the Think Communities approach as a way of working across multiple partners, but that places the resident at the centre of our approach, provides a solid platform from which this important work can be delivered. Think Communities provides a flexible approach to finding the best solution possible to both 'here and now' issues in our neighbourhoods as well as those challenges – such as poverty and inequality – that are much more deeply entrenched. Our response to supporting vulnerable people throughout the pandemic has enabled the Think Communities approach to be tested in real time. Identifying need at the earliest possible moment, identifying who is best placed to support that need, and then ensuring services, information and opportunities are available to the resident to support them were all front and centre principles for the way we have operated.
- 2.2.4 Although we continue to support the management and prevention of COVID-19, we are proposing to weave that work into the work necessary to meet the priorities set out above. Continuing to provide practical support for people who need to self-isolate or who are reluctant to get vaccinated is vital, but we need to deliver that alongside also considering the broader needs of the same residents and how best we can use the strength and ambition of the new leadership alongside the foundation we have established through Think Communities.
- 2.2.5 We also have some valuable services available to us to help achieve these priorities, alongside the principles of Think Communities. The Administration's commitment to public libraries provides a valuable springboard from which our work on tackling social immobility or supporting vital early prevention work can be achieved. Our adult skills service will be absolutely core to supporting people most impacted by COVID-19, and those who are the most excluded or deprived, to develop confidence and skills to find new and/or better paid work. Our Coronial and Registration services provide us with unique opportunities to engage with residents, sometimes at some of the most difficult moments of their lives, but these services, along with Trading Standards, also help to build a picture of the challenges communities are facing and to keep them safe from harm. And our community safety services can be bent towards supporting some of our highest risk victims of crime and abuse as well as supporting those people with some of the most complex challenges.
- 2.2.6 With all of this in mind, the proposed work priorities for the service directorate supporting this Committee are as follows:
- i. The rapid development of a Social Mobility Strategy, but also the highly practical coordination and delivery of tangible actions to help those facing the biggest challenges to improve their outcomes
  - ii. A full and positive review of our public library service to ensure it is fully aligned to the priorities set out in the Joint Administration Agreement, that the local offer matches the need of the neighbourhood it serves, and that we are positively exploiting every opportunity to promote our libraries, including mobile and community-based libraries, as core hubs for public service

- iii. The development of tangible and practical proposals for decentralising county council services, and leading the delivery of those, if agreed, working closely and collaboratively with our district and city council partners in the first instance
- iv. Working closely with our Community Resilience Group (c.50 organisations from across the public and not for profit sectors that meet to focus on key issues such as inequalities and tackling poverty) and the organisations that form our Place Leads Partnership (County/District/City councils, Councils for Voluntary Service, North and South Health Alliances, Public Health, and Police) to identify and address inequalities in communities
- v. Delivery in real terms against our new youth service frameworks, referred to later in this report, to ensure our young people are engaged and motivated and that we can best respond to their challenges and aspirations

The Committee is asked to comment on and endorse these priorities, as well as suggest other areas of focus necessary to achieve our collective goals.

## 2.3 COVID-19 Coordination and Response

2.3.1 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 group and those that form part of the Local Resilience Forum. The Countywide Coordination Hub continues to operate and be available to anybody needing advice and information, but is also able to provide practical support including help getting to and from a vaccine appointment, support to help someone self-isolate if there are barriers preventing them from doing so, and helping people access food and essential supplies if necessary. The Hub team is also supporting the vital work to ensure everyone eligible for a vaccine is able to take that offer up, including those who are reluctant or resistant. The latest summary of outputs from the Hub is as follows:

We have so far...



- 2.3.2 The Hub has also worked with partners in district and city councils and the voluntary sector to deliver the COVID Local Support Grant programme (previously known as the Winter Support Grant). The programme was due to end on 20 June 2021, and we successfully committed all of the available budget through a combination of provision of food vouchers to eligible children and young people, and support to district and city councils through the delegation of budgets from which small awards could be made to eligible households. However, we have now received confirmation that the scheme is to be further extended to 30 September 2021. We are currently reviewing the available budget and eligibility criteria in order to best support those in greatest need.
- 2.3.3 A major focus for our work at present is to support our NHS colleagues to increase take-up of the COVID-19 vaccines. A steering group has been established and is co-chaired by the county council and the clinical commissioning group, to focus on where and how best to target community engagement as well as practical activity. The work is rapidly evolving but includes expansive work with different communities alongside district and city council partners, work with employers to support vaccine take-up in their workforce, support for pop-up or large-scale vaccination sites, and work with vulnerable groups to ensure positive take-up. Further details will be shared at the Committee meeting given the agile nature of this work.
- 2.3.4 Although the work of the Hub has been instrumental in supporting our collective response to the pandemic, it has existed alongside the arrangements that were stood up in each of our district and city councils. Combined, this approach has created a network of agile and flexible support that will be just as valuable as we begin to focus more on recovery and many of the other priorities described above. The Place Leads Partnership, referred to above, now forms the engine room to the Hub network, and, in the County Council, we are building our plans to ensure the current Hub model becomes mainstreamed in our overall Think Communities delivery model.

