

SERVICE HIGHLIGHT REPORT – COVID-19 AND KEY SERVICE UPDATES

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Part 1 - COVID-19

NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT

THINK COMMUNITIES

- New Government guidance for the opening of community venues was released on 1 December in preparation for entering tier 2.
- National Youth Agency Guidance regarding engagement with high risk and vulnerable young people was also announced in November. The Think Communities team worked in conjunction with the Youth Inspired in Peterborough and through our Youth and Community Connectors in Cambridgeshire to give advice and guidance to groups in this regard. The guidance allows for 1 to 1 and groups of up to 15 young people who are vulnerable to continue activity as well as detached and outreach youth work.

REGULATORY SERVICES

- Sports events can now resume with spectators, albeit with a reduced capacity of 50%, or 2000 outdoors/1000 indoors (whichever is lower). Venues will be supported by our Regulatory Services staff to ensure that events are well planned and well managed.
- From 2 December, wedding ceremonies and civil partnerships, including receptions, will be able to take place with 15 in attendance. During the most recent lockdown it has been possible for Citizenship Ceremonies to take place in Cambridgeshire, and this will continue under the new tier system.

CITY COLLEGE PETERBOROUGH

- Adults with Downs Syndrome have been added to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list, and anyone attending the Day Opportunities service with this diagnosis has had a risk assessment and have maintained attendance.

NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY

COUNTYWIDE COVID-19 COORDINATION HUB

- Throughout November, during the national lockdown, the Hub network have worked together to ensure Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents are able to access support if needed. Nationally, it has been reported that demand has been low and this has been seen locally. During the lockdown, 1,607 residents registered on the new National Shielding Service System (NSSS) – where they registered as wanting support, all received a call by a member of the hub network (356 in total). Many were encouraged to register to ensure they had access to priority supermarket slots. Coming out of the national lockdown, the NSSS is no longer available for areas in Tier 2; however we will continue to receive the weekly Shielded Patients List, and we will remain available to anybody who needs support.
- Through November the County Hub worked alongside Adult Social Care to reach out and support Carers through the lockdown period. Hub and redeployed staff made 759 contacts to known carers offering support if required. As well as this Think Communities worked with Support Cambridgeshire to engage with and support our commissioned and non-commissioned VCS carer organisations to ensure they had the capacity for increased referrals through this time. Targeted and more subtle communication was also undertaken to reach out to those who may not consider themselves as carers, as well as to young carers, through schools, to offer support. A single plan across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for carers is now being created as part of the Think Communities approach.

- The Countywide Hub has been working with the district and city councils to further enhance the offer of support for those who need to self-isolate. This includes ensuring there is a robust process in place to support anyone that isn't eligible for support via the National Support Scheme, making sure they are able to access financial and other forms of support where needed.
- Learning from the Shielding Case Officer model from the first lockdown, a follow-up service is being developed with Public Health to ensure that during their period of self-isolation, residents will receive a wellbeing call to make sure they have the support in place that they need. November saw the plans being developed with a view that the initial roll out will be in Peterborough and Fenland. The wellbeing calls will feed into the hub network to ensure support can be arranged where necessary.

Winter Grant Scheme

- A model has been developed this month in collaboration with our Education Director, the district and city councils and key voluntary sector organisations to ensure that families and other vulnerable individuals have access to the support they might need throughout winter, as part of the Government's Winter Grant Support scheme. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have received £2.2m to be spent by 31 March 2021
- A 'Central Food Voucher' system will be coordinated and arranged by the countywide hub in collaboration with schools and other education providers. A voucher will be sent to eligible families automatically with each eligible child receiving a £15 voucher for each week of the school holidays (Christmas and February half term).
- Remaining funding will ensure others that may not be eligible for the central food voucher or that require further support are able to access it, via investment into established organisations. Additional support is likely to include food and fuel support, debt advice and other essential supplies.

