

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD AT 4:30PM ON
22 JULY 2020**

VIRTUAL MEETING: PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL'S YOUTUBE PAGE

Committee Members Present: Councillors C. Harper (Chairman), A. Ali, S. Barkham, R. Bisby, S. Bond, R. Brown, C. Burbage, G. Casey, A Coles, N. Day, A. Ellis, D Fower, Amjad Iqbal, John Fox, Judy Fox, T. Haynes, J. Howard, J. Howell, M Jamil, D. Jones, S. Lane, E. Murphy, D. Over, L. Robinson, B. Rush, N Sandford, N. Simons, H. Skibsted, S. Warren, C Wiggin and I. Yasin

Co-opted Members:

Alistair Kingsley – Independent Co-opted Member
Claire Watchorn – Parent Governor Representative
Flavio Vettese – Statutory Education Co-opted Member representing the Roman Catholic Church
Peter Cantley – Statutory Education Co-opted Member representing the Church of England
Parish Councillor Junaid Bhatti
Parish Councillor June Bull
Parish Councillor Keith Lievesley
Parish Councillor Neil Boyce

Also Present: Councillor Holdich, Leader of the Council and Member of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Councillor Fitzgerald, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Public Health
Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education, Skills and University
Councillor Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments
Councillor Seaton, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor Walsh, Cabinet Member for Communities
Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation
Councillor Farooq, Cabinet Member for Digital Services and Transformation
Councillor Cereste, Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and Environment
Councillor Bashir Cabinet Advisor for Children's Services

Officers Present: Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive of Peterborough City Council
Charlotte Black, Service Director: Adults and Safeguarding
Wendi Ogle Welbourn – Executive Director, People and Communities
Lou Williams, Service Director, Children and Safeguarding
Jonathan Lewis, Service Director, Education
Adrian Chapman, Service Director for Communities and Partnerships

Dr Liz Robin, Director for Public Health
Steve Cox, Executive Director Place & Economy
Mohamed Hussein, Director: Housing Needs and Supply
Graham Hughes, Service Director, Highways and Transport
Sue Grace, Director, Customer and Digital Services
Amanda Askham, Director of Business Improvement and Development
Peter Carpenter, Acting Corporate Director Resources
James Collingridge, Head of Environmental Partnerships
Fiona McMillan, Director of Law and Governance
Rachel Edwards, Head of Constitutional Services
Pippa Turvey, Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager
Paulina Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Jane Webb, Senior Democratic Services Officer
David Beauchamp, Democratic Services Officer
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming those members of the public and press who were watching the livestream of the meeting through the Council's YouTube page. Due to government guidance on social distancing, the meeting took place remotely in accordance with current legislation as laid out in the [Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels \(Coronavirus\) \(Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings\) \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2020](#) which made provision for remote attendance at, and remote access to Council meetings. The meeting was also following the Peterborough City Council's Virtual Meeting Protocol

The Democratic Services Officer conducted a roll call of Members and Officers in attendance.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors K. Aitken, A. Dowson (Councillor Murphy in attendance as substitute) J. Goodwin, S. Hemraj (Councillor D. Fower in attendance as a substitute), S. Qayyum (Councillor A. I Iqbal in attendance as substitute), Co-opted Members Susie Lucas and Rizwan Rahemtulla,

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

Co-opted Member June Bull declared that she was a trustee of Vivacity and would therefore not take any part in discussions in the relevant section of the report.

12. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions received for this meeting.

13. PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCILS REPOSE TO COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

The Chief Executive of Peterborough City Council introduced the report which provided an update on the Council's ongoing response to the coronavirus pandemic, work with partners and communities to protect the most vulnerable and developing work to help Peterborough to recover from the emergency,

Questions and observations were made around the following sections of the report.

Background and Public Health Context

- Members asked what measures were in place to restrict large gatherings, e.g. car cruise events. The Director of Public Health responded that there was coordination with the police and other relevant partners on these matters via local command and control structures, local resilience forums, strategic coordination groups and several sub-groups. Due to the increase in cases since the report was written, it was important to monitor events and gatherings carefully and work with partners to minimise any increased risk of COVID-19.
- It was agreed that the Director of Public Health would investigate further the police response to a car cruise event held in Peterborough on Saturday 18 July and pass on the Committee's concerns regarding lack of consistency in police enforcement of large gatherings to the Multi-Agency forum.
- Members asked if the Council had moved from being a leader in Test and Trace to following the work of other councils. Members also felt that furloughed Vivacity staff could have assisted the Public Health Team. The Chief Executive responded that the COVID-19 response under the Civil Contingencies Act from the Council and other partners had been reported to the Joint Scrutiny Committee on two occasions. Central Government had visited Peterborough and assessed the City's response as being close to best practice.

