

GROWTH, ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 7
28 SEPTEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of: Place and Economy Covid-19 Update	Steve Cox, Executive Director, Place and Economy	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Cereste, Cabinet Member for Waste, Street Scene and Environment Cllr Hiller, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Commercial Strategy and Investments	
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Place and Economy Covid-19 Update

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: <i>n/a</i>	Deadline date: <i>n/a</i>
<p>It is recommended that Growth, Environment and Resources Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Note and comment on the report 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report was requested by the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee in order to update them regarding work undertaken by the Place and Economy directorate during the Covid-19 outbreak.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report is to update the Committee on the work undertaken by Place and Economy in response to the Covid-19 crisis and the impact of the crisis on services.

The report is broken down into key service areas that are within the remit of the Committee.

- Active Travel
- Development Management
- City Centre Recovery
- Waste, recycling and Aragon Services

Officers representing the service areas will be available to answer questions at the meeting.

2.2 This report is for Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.1, Functions determined by the Council:

- 1. City Centre Management
- 3. Environment Capital
- 4. Economic Development and Regeneration including Strategic Housing and Strategic Planning

3. **TIMESCALES**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	
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4. **BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 **Active Travel**

The Council has received funding of approximately £175k from Government as part of Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund. This funding came with the instruction that Local Authorities should reallocate road space in favour of pedestrians and cyclists by using temporary pop-up facilities such as highway barriers. The strength of the bid submitted by the Council (and Cambridgeshire County Council) through the Combined Authority resulted in an additional 11% of funding being allocated.

The Council has installed a number of measures around the city centre as part of the tranche 1 funding. These measures are all currently temporary measures and no decision have been made on when (or if) they will be removed. The measures include:

- School Street Closures: We have had ten schools confirm their interest in being involved in this scheme. Risk assessments have been undertaken at the majority of these schools, with the remainder due to take place shortly. The closures themselves commenced at some locations as the new school term commenced with others due to begin shortly. Residents and ward councillors will be contacted with further information nearer the time if they haven't been already.
- Broadway: The lower section near Westgate has had bays suspended to allow more room for pedestrians.
- Cattle Market Rd: Parking bays have been suspended to create more room for pedestrians.
- New Road: A new pop-up cycle lane was installed in w/c 7th September and in order to accommodate the cycle lane a one way system was introduced.
- City Road: A pop up cycle lane has been installed between St Johns and Northminster (westbound only) making this section of road one way.
- Priestgate: A pop-up cycle lane has been installed on Priestgate, the road has become one way with parking bays suspended to allow more room for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Crescent Bridge: A pop up cycle lane has been operating on Crescent Bridge for a few weeks. We have monitoring devices in place for this scheme and they are showing an average of 190 cyclists per day. Traffic is also being monitored and there are no congestion issues currently.
- Signage: We are producing a number of signs on some of the key routes around Peterborough to advise people how long it takes to walk and cycle to a destination as a further means of encouraging people to travel sustainably.

In addition to the tranche 1 funding, the Council has submitted an application via the CPCA for an additional £625k to install more on-road cycling schemes as part of the second phase of the Government's Emergency Active Fund. The Council is expecting to hear in September how much funding it will be allocated but all funding must be spent this financial year. Three streets were identified for tranche 2 funding and these are:

- Oundle Rd from Pleasure Fair Meadows car park to Lady Lodge Drive
- Park Road from Huntly Rd to Dogsthorpe Rd
- Broadway from junction of Eastfield Rd to Park Crescent

Later this month Cabinet will consider a proposal to establish a Cross Party Working Group to assist the delivery of schemes due by March 2021, together with the monitoring of the measures delivered to date. Five Members will sit on the Working Group, with one representative from each political party, together with officer representation as appropriate.