REGULATORY SERVICES

- The service continues to receive enquiries relating to COVID-compliance. Trading Standards have received several enquiries relating to the regulations, with businesses obtaining counsel's legal interpretation of legislation to allow them to open. One particular challenge is those stores that sell both essential and non-essential items. Officers are also dealing with COVID compliance complaints, which are expected to increase once retail and hospitality reopen under the new tier system.
- With some relaxation of restrictions between 23-27 December, the service is planning for any increased demand relating to enhanced contact tracing, as well as increased need for intervention in localities across licensed premises.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- We continue to see higher than normal levels of medium risk domestic abuse referrals, particularly in north Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, placing increased pressure on outreach services. High risk referrals though are stable. Thresholds have been changed temporarily to enable the IDVA Service (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) to take medium risk referrals to help manage this demand, and all those who need support from the service are receiving it.
- The Peterborough Rapid Response Team has further stepped-up activity to maximise impact on COVID case numbers. This includes:
 - Tripling the number of on-street Marshals, which, allowing for shifts, will provide 20 marshals at any one time working 9am – 9pm seven days per week
 - Commissioning community groups to support target interventions, including Youth Inspired, YMCA, PARCA, Age UK and various faith groups leading to teams of staff now working alongside the RRT to engage with target groups
 - Enhancing further the communications work, including renewed and increased COVID signage across the city, and a post-lockdown action plan to ensure all messaging forums are being fully exploited. We have also introduced 'geo-locating' to allow for targeting postcode prevention messages via Bluetooth
- The Peterborough Christmas light switch-on arrangements have been made COVID-safe, with a virtual event planned.

PETERBOROUGH OUTREACH YOUTH WORK

- In response to increasing 0 -17 year old transmission in Peterborough, and as an integrated part of the Peterborough Enhanced Rapid Response Plan, we have commissioned Youth Inspired to work with the

youth sector to undertake outreach engagement across the City. Training was completed on 2 December to the first cohort of 10 youth workers who will be focusing on after school engagement in areas where evidence suggests young people are congregating. Key messages have been developed and youth workers will coordinate with the police and marshals to make the most of the resource across the City.

ENGAGEMENT WITH 18-30 YEAR OLDS

- To improve our reach to working age young people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, our Youth Voice Worker has been developing a toolkit for employers to support behaviour change with this age group. The draft toolkit has been developed and will be launched in December.

RECOVERY ACTIVITIES

REGULATORY SERVICES

- Having supported others to become competent to lead on contact tracing and with staff from the wider service redeployed to manage COVID enquiries, some officers from Environmental Health in Peterborough have been released to recommence business as usual activities mitigating the risk of potential food poisoning and hygiene complaints. The Food Standards Agency raised with Local Authority Chief Executives the impact COVID-19 has had on programmed food hygiene inspections nationally, and so our response is timely.

CITY COLLEGE PETERBOROUGH

- We have submitted a bid to the Combined Authority Innovation Fund to provide a one-stop information centre on training opportunities to residents and businesses to support skills improvement and retraining for employment post-COVID.
- Fortnightly meetings are being held between Day Opportunities and Adult Social Care to discuss and agree people that would like to return to service.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE SKILLS

- A range of 40 online courses are now being offered to support social and economic recovery.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- An outreach worker for Peterborough Women's Aid, funded through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Local Authority, is being recruited to support the additional demand for domestic abuse support in Peterborough.
- We are also recruiting an additional domestic abuse worker in Peterborough to work specifically with Eastern European communities, where there has been a disproportionate increase in cases.
- Our refuges all now have COVID tests on site, to enable rapid testing of any symptomatic residents.

CULTURE AND LEISURE (PETERBOROUGH)

- Peterborough Museum is scheduled to reopen on 4 December, and Flag Fen will reopen on 21 December (for the first time ever in winter). The Key Theatre will reopen for a Christmas run of films.

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

N/A

NEW COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

The Coroner Service is preparing a business case to request funding be approved to purchase Perspex screens that can be used during Inquests. Purchasing of screens would allow smaller court spaces to be used whilst remaining COVID compliant, reducing the cost of hiring larger venues which would far outweigh the cost of the screens.

Funding has been agreed for an additional Independent Domestic Violence Adviser working with Eastern European communities in Peterborough.