Councillor Over joined the meeting at 4.44pm.

- The Director of Public Health acknowledged that it was challenging for the Council to balance supporting the objectives of the upcoming Black Lives Matter movement whilst also discouraging large gatherings due to the pandemic. It was suggested that Councillors should be role models in public health and consider not attending the protest while finding other ways to demonstrate their support for fighting injustice. The protest itself would be made as safe as possible.
- Members raised specific concerns regarding the policing of a large gathering in Paston. It was agreed that the Director of Public Health would refer these concerns to the Multi-Agency forum as per the action below.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Director of Public Health to investigate further the police response to a car cruise event held in Peterborough on Saturday 18th July and pass on the Committee's concerns regarding lack of consistency in police enforcement of large gatherings to the Multi-Agency forum.

Test and Trace

- Members asked if there were any plans to introduce additional testing centres alongside those at the East of England Showground and Gladstone Park in light of Peterborough's COVID-19 infection rate ranking increasing from 8th to 11th in the country. The Director of Public Health responded that feedback had indicated that not everyone could access the Showground easily without a car. The Council planned to work with the regional Test and Trace Centre and the military to find appropriate sites for mobile test centres. The Council aimed to increase the accessibility of testing, especially in the Northern and Central postcodes of Peterborough, rather than siting test centres in particular hotspots. There were strict criteria that needed to be achieved for a site to be deemed suitable.
- The Director of Public Health stated the importance of following the government's testing and self-isolation guidelines if a person experienced symptoms of COVID-19.

- Details of possible new testing locations were not available at the meeting but it was agreed that conversations between Councillors and the Director of Public Health regarding the needs of specific areas would take place outside the meeting.
- It was agreed that the Director of Public Health would discuss with colleagues improvements to the signage directing people to the COVID-19 Test Centre at the Showground to avoid the public having to ask local residents for directions.
- Members requested an assessment of the success of the test centre at the Gladstone Park Community Centre, in light of potential language barriers in the area. The Director of Public Health responded that the success of the mobile testing centres had been variable, but Gladstone Park had been used steadily. The Service Director, Communities and Partnerships responded that extensive work had been undertaken to improve the accessibility of testing at Gladstone Park, e.g. multi-lingual leaflets and liaison with the Mosque and community leaders. Officers would welcome any input from Members to improve accessibility of testing further.
- Members asked why the Showground was chosen as a test centre given its poor accessibility for people without a car. The Director of Public Health responded that the Showground was a regional test centre, not a Peterborough-specific one, so its accessibility from the A1 was a key reason for its selection, especially as it was selected at a time when access to testing was lower.
- The Director of Public Health outlined the current guidance for testing and self-isolation for people with and without COVID-19 symptoms. This information was available on the Peterborough City Council website.
- Members asked if military assistance was requested by the Council or the Secretary of State. The Director of Public Health responded that in Peterborough, the military had been requested by the Council, unlike in some other areas. Peterborough's relatively high infection rates were a concern to Central Government but the City was coordinating its own response while being able to request additional support if needed. The response had been quick and positive. Work had been done with the Regional Centre to identify the best testing sites.
- Officers aimed to communicate with the relevant Councillors when a testing centre was due to be set up in their ward. A Member's concerns regarding lack of notification in one case was noted and officers would aim to ensure communication took place in the future.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Director of Public Health to discuss with colleagues' improvements to the signage directing people to the COVID 19 Test Centre at the Showground to avoid the public having to ask local residents for directions.
2. The Director of Public Health to ensure that councillors are advised in advance of any test centres being opened up in their wards.

Peterborough Hub

- Members requested an update on the status of the Peterborough Hub's volunteer programme. The Executive Director - People and Communities responded that the Hub still had access to many volunteers who were used in a variety of ways, e.g. food banks and alongside parish councillors. The Council would continue to encourage new volunteers, especially those with knowledge of economic hardship.

Shielded Programme

There were no questions on this section of the report.

