

COVID-19 EMERGENCY PLANNING HIGHLIGHT REPORT

SERVICE AREAS:	Resources
REPORT AUTHOR:	Pete Carpenter
REPORTING PERIOD:	To the 4 th July
NEW GUIDANCE AND IMPACT	
Finance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Government on the 2nd July announced another series of funding initiatives. This included:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ An additional £500m of “unringfenced” funding for Local Government. Allocations have not yet been decided;○ A co-payment mechanism for irrecoverable Sales, Fees and Charges income, with the Government covering 75% of losses beyond 5% of planned income;○ Council Tax and Business Rates Deficits – collection fund losses will be spread over three years but the 2021/22 Spending Review will give more clarity. A technical note is expected on this soon;○ More detail is expected on all three aspects of this funding but early indications suggest that this will deliver £4m of additional funding to the Council which would potentially reducing the overall deficit reported to MHCLG in June to £10m (non Tax).• £1m of additional Capital Funding in relation the Towns Fund to fund capital projects that must be delivered this financial year.• Addition funding that could be delivered through Councils through schemes detailed below. We do not yet know the magnitude of all these schemes, their applicability to Peterborough, and allocation requirements:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A £10m scheme for kick starting tourism○ A £63m fund for hardship payments to those struggling to pay for food and other essentials during the crisis○ Non-COVID-19 grants. At the time of payment, the Government will issue a Local Authority Social Services Letter (LASSL), informing councils of the total value and distribution of the funding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ funding for social care in prisons;▪ funding for the disregard of the war pension scheme;▪ the Local Review and Community Voices Grant. At the time of payment, the Government will issue a Local Authority Social Services Letter (LASSL), informing councils of the total value and distribution of the funding.	
Registrars	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• From 4 July 2020 notices of marriage and civil partnership can once again be taken. Weddings and Civil Partnerships can also be held.	
Property	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New guidance came out on the Safe usage of Council buildings on the 30th June – this is being evaluated following the closure of the application window.	
NEW CHALLENGES AND ACTIVITY	
Finance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation of the new funding sources to ensure maximum benefit for the City Council.• Delivery of the first phase of the 2021/22 budget with all the present unknowns.• Lobbying government for a funding solution to the deficit position due to COVID-19 this year and also the collection fund shortfalls next year;• The new BEIS Grant scheme which closed on the 26th June had 267 applicants – we are proceeding to allocate payments.	
Property	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking at Councils “return to work” returns given the revised guidance received on the 30th June.	
Registrars	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although steps have been taken to ensure new parents can claim benefits (eg child benefit) birth registrations have not been possible until recently since late March. During this period a backlog of birth registrations has built up and this currently stands at 1,260. Safety screens have been	

installed in the offices and work has started last week on clearing the backlog with appointments able to once again be made online or via the call centre to register births.

- From 4 July 2020 notices of marriage and civil partnership can once again be taken. Weddings and Civil Partnerships can also be held. The focus at the Register Office will initially be on those ceremonies that were postponed and notices that have to be retaken. Although guidance states that up to 30 may attend ceremonies, the maximum number who will be able to attend a ceremony at the Register office will be 6 guests plus the couple to ensure social distancing and the safety of attendees and staff.

Bereavement

- From 4 July 2020 the number of close relatives able to attend funerals at the crematorium will increase to 20. This is possible following a further risk assessment and due to the size of the Chapel. The same number of close relative mourners will also be able to attend funerals at our cemeteries. Social distancing should continue to be observed.
- From this date families will also be able to choose to book a 1 hour service at the crematorium rather than the standard service of 30 minutes. (When demand was very high only the 30 minute option was available).

RECOVERY ACTIVITY

Resources Overall

- Logging how the different parts of the department will work and support the reset of the Council over the next 2 to 3 months given the changes due to numerous pieces of guidance received over the past 2 weeks.

Finance

- Continuing the work on the 2021/22 budget.

DECISIONS MADE SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- Closing of the new BEIS Grant Application Scheme on the 15th June.
- How Resources will operate over the next 2-3 months (continuation of Working from Home).

NEW FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SINCE LAST REPORTING PERIOD

- Business rates relief of £36.6m to 1,250 Retail, Hospitality and Leisure providers;
- Business rates relief of £0.3m to 31 nurseries;
- £29.9m of specific Grant Funding for Small, Rural, Retail, Leisure and Hospitality businesses. 2,503 grants have been issued. Last week, our performance was ranked the 28 most efficient out of 314 Councils. We continue to add businesses to this list dependent on valuation changes and updates which is why the figure is not quite at 100%. For the past 3 weeks an additional 20 hereditaments have been added weekly;

WORKFORCE CHANGES

- None to report

COMMUNICATIONS

- The closure of the new BEIS Grant Application Process.
- Changes to the delivery of the Registration Service.