## 2.4 Service Reports

2.4.1 Reports relating to key activity within the adult skills and community safety services are included separately on this agenda.

### 2.4.2 Think Communities

- i. Some headlines from the County Council's Think Communities place-based teams are set out below. These teams work closely with all of our partners, most notably District, City, Town, and Parish Councils, to identify priorities in a neighbourhood and deliver activity to achieve better outcomes.

#### Cambridge City:

- A new Statement of Intent has been developed which sets out the joint working between Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridge City Council and is being finalised by senior officers from both organisations.
- Officers are supporting Lateral Flow Testing, vaccine hesitancy conversations and working with the City Council local COVID-19 Hub.

#### East Cambridgeshire:

- The Parish and Community Forum (set up at the start of the pandemic) has completed a review and agreed to continue with bi-monthly remote meetings and an Annual meeting in person.
- A new Coordinator has been appointed to the 'Give Carers a Break' Project and she has already recruited her first two volunteers, has presented at the Parish and Community Forum, been introduced to the Older People's team, and arranged information packs for the new Think Communities bus.

#### Fenland:

- The team are supporting vaccine hesitancy and Lateral Flow Testing take-up, providing officer support to work with the district council including visits to houses of multiple occupation and visiting over 10 pharmacies to collect hard and soft data with key findings reported to the Vaccine Hesitancy Steering Group.
- Planning for a new Wisbech Think Communities Hub has restarted, with the Hub aiming to provide wrap around support to households with complex needs. The team are also working with NHS partners to test the need for and potential of a Community Hub at the Doddington hospital site. Think Communities will offer the bus a day a week for a few weeks to test demand.

#### Huntingdonshire:

- We are working with local councils and residents who identified demand for a Job Club in St Neots, working closely with the district council. Feedback from the community, local councillors and local organisations is being used as evidence of need along with data from the Department for Work and Pensions. This is a jointly delivered project with Cambridgeshire Skills.
- Connectors have contacted 20 Huntingdonshire parish council representatives this month with follow up visits completed with 8 different parishes. Outcomes so far include a planned community engagement event in Warboys, and regular

Winterton (new town) 'Community walkabouts' facilitated by Think Communities to bring people together, know their spaces, and enable locally led activities.

## South Cambridgeshire

- The team has established a network of public sector and community partners to work together to address some of the perceived gaps in services and support in the Orchard Park area. Outcomes so far include restarting detached youth work at the skatepark, weekly Stay and Play being progressed, and use of space in the Parish Council-run community centre.
  - The risk of the Northstowe community space being unavailable sooner than expected and alternative plans not being adequate were mitigated by work done alongside the District Council and the child and family centre who provided a strong enough case to extend the use of the temporary community facilities until 2022.
- ii. We have recently developed two infographics which set out our youth offer – to young people (figure 1) and to communities seeking support to set up their own provision (figure 2). These are set out below:

Figure 1

## Youth Engagement Offer | Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

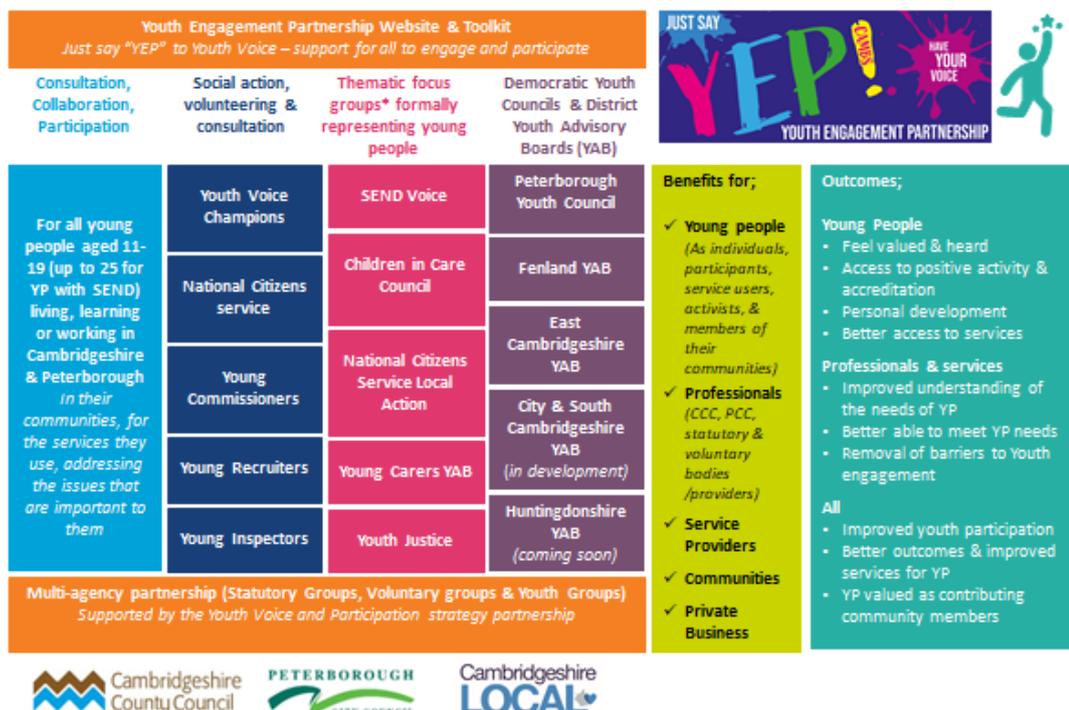


Figure 2



The work summarised in these infographics aligns well to the priorities of the new Administration and enable us to rapidly focus on the needs of young people as well as identifying new opportunities or gaps in support.