Arts Council England recovery grant funding was secured for Peterborough prior to the second lockdown. The project plan is now being re-profiled, as requested by ACE, but it is hoped that the grant value will remain the same.

A range of Rapid Response interventions in Peterborough are now being funded through the COVID Outbreak Management Fund.

WORKFORCE CHALLENGES

REGULATORY SERVICES

- The substantial continued workload for Environmental Health in Peterborough – having the responsibility for enforcement of COVID legislation, leading the contact tracing pilot, working with the Public Health Workplace Cell, and an increase in food poisoning and contamination complaints as well as the backlog of food hygiene inspections – is causing immense pressure on the team. To ease the pressure, approval is in place for 3 full-time fixed term Regulatory Officers to be recruited to, with costs covered by a Government grant. The first post was recruited to at the start of November.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Vlogs have been produced, showing the lead Councillors for community safety in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough highlighting that domestic abuse services remain open during the second lockdown.
- Further, a social media campaign ran and press releases were issued for White Ribbon Day on 25 November and the following 16 days of Action. White Ribbon Day itself was also commemorated by a flag raising at Shire Hall and Peterborough Town Hall by the Leaders of both councils.

Part 2 – BUSINESS AS USUAL ACTIVITY

KEY SERVICE UPDATES – INTERNAL / EXTERNAL

THINK COMMUNITIES

- Continued work has taken place in November to further develop the operating model, systems and procedures for Think Communities, with the cross-Departmental project team now meeting with representatives from Business Intelligence and Finance to ensure trajectory management is progressed. Officers from Adults and Children’s services are also in the membership to ensure join up between the Best Start in Life and Adults Positive Challenge programmes.
- We continue to drive forward with recruitment to put in place posts in line with agreed investment. Interviews for Place Coordinator posts in Huntingdonshire and Fenland took place on 26 November and 3 December with panel representatives from Huntingdonshire voluntary sector and Fenland District Council.
- An additional £777,925 has been awarded to Peterborough by MHCLG to further the work of Think Communities. The funding will allow us to deploy additional resource in areas such as linking vulnerable young people to positive activity within communities as well as furthering our ability to enable increased community capacity using time credits and volunteer champion training.
- The Cambridgeshire Innovate and Cultivate Fund (ICF) Recommendation Panel met on 30 November and approved 8 second stage applications to be recommended to Committee on 3 December. Ongoing work is being undertaken to collate the 2019-20 ICF Evaluation Report which will be taken to Communities and Partnerships Committee in January. This will analyse the impacts of funded projects on beneficiaries, communities and the council.
- To ensure that within the Think Communities approach we continue to put communities at the heart of everything we do, we are planning to hold community engagement events in the 26 identified Service Delivery Areas over the next 3 months. The purpose of the events will be to launch the newly developed front facing brand of ‘Cambridgeshire Local’ and ‘Peterborough Local’, as well as to listen and work alongside communities and partners to understand their individual strengths and challenges.

- After a break in the parish council liaison group meetings in Peterborough, these were restarted in November with a refreshed format. The meetings will now be held quarterly with the agenda having a standing agenda item to support parishes in the development of the John Clare Countryside Project. As well as this our Community Connectors in Peterborough will be supporting communication and engagement with Parishes as part of Peterborough's Enhanced Rapid Response plan for COVID-19.
- Support for the scams partnership continues to be very strong with the membership growing all the time; we now have 96 supporters all committing to spread scams awareness and deliver scams resilience within their communities. With the present rate of growth we expect to reach treble figures by Christmas! In addition to the above we now have an additional 234 subscribers to our newsletters and alerts, keeping themselves and others safe from scams. We have seen great examples of reciprocity this month where our supporters have shared valuable information with us for onward dissemination.
- Both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Military Covenant Boards met recently, and this was the last meeting attended by Vikki Barr (Development officer) who received much praise for her work over the 2 year project. To ensure the continuation of the work we will be recruiting a new internally funded covenant officer.