Development Management

	April to August 2020	Comments
Planning Fee Income	£310, 271	Fee income is 35% lower than for the same period in 2019 (application fee income in 2019 was £471,263). It should be noted that planning fees are set nationally and that we have actually received more planning application this year compared to last year but their value has been less.
Planning Related Applications received – all types	All types - 667 applications received	Applications received dropped significantly during lockdown between April-June, reached normal levels in July and have dropped again in August though not to the same levels as during lockdown. Overall, applications received for the year to date are 25% lower than in 2019.
Planning Applications received	602	During the same period last year we received 483 planning applications so there has actually been an increase (through the fee income has been lower)
Planning Applications determined within target or agreed timescale	Major 100% Minor 80% Others 87%	In 2019, the overall performance was: Major 93% Minor 88% Other 90% Notwithstanding the reduced performance, it still exceeds the Government set targets.
Enforcement enquiry acknowledged in 3 days	96%	Similar performance to same period in 2019
Enforcement visits carried out within 7 days	75%	Lower performance following lockdown to same period in 2019 which was 80%.
Cases closed in 8 weeks where no breach found	60%	Similar performance to same period in 2019
Volume of incoming cases and cases closed		The number of enforcement enquiries has increased significantly during June to August 2020 particularly relating to alleged householder breaches. To date we have received 270 cases and in the same period last year we had 240 cases.

City Centre Recovery

Footfall into the city centre has increased, the latest Google Community Mobility report shows footfall for the retail and recreation sector in Peterborough to be 80% of pre-lockdown levels. Based upon this trend, footfall for this sector could return to pre-lockdown levels by early October 2020.

The Peterborough Economic Recovery Programme (PERP) team, is a collaborative project led by PCC, with Opportunity Peterborough and local businesses. The team have developed an outline plan to deliver economic recovery in the City.

The PERP team has worked with local businesses to roll out social distancing messaging in the city centre throughout the summer. A bespoke communications strategy was deployed for the Lincoln Road neighbourhood shopping area. This included messaging via local community radio stations. We understand from local businesses that the bespoke messaging in Lincoln Road has helped contribute to ensuring that thus far Covid-19 transmission has been limited in the area.

Representatives from the PERP made a presentation to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Entrepreneurs Panel on the 25th August. The presentation was in support of an application for £800k. This will be match funded by £183k from PCC. The application is to fund the physical infrastructure that will support the development of a “cafe culture” in Cathedral Square.

Initial feedback was that the presentation was well received. If successful the application will receive approval from the CPCA Business Board on the 15th September and be ratified by the Combined Authority on the 30th September.

Waste and Recycling and Aragon services

The Waste and Recycling service has seen an increase in tonnages throughout the Covid-19 lockdown as more residents were spending time at home, we found a lot more DIY waste was being put in the Black residual bins which did impact on crews workload.

Due to the increase in tonnages we had to as per Government Guidance prioritise the Residual, Food and Recycling waste streams for collections and as such Garden Waste was moved to Four Weekly and Bulky Waste Collections were stopped.

Unfortunately, due to sickness and Covid-19 related absence we had one week of Garden waste that could not be collected as such we reacted to move all collection forwards one week to ensure these properties still got a collection. Garden waste was also collected free of charge for those residents that previously subscribed following the end of last year's paid for scheme.

In August we brought back the Garden Waste to be fortnightly and the new chargeable scheme has opened for residents to sign up for again.

It is hoped as lockdown now eases and we have fortnightly garden waste back in operation we will start to see household residual tonnages dropping allowing operatives to be released back onto their normal duties. As of week commencing the 21 September 2020 we will be restarting the Bulky Waste service this will be limited to 5 items and 30 collections per day, the collections will be done on the same day as your black bin so one half of the City will be collected one week and the other half the next week.

Street Care and Grounds Maintenance

Street Care and Grounds Maintenance has operated a normal service throughout Covid-19 they have ensured the grass has continued to be cut, trees maintained, litter bins emptied, and the streets cleaned.

We worked closely with the City Centre team when shops started to reopen to put additional measures in place in the city centre with bench, bin and cycle rack washing, sanitiser dispensers and a daily presence from the Hot Wash to keep the City Centre looking safe, clean and presentable.