Think Communities

- Members requested information on plans to re-energise the Think Communities programme in 2020/21. The Service Director, Communities and Partnerships responded that delivering Think Communities in real time had inspired officers throughout the pandemic and it had been demonstrated that this was the right approach to support people. A roadmap for progress between now and March 2021 had been developed and it was agreed that this would be shared with Members as a briefing note. By March 2021 there would be a comprehensive Think Communities offer available.
- Members commented that although interesting meetings had taken place regarding the Think Communities pilot in Orton Longueville, different aspects of the programme did not seem to integrate well it and it was unclear who would be responsible for ensuring this took place. The Service Director responded that fourteen Think Communities pilots had been undertaken which helped to inform the development of the model but their scope was more limited. The Think Communities programme would be a comprehensive approach to address the needs of all residents in a particular area and would be fully coordinated.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Service Director, Communities and Partnerships to provide a briefing note to Councillors containing details of the future Road Map for progressing work on the Think Communities approach.

Vivacity

- Officers were working closely with Vivacity during the 90 day exit period and no opportunities would be missed to apply for part of the £1.75bn government support package for the performing arts. Members were encouraged to monitor the situation and hold officers to account on this issue.
- The Service Director – Communities and Partnerships summarised plans to re-open leisure facilities as follows:
 - 25th July – Regional Pool
 - Between 25th July and end of August - Premier Fitness, Jack Hunt Pool and Gym, Bushfield Leisure Centre and Werrington Leisure Centre
 - Discussions ongoing regarding Bretton Water Park and hoping for positive news shortly
 - The Lido would not open this season due to time required to recommission it and make it COVID-secure. The combination of the short remaining season and the costs involved made re-opening the site too risky. The Friends of Peterborough Lido group were understanding and would work with officers to ensure next season's re-opening would be a success and examine other alternative uses for the Lido buildings to enable them to be used more throughout the year.
 - Early August – Central Library subject to COVID-secure measures
 - End of August – Bretton, Orton, Hampton and Dogsthorpe Libraries
 - End of September – Other libraries including the Mobile Library
 - No current plans for the re-opening of Museums or Flag Fen.
 - Officers were keen to open Flag Fen as soon as possible as well as find museum space for the Must Farm findings to keep them local. This has the potential to be a site of international renown.

- Work was ongoing regarding the re-opening of residual services, e.g. the Key Theatre.
- Members noted that the Council would soon be taking responsibility for leisure facilities again and asked if operation by other businesses or voluntary groups would be considered in the future. The Service Director, Communities and Partnerships responded that in the short-term, direct running of services by the Council was the only viable option. The Council would reflect on Vivacity's tenure and consider post-COVID demand for services and consider the best delivery arrangements in the future. Community management would be considered.
- There was every intention for the Lido to open for the next season. The decision not to open next year was based on advice from Vivacity and the Public Health department and a change of operator would not cause this advice to change.
- Members asked when the decision was taken not to re-open the Lido and felt that problems with Vivacity had been previously apparent and there was a lack of clear direction. Officers responded that the Council was facing a unique set of circumstances due to Vivacity giving notice during lockdown. It was difficult to have timely conversations with 98% of staff on furlough. Decisions made regarding the use of public money needed to involve due diligence, which could take a long time.
- Most Vivacity staff would be subject to the TUPE rules and become employees of the Council. Those for whom this did not apply had been made aware.
- Members asked why indoor swimming pools were being opened before the Lido given that COVID-19 transmission rates were lower outside. The Director of Public Health responded that the short time period for re-opening the Lido to a COVID-secure standard and the possibility for large gatherings and queues were factors in this decision.
- The Director of Public Health stated that the Public Health department had not been formally asked for advice regarding the re-opening of indoor swimming pools but the decisions to re-open were based on clear national guidance. Indoor pools were more likely to be capable of being COVID secure than the Lido but a close analysis had not yet been undertaken.
- Some members felt that that direct operation of leisure facilities by the Council should be considered. Alternative models could also be examined such alternative types of trust models with having workers and customers being on the board of the new leisure operator. The Service Director – Communities and Safety responded that all options were on the table and alternative delivery vehicles would be considered.
- Members asked why Werrington Leisure Centre was not reopening at the same time as the Regional Pool. The Service Director responded that Vivacity had significant numbers of their workforce on furlough and hence limited staff to make facilities COVID-secure for re-opening. It was also important to understand the needs of communities.
- The Service Director clarified that all staff subject to TUPE would be protected, regardless of the timelines for facility re-opening.
- The Director of Public Health informed Members that 'R' ratings were not reliable on a sub-regional level. Infection rates per 100,000 people would instead be used to assess whether leisure facilities could re-open. The Service Director added that higher infection rates would not necessarily entail centres remaining closed; it was one of many factors to consider. Officers were conscious that people had been locked down and were passionate about re-opening facilities.
- Members queried levels of communication to Vivacity customers, if the Council were overseeing this and if reduced subscription rates were available for those in difficult financial circumstances due to COVID-19. The Service Director reminded members that Vivacity was still responsible for the service though the Council was working closely with them to ensure consistent messaging. The Council did not have access to Vivacity's customer database. Vivacity were considering various options to help customers use services again although the details had not yet been disclosed.