REGULATORY SERVICES

- Trading Standards have formed 3 new partnerships with food businesses as part of the Primary Authority Scheme - the scheme allows businesses to receive paid-for assured business advice, meaning they are protected from other authorities challenging the actions where they have acted on this advice.
- Inspections of trade premises have been taking place, these having not done so earlier in the year due to restrictions. Most Food Standards and Animal Feed visits are taking place remotely, with on-site follow up inspections taking place where deemed appropriate e.g. high risk premises.
- Interviews for Assistant Coroners are taking place week commencing 30 November. The standard of applicants was so high, 18 candidates are being interviewed. Successful appointments will help clear the backlog of Inquests resulting from the pandemic.
- The Housing Enforcement team quickly responded to an electrical safety concern in four flats in Peterborough and successfully took action to rectify it. The four families, all with young children, are now staying in a local hotel, paid for by the landlord while an electrician makes the accommodation safe. If the landlord had not complied a notice would have been served and emergency accommodation found through the council's housing needs team.
- A recent Inquest relating to the deaths of 5 young women as a result of the care they received for eating disorders has gained media attention. The families of four of the five women attended the final day of the Inquest and expressed their gratitude to the team for the service that has been provided to them in such tragic circumstances. It is hoped that the findings, determinations and conclusions of these inquests will go some way towards achieving progress in the management and treatment of the condition being made locally, regionally and nationally. The Assistant Coroner who heard the case will be completing a 'Prevention of Future Death Report' following the outcomes of the Inquests.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

- The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Board has agreed to support proposals for a post to support parents experiencing Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse.
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough will take part in a project with the Early Intervention Foundation to undertake a system mapping of services to support children experiencing domestic abuse.
- The Counting Every Adult service assembled a group of senior decision makers to look at the strategic direction of our systems change work in relation to those who face multiple disadvantage, using the Making Every Adult Matter approach. This included our own directorate, the police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Foundation Trust, Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridge City Council and Public Health, along with key operational partners.

CULTURE AND LEISURE (Peterborough)

- Work has begun on updating the Museums Accreditation Scheme due to a change of Governance as a result of the transfer of the collections from Vivacity's management.

- An application was submitted on behalf of City Culture Peterborough to Historic England's Regional Capacity Fund for c. £90k to complete the conservation of the Must Farm boats. Peterborough City Council have provided 40% match funding.
- Work has begun on reaccreditation for the Archives Service as well as on an architects brief for the new building.
- The New Regional Pool development plan was approved by Cabinet on 30 November with an action for a working group to be formed to discuss the hydrotherapy pool options. The development is working alongside the Peterborough Investment Partnership to deliver a replacement for the current 45-year-old facility that is no longer fit for purpose.
- A brief and specification are being agreed currently to confirm the detail required by leisure consultants ready to start work on the full feasibility for a potential new leisure facility in Werrington. This will confirm the best location for the facility as highlighted by Sport England with the lack of leisure facilities within this area and the city as a whole. The facility mix will include as a minimum a 6 lane 25m pool, 100 station fitness studio, 2 class studios, a cafe and Library area.
- Table Tennis England and Viridor have granted Living Sport and the council £20,000 (£10,000 each) for outdoor table tennis tables across the city. Due to the current restrictions Table Tennis England have advised install to take place in March 2021 which will see at least a further 5 tables installed in more rural areas.

FINANCIAL ISSUES

- Peterborough and Cambridgeshire have each received £50K government grant to support with preparation for the new Domestic Abuse Bill. A plan is being developed to show how this will be used and how we will meet the new statutory duties from April 2021.

UPCOMING ISSUES & HORIZON SCANNING AREAS

- Trading Standards are working with the Local Resilience Forum to ensure preparations are in place should the team need to take further action in response to a recent outbreak of Avian Influenza. A Prevention Area was put in place across the whole of England on 11 November. Currently, part of a surveillance zone in Leicestershire reaches into Rutland, this being the responsibility of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Trading Standards as part of a shared service agreement. All registered bird keepers in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have already been contacted using information from our own database and that provided by the Animal and Plant Health Agency. The current focus is to continue to push out communications to raise awareness and ensure the message reaches bird keepers who are not registered (those with smaller backyard flocks). Communications also inform members of the public how to report breaches.