- iii. Also, in relation to supporting young people, work has started on our Youth Voice Champions programme. Champions will receive a monthly newsletter, consultation opportunities, development days and monthly meetings. Officers also attended the first Cambridge Youth Forum and spoke to promote our youth engagement offer, receive feedback on the new infographic, and offer support to multiple organisations.
- iv. Our National Citizen Service (NCS) team continues to focus on recruitment to the summer programme – we are currently top of the league table in the East Anglia region. Our NCS programme is also now an employer for the government’s new Kickstart scheme, and we will be employing one Kickstarter as an NCS Programme Assistant for a six-month period. This will be part of the NCS Trust’s gateway and follows an extremely successful 2 months’ work placement with a university student.
- v. The Youth Service-managed Community Reach Fund annual report and headline data 2020/21 has recently been published. Highlights included grants totalling £19,354 being awarded to 22 organisations or groups, use of the Community Reach Fund as a training and development tool to support additional funding to be secured for Cambridgeshire’s Youth Offer through alternative sources (in 2020/21 this exceeded

£1.5 million), and development of the COVID Enabler grant (up to £500 each), which saw grants totalling £12,382 being awarded to 27 organisations or groups.

### 2.4.3 Regulatory Services

- i. The annual Chief Coroner Report for 2020/21 has been submitted. The report shows the impact COVID-19 has had on the backlog of cases over 12 months old. Despite the measures put in place throughout lockdowns to ensure the service could continue with *some* inquests, there has been an increase of 44% from the previous year. Comparison to other Coronial jurisdictions will be undertaken to understand how other authorities have fared throughout the pandemic.
- ii. As part of COVID-19 recovery, the Trading Standards team are adopting a hybrid approach to inspections, completing as much as possible remotely, only visiting to carry out parts of the inspection that cannot be completed remotely. Risk Assessments for the service have been updated to reflect this. Trading Standards cases are slowly beginning to be heard in court. The team recently had success in court when a defendant entered a guilty plea in relation to Consumer Protection Rights offences, a £3k compensation order was also awarded. A further defendant in the same case is expected to be sentenced shortly.
- iii. The Cambridgeshire Registration Service can continue to operate from its location at Castle Lodge until the end of December 2021 with a move to the new Roger Ascham building scheduled for early 2022. Building work began on site at the new venue in May, with residents, neighbouring services such as the school and pupil referral unit, and the local councillor updated ahead of the work commencing. They will continue to be updated throughout the work.

## 3. Alignment with corporate priorities

### 3.1 Communities at the heart of everything we do

The primary focus of the responsibilities of the Service Director and his teams is on ensuring the needs and aspirations of our communities is well understood and that services and interventions are developed and implemented to meet those needs.

### 3.2 A good quality of life for everyone

The Committee's focus set out in the Joint Administration Agreement described earlier in this report, is summarised as 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.

### 3.3 Helping our children learn, develop and live life to the full

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 **Cambridgeshire: a well-connected, safe, clean, green environment**  
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, safe places for people to live in.
- 3.5 **Protecting and caring for those who need us**  
The report above sets out a range of measures that seek to support those who are most vulnerable or at-risk in our communities.

## 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

Ensuring and achieving equitable opportunities for all of our residents is central to the work of the Committee and its service directorate.

### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are a number of communications and engagement aspects to the work of this Committee 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 are vital in their role as community leaders in helping make sure we identify challenges, risks, and opportunities early and that we deliver a real and lasting change for our residents.

### 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.

#### 4.8 Environment and Climate Change Implications on Priority Areas

##### 4.8.1 Implication 1: Energy efficient, low carbon buildings.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation: There are no significant implications for this category

##### 4.8.2 Implication 2: Low carbon transport.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation: There are no significant implications for this category

##### 4.8.3 Implication 3: Green spaces, peatland, afforestation, habitats, and land management.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation: There are no significant implications for this category

##### 4.8.4 Implication 4: Waste Management and Tackling Plastic Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation: There are no significant implications for this category

##### 4.8.5 Implication 5: Water use, availability, and management:

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation: There are no significant implications for this category

##### 4.8.6 Implication 6: Air Pollution.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: N/A

Explanation: There are no significant implications for this category

##### 4.8.7 Implication 7: Resilience of our services and infrastructure and supporting vulnerable people to cope with climate change.

Positive/neutral/negative Status: Positive

Explanation: It is vital that the work of the Service Directorate directly supports the climate change and environmental targets set by the council, and that communities and residents are supported to make positive changes and choices.

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: Henry Swan

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 McMillen

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?

No

Name of Officer:

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