- It was believed that the only provision for children's summer leisure activities at present was at the Key Theatre, which would be made available in 1-2 weeks' time. It was agreed that the Service Director would find out if Vivacity were running any other activities.
- It was clarified that the Director of Public Health provided advice on the re-opening of the Lido. The decision not to re-open the facility was taken jointly between the Council and Vivacity.
- Ward councillors would continue to be updated on the progress of re-opening facilities in Werrington and this approach would be replicated across all wards.
- All available information regarding the transfer of service from Vivacity to the Council had been shared with members. The situation was fast moving and updates would be provided. The relationship between the two organisations was strong with good progress being made and officers were confident that the transition would be smooth.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Service Director, Communities and Partnerships to enquire if Vivacity were running any other activities for children over the summer holidays, besides those taking place at the Key Theatre.

Children's Education.

All questions on this section were answered by Jonathan Lewis – Service Director, Education.

- There was currently no additional funding available for the extra school transport required to maintain school bubble arrangements. It was agreed that the Service Director – Education would provide members of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee, with information on any guidance and additional funding that may be received from the Department for Education to deal with additional demands on school transport provision due to bubble requirements for certain children as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Members commented that schools were already having to make plans for transport, and most were planning to use existing levels of transport. Members asked how schools would cope without extra resources given bubble requirements and when the deadline would be for making new arrangements. The Director responded that local authorities were responsible for statutory school transport. The guidance on bubbles was challenging for secondary schools, which entailed seating plans and face coverings. The Council planned to support parents to bring their own children to school and were working to ensure appropriate measures were put in place. The lack of extra funding was challenges and meant no new buses or tail lift vehicles could be provided. Plans would be agreed over the summer holidays and parents would be written to advising them of the arrangements. The Council was working with special schools to keep bubbles in place.
- Members commented that approaches to remote learning varied considerably between schools and asked how best practice was being identified and shared. The Director responded that school improvement advisors had met with the head teachers of all maintained schools to ensure best practice was followed. Daily updates were also provided to schools. There were excellent national examples and case studies to follow.
- The Council had a statutory duty to provide Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCs) and these requirements had been met despite the lockdown by bringing in additional staff. Some face to face contact had been needed. It was agreed that the Service Director – Education would provide members of the Children and Education Scrutiny

Committee with an update in the autumn regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCs) in Peterborough.

- Members asked how schools were following the National Education Union's guidance on bereavement and how they were making arrangements for the wellbeing of bereaved pupils. The Director responded that the following work had taken place in this area:
 - Discussions with a psychologist
 - Webcasts and Training
 - Voluntary sector support
 - Clear signposting
 - Ensuring adequate team capacity
 - Monitoring
 - Integration with social care and early help services
 - Support for children to re-integrate.
- Members and Officers praised the work of the Peterborough Music Hub which had continued to deliver virtual lessons during the pandemic.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Service Director – Education to provide members of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee, with information on any guidance and additional funding that may be received from the Department for Education to deal with additional demands on school transport provision due to bubble requirements for certain children as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The Service Director – Education to provide members of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee with an update in the Autumn regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic had affected Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCs) in Peterborough.

Children's Services

Questions on this section were answered by the Executive Director - People and Communities and the Service Director – Children and Safeguarding.

- The Council commissioned a service for young carers and would continue to do so. It was agreed that the Executive Director and Service Director for Education would confirm what summer activity programmes were in place for young carers.
- Members expressed concern that safeguarding training on the Council's website was only at an introductory level. Members requested information on designated safeguarding leads, statutory refreshers courses, plans for extra training in the autumn (e.g. webinars) and any implications for safeguarding. Officers responded that plans were in place and it was agreed that the Executive Director – People and Communities would provide members of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee with a report on what additional plans were in place for extra safeguarding training in the autumn.
- Family courts had been operating well by embracing virtual hearings and arranging facilities to support families and parents. A Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCAS) survey indicated that only one case in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough was delayed due to COVID-19. There were delays in the Youth Courts however and it was agreed that details would be provided to the committee outside the meeting.

ACTIONS AGREED:

1. The Executive Director – People and Communities and the Service Director – Education to confirm what summer activity programmes were in place for young carers.
2. The Executive Director – People and Communities to provide members of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee with a report on what additional plans were in place for extra safeguarding training in the autumn.
3. The Director of Children’s Services and Safeguarding to provide details of any delays in relation to Youth Justice Courts.

Adult Social Care - Test and Trace

- Members asked when the impact of test and trace on social care providers would be known. The Service Director, Adults and Safeguarding responded that there had not been any issues yet but the Council was aware of possible impacts on staffing and would continue to monitor the situation.

Infection Control Fund

There were no questions on this section of the report.

Care Homes

- Members requested information on the Council’s predicted impact and understanding of the risk of a second wave of COVID-19 in the winter, noting that mortality from the virus reduced with increasing temperature. The Service Director, Adults and Safeguarding responded that this was an area of concern and a second wave would be challenging for care homes. Staff were currently tested weekly and residents for whom there was particular concern were tested monthly. Experience had been gained and care home support plans and infection control funding had been put in place to ensure homes were ready for a second wave. It was noted that some of the City’s most vulnerable residents lived in care homes and this was a crucial issue.

Delayed Transfer of Care

- Members requested an update on ‘step down’ facilities for people who could not be safely isolated in care homes. The Service Director, Adults and Safeguarding responded that discussions were still ongoing with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). One model being explored involving using block beds that had been already commissioned with additional wrap-around health services but no final decision had been made. A decision would be needed quickly if infection rates started to rise.

Bereavement Service

- Members recognised the good work of the Bereavement Service and passed on their thanks.

Registration Service (Register Office)

There were no questions on this section of the report.

Waste

Questions on this section were answered by the Head of Environmental Partnerships unless otherwise stated.

- Issues regarding traffic at the Household Recycling Centre (HRC) and difficulties in accessing the nearby food bank were noted. Officers were reviewing traffic management daily and working closely with the HRC operators and the Highways Team. Concerns regarding the volume of traffic would be passed on. Traffic was unpredictable and there were no specific peaks and troughs identified. Officers would ask FCC Environmental to coordinate any trends and pass this information on to members if any were identified.
- Members asked when garden waste collections would return to taking place fortnightly instead of monthly. Officers responded that weekly meetings with Aragon Direct Services took place to monitor tonnages. Residual and recycling tonnages had increased significantly requiring resources to be diverted to ensure these core services were maintained, though there had been a slight drop recently. Officers were working on a proposal with Aragon to bring back fortnightly garden waste collections and Members would be kept updated on the progress of this.
- Members requested updates on the Bulky Waste Collection service and requested that advice be given to Bretton Parish Council on the subject. Officers responded that the resource normally assigned to bulky waste collection had been re-assigned to collecting the core bin service. Officers were monitoring the issue and trying to restore bulky waste services, while prioritising the main bin collection services.
- Members requested advice on rat issues in Orton, stating that residents had been advised to use private pest control. Officers responded that the Council's Pest control team would address reports of rats on Council land. Residents feeding birds in their gardens could contribute to this issue. Residents were encouraged to put waste in double bags in affected areas.
- Members commented on the drop in recycling performance and asked how this compared to previous trends. Officers responded that recycling rates were 16% higher compared with the same time last year. Although general side waste was not accepted, recyclable side waste in clear bags would be accepted. Officers were keen to ensure that these trends continued after the pandemic and that residents made full use of all bins.
- Members questioned whether brown bin collections should have been suspended, asked how much the Council had lost in revenue from the service and suggested that the charge should be scrapped. Officers responded that the suspension of the brown bin service had been based on government advice to secure the continued provision of the core service. An update would be provided on the brown bin service soon.
- Members asked if the suspension of the brown bin service had led to surplus waste being placed in black bins. Officers responded that there had been a 30% increase in HRC tonnage which was positive as garden waste was being recycled. No compositional analysis was available for black bins. It was agreed that The Head of Environmental Partnerships would analyse the calorific value of black bin waste to establish if there had been an increase in garden waste placed in black bins due to the reduction of the brown bin service.
- Members asked what residents should do in light of the suspension of bulky waste collections. Officers responded that the HRC was available although it was acknowledged that this was not accessible for everyone. There were also private companies who could provide bulky waste collection.
- There was no additional cost to the Council of tackling excess fly-tipping as Aragon was paid a fixed fee to deal with the issue. Fly-tipping was monitored weekly and levels were now down to the same level as the previous year and continued to improve.
- The current advice on the HRCs website to only visit for essential purposes was questioned by members in light of the issues surrounding garden waste. It was agreed that the Head of Environmental Partnerships would liaise with staff at the Household, Waste and Recycling Centre (HRC) to discuss whether the current advice

on the Website regarding encouraging essential visits only should be reviewed. It was suggested that changing the advice could lead to more traffic problems and make it more difficult to ensure social distancing.

ACTIONS AGREED:

1. The Head of Environmental Partnerships to analyse the calorific value of black bin waste to establish if there had been an increase in garden waste placed in black bins due to the reduction of the brown bin service.
2. The Head of Environmental Partnerships to liaise with staff at the Household, Waste and Recycling Centre (HRC) to discuss whether the current advice on the Website regarding encouraging essential visits only should be reviewed.

Aragon Direct Services

All questions in this section were answered by the Head of Environmental Partnerships.

- Members praised Aragon Direct Services for their good work despite staff shortages caused by COVID-19. It was suggested that furloughed staff from Vivacity or other Council partners could have been seconded to Aragon to assist.
- When fortnightly brown bin collections were restored, new customers would be able to join the scheme at the same time.
- Discounted compost would continue to be available for delivery to houses.
- In response to a Member's concerns, it was agreed that the Head of Environmental Partnerships would ensure adequate bin collections and road sweeping were taking place in the City Centre.
- Play areas in Hampton had been opened because they were operated by a private company. Following central government guidance, there were no plans for the Council to open additional play areas at this time, beyond the one that was already open. This single site had opened as there was a gardener based in the park who could close it easily. Although government guidance allowed the use of play areas, there were strict requirements in place to make them COVID-secure which would not be feasible to roll out to every play area. Work was underway with the Communications team to make residents aware of which facilities could be used. Officers were still inspecting signage and equipment weekly to ensure it was safe. It was agreed that the Head of Environmental Partnerships would provide clearer communication on the plans for the reopening of PCC-owned play areas.
- Members raised specific concerns regarding overflowing bins in public spaces and asked how frequently these were emptied and if larger bins could be provided. The Head of Environmental Partnerships responded that different bin collection frequencies were used across the City. Play area bins were inspected weekly and would be collected once full. Older 'Tulip' bins were susceptible to losing their contents in windy weather and might need to be replaced by 180l bins.
- Members praised the work of Aragon Direct services in addressing issues around parked cars preventing the collection of bins.
- Members praised officers' work in re-opening a BMX track.

ACTIONS AGREED:

1. In response to a Member's concerns regarding overflowing bins, it was agreed that the Head of Environmental Partnerships to ensure adequate bin collections and road sweeping were taking place in the City Centre.

2. The Head of Environmental Partnerships to provide clearer communication on the plans for the reopening of PCC-owned play areas.

Highways and Transport

All questions in this section were answered by Graham Hughes, Service Director, Highways and Transport.

- Members commented that councillors had submitted ideas for Tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel fund without receiving any feedback and requested that this take place, noting that Tranche 2 was being developed. Officers responded that Tranche 1 was put in place rapidly and communication could have been better. The Deadline for Tranche 2 was 7 August. Department for Transport (DfT) guidance was very specific about how funding could be used and focussed on the reallocation of road space. Details of the ideas raised by councillors are listed in 'ACTIONS AGREED' below and it was agreed that the Service Director would pass these on to the Group Manager, Transport and Environment.
- Members raised concerns that the Council's post-COVID recovery plan was disproportionately focussed on highway schemes and asked if there was a plan to ensure a green recovery and when this would be implemented. The Director responded that although there were highway schemes planned, it was also important to focus on the DfT money used to improve walking and cycling in the City. A green recovery could ensure that good behaviours adopted during the pandemic were normalised, such as lower car use.
- Members felt that following amended government guidance, the Council should again promote the use of public transport alongside active travel to ensure CO2 emissions remained low. The Director acknowledged this point and noted the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Combined Authority) had already made similar points. The Council would work with Stagecoach to ensure masks were being worn on buses so that residents could feel safe using public transport. It was agreed that the Service Director, Highways and Transport would work with the Combined Authority to consider promoting the COVID-secure use of public transport again , reiterating the use of facemasks, with the aim of avoiding an increase in car use and CO2 emissions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Council was still responsible for Emergency Traffic Regulation Orders, not the Combined Authority.
- Members raised specific issues regarding cycling and walking in the Ravensthorpe area and encouraged well-targeted use of funds. It was agreed that these issues would be raised with the Highways team and the member contacted outside the meeting.
- It was noted that only seven schools had applied to be part of the School Streets Initiative. Members were encouraged to contact the Group Manager – Transport and Environment if they knew of any other schools interested in participating.
- Members commented that some traders on Cowgate and Lower Broadway felt that their comments on the Active Travel Fund consultation were not taken into account and questioned the value of responding. The Director encouraged traders to respond to consultations and emphasised that it was worth doing so. Changes to Cowgate might take place as part of Tranche 2.
- Members requested clarity on the deadline for Tranche 2 Active Travel funding. Officers responded that this was 7 August but it was agreed that Service Director, Highways and Transport would verify this and provide more information on the programme.
- Members commented that many parish councils had been working to improve cycling and walking but there had been little communication or support regarding this from the Council. The Director responded that he would liaise with the Highways Team to

understand how communication with parishes and ward councillors took place. The sums of money availability for cycling and walking improvements in Tranche 2 were substantial and could represent an immediate opportunity for improvement.

- Members felt that a small investment, e.g. bike racks, in a local area could be highly effective at promoting active travel. It was agreed that these comments would be referred to the Group Manager – Transport and Environment. It was noted that criteria for spending were more restricted in Tranche 2 than Tranche 1.
- Members noted that the Combined Authority had significant transport funding and asked how much of this would be allocated to improving cycling and walking in Peterborough. The Director acknowledged this and stated that his previous response focussed just on the Council's resources. The Combined Authority was the transport authority for Peterborough and had access to significant funding which was allocated by their Board. It was important for the Council to develop good quality schemes to submit to the Combined Authority to increase the chances of funding being received.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Service Director, Highways and Transport to pass on Members comments regarding the Tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel fund consultation to the Group Manager, Transport and Environment. These to include;
 - a. Bike racks / cupboards including in the four main rural villages
 - b. Bike borrow schemes
 - c. Encouraging the use of walking, cycling and public transport
 - d. Consulting with Cowgate traders to ensure any works completed are appropriate for their needs.
2. The Service Director, Highways and Transport to work with the Combined Authority to consider promoting the COVID-secure use of public transport again, reiterating the use of facemasks, with the aim of avoiding an increase in car use and CO2 emissions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The Service Director, Highways and Transport to confirm that the deadline for applications to the Emergency Active Travel fund was 7th August 2020 and provide more information on the programme

Housing

- Members requested information on the amount of domestic violence refuge accommodation available in the City. The Executive Director – People and Communities responded that the amount of refuge accommodation had reduced due to infection control measures. To compensate, the Council had worked with Cross Keys Homes to find two new houses so there was no drop in capacity. Domestic abuse had risen by 11% and it was expected this would continue to increase. The Council was working with the Police and other partners to encourage victims to seek help. There was capacity to help people and a specific piece of work was currently ongoing regarding interactions between older and younger people in a household. This was a key area of focus for the Executive Director in her work with the hub.
- Members noted the success of housing homeless people during the pandemic and asked what plans were in place to ensure these people remained housed. The Director of Housing Needs and Supply responded that the Council would continue to house 36 households in temporary accommodation until the end of July. The Council had been notified of Government 'next steps' funding including £105m revenue funding to cover costs in the remainder of the municipal year. The Council had been

encouraged to bid for this along with other councils. Negotiations were underway with another provider and the Council would aim to house people who had not yet been accommodated. There was also a second pot of £161m of capital funding available to bid for in 2020/21. There was scope to make bids for both the short term and long term (e.g. building, buying and developing assets for the future). Officers were working with the Public Health team to understand issues surrounding drug and alcohol misuse and other partners such as the Light Project to understand what kind of accommodation the Council should be providing. The Council was in a strong position regarding resources that were potentially available. The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government had proposed Peterborough as one of only 12 authorities to receive assistance from a charity called Land Aid who had expertise in property acquisition and development. They would provide free assistance in bidding for available funding.

City Centre Re-opening

- In response to a Member's query it was agreed that the Service Director, Highways and Transport would confirm when St. Peter's Arcade would re-open outside the meeting.
- Members asked what measures were in place to enforce the wearing of face coverings in shops. The Director of Public Health responded that supporting shopkeepers to ensure the wearing of facemasks had been discussed at the Tactical Coordination Group and with the Rapid Response Team. The Chief Executive added that discussions were ongoing between the Council and the Police. The requirement to wear masks was a significant change and handling it well was importance. Plans had been put in place which would be monitored carefully. Reports would be sent to the Strategic Coordination Group if more action was needed.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Service Director, Highways and Transport to confirm when St. Peter's Arcade would re-open.

Recovery Framework

- Members raised concerns regarding lack of staff capacity to enforce parking outside the City Centre and general enforcement in the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) areas. The Service Director, Communities and Safety responded that he was confident that there were sufficient officers available. The Think Communities approach helped to increase collaboration with partners and enforcement agencies.

Workforce

There were no questions on this section of the report.

Risk Management

There were no questions on this section of the report.

Financial Implications

All questions in this section were answered by Peter Carpenter – Acting Corporate Director, Resources.

- Members asked if lost revenue from Council Tax and Business Rates would be covered by Central Government. The Acting Corporate Director, Resources responded that three tranches of funding had been introduced by the government. The first was additional overall funding, the second was the reimbursement of income and the third covered Council Tax and Business Rates income. Guidance was still incomplete on the second two tranches. The present position was that Councils with collection shortfalls would have to reimburse the collection fund over the next 3 years, representing a reduction in revenue. This could be £16-20m in Peterborough which would represent a revenue reduction of £6m of revenue funding per year. However, this could change following the September Local Government Financial settlement and a great deal of lobbying was underway to this effect. Non-collection of tax income was one of the Council's largest risk factors. The end of the Furlough scheme in October could see an increase in redundancy, making the non-collection issue worse.
- Members noted the creation of the COVID-19 reserve and the forecast that it would be used in full to support the revenue budget. Members asked what COVID-19 would cost the Council's revenue budget in 2021. Officers responded that £13m of government funding had been received; £5.6m before the start of the 2020/21 financial year to increase the Council's reserves, an additional tranche of £5.4m with a final tranche of £2m confirmed in the previous week. This still left a budget gap of £12-14m which was validated monthly with MHCLG.
- Members raised concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's budgetary position and the risk of having to repair capital assets obtained through bid funding. Officers responded that they were examining this issue and budget monitoring reports continued to be produced. The next budget was being worked out and would be re-evaluated based on the new way of working. New pressures caused by COVID-19 included loss of income and savings being unable to be delivered. An analysis of the funding gap was underway. The situation was constantly changing and there were different types of government funding, some were ring-fenced and others were not. The biggest challenge for next year's budget was that the local government sector would have to respond to the COVID challenges before the next local government finance settlement.
- Some Members asked what the cost to the Council of delivering leisure services would be, stated that Vivacity had been inadequately funded and felt that additional leisure funding would be needed in the new budget. Officers responded that this was being worked on and that the cost of delivering services had changed since March 2020. The Secretary of State had indicated that 75% of income from Council-run leisure facilities could be kept by the Council and officers were investigating the feasibility of this. This had not been possible when services were run by Vivacity.

Background documents

There were no questions on this section of the report.

Formulation of recommendations

- Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Robinson, proposed that the Committee **recommends** that Cabinet takes immediate steps to open statutory services such as libraries, with due consideration for public health issues, and that a report should be submitted to Central Government outlining the Council's breach of statutory duties to date. This was UNANIMOUSLY agreed. The Service Director, Communities and Safety stated that he would take responsibility for responding to the recommendation and would liaise with Vivacity accordingly.

- Councillor Sandford, seconded by Councillor Ellis, proposed that the Committee recommends that Cabinet requests that the Combined Authority Board provides additional funding to invest in cycling provision and bridleway improvement in Peterborough. Councillor Sandford agreed amendments to the recommendation from Councillors Murphy and Fox to include mention of 'additional funding for to improve cycling provision' and 'bridleway improvement' respectively. The amended proposal was UNANIMOUSLY agreed. The Service Director, Highways and Transport stated that he would discuss this with the Combined Authority. Councillor Murphy stated that he would also raise this proposal at the Combined Authority's Scrutiny Committee.
- Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Over, proposed that the committee recommends that Cabinet investigates introducing 20mph speed limits, including in rural areas and outside schools, to encourage safer cycling. This was UNANIMOUSLY agreed. The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to revenue the issue of 20mph speed limits had previously taken place and officers may wish to refer to the work of this group when preparing a response to the recommendation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Scrutiny Committee noted and commented on the progress made date in responding to the impact of the Coronavirus and:

1. The Joint Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that Cabinet takes immediate steps to open statutory services such as libraries, with due consideration for public health issues, and that a report should be submitted to Central Government outlining the Council's breach of statutory duties to date.
2. The Joint Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that Cabinet requests that the Combined Authority Board provides additional funding to invest in cycling provision and bridleway improvement in Peterborough.
3. The Joint Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that Cabinet investigates introducing 20mph speed limits, including in rural areas and outside schools, to encourage safer cycling.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting began at 4:30PM and ended at 7:22PM