Play areas were shut due to lockdown, when the Government announced they could reopen in July officers worked with Aragon and arranged for Central Park to open first as they have a full-time gardener on site that could react to any issues that arose. Following this we worked closely with Public Health to look at the current rate of infection within the City to see when it would be safe to open the remaining play areas. As of week commencing the 17th of August Aragon are planning for all 150 play areas to be opened for use with measures put in place including clear signage on how they should be used safely.

Fly tipping has been on the increase throughout lockdown and following lockdown easing, Aragon have however been keeping to their KPI's and removing non-hazardous in 48 hours and hazardous within 24 hours of it being reported to them. It was hoped following the reopening of the HRC that we would see a reduction in fly tipping but to date this has not been the case, we continue to work closely with the PES team to take evidence from fly tips where possible. The following tables shows the amounts of fly tipping removed since March 2020

Month	Fly tips
March	616
April	764
May	833
June	835
July	950
August	777

Building Cleaning

The Building Cleaning Team have reacted well to ensure PCC have sufficient supplies of hand sanitiser and antibacterial wipes for the offices that are open, they also implemented a cleaning regime using a Virucidal cleaning product daily.

Support was given to the Rough Sleeper team to arrange cleaning of the Hotels that were used during lockdown and deep cleans for any suspected cases of Covid-19 within PCC buildings.

Home to School Transport

Due to the closure of several schools the Home to School Transport team had a minimal service, those schools that had Key Worker children attending were still provided with transport but this meant that the coaches were not being utilised to typical levels.

Aragon working with PCC were informed that a local employment agency that was transporting workers to food production factories were struggling with social distancing within their coaches. Aragon offered their coaches to be used to help eliminate these issues and safely transport the workers to and from the factories.

Property Maintenance

The PCC estate has been managed throughout with Statutory Testing being conducted and work to make offices Covid-19 secure carried out. Where buildings have been reopened following a period of closure all relevant checks have been carried out to ensure they are safe to be occupied.

Waste Treatment.

As mentioned above there has been a noticeable rise in the amount of waste and recycling materials collected from households through the Green and Black bin and food caddy services. For the period of January to July 2020 there has been an increase of just under 9% in the total amount of material collected from the kerbside across all material types. Current kerbside collected material recycling rates compared to this point last financial year are shown below.

January 2019 – July 2019 = 41.73% Recycled/Composted
January 2020 – July 2020 = 40.04% Recycled/Composted

The main element in the minor reduction in kerbside performance is from the reduced frequency of the garden waste collection service, which as mentioned above was required to support the core collections in line with government advice. Although waste was up the amount of recycling and food waste was also increased with the percentage split across the collections remaining like that experienced before the Covid-19 situation arose.

These increased volumes have had the effect of increasing expenditure on waste treatment, as one might expect, however the most recent data available indicates that these elevated levels have lessened, and we will continue to monitor the impact of returning to fortnightly garden waste collections.

Recycling Improvement - Education and Awareness Raising.

During the extended period of restrictions and increased home working there has been an increase in the amount of materials collected through the kerbside service, both recycling, food and residual wastes. However there have been several incidents of loads of Dry Mixed Recycling (DMR) being rejected by the Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) contractor. To date 3 bulk carrying vehicles have been rejected and the material sent for landfill, this equates to approximately 45 tonnes of materials that could have been processed for recycling.

Officers are working closely with Aragon to improve inspection and monitoring both during the collection process and the handling of the material when it arrives at the transfer station in Peterborough before being loaded onto vehicles for transfer to the MRF. In doing so the aim is to minimise the chance of poor quality material being sent for processing as well as identifying the areas of the collection rounds where the material is being collected so education and enforcement action can be directed to where it is most effective.

Officers are working with Aragon and Viridor on the development of education and awareness raising tools that can be used remotely so we will be able to engage with schools and interested groups whilst social distancing measures remain the norm and preclude physical visits to the ERF and roadshow events.

Fengate HRC.

Waste and recycling through the HRC has been more complicated to assess on a year to year basis as the site had been closed for a period, so we had to break the numbers down to an analysis of material per day the site was open. April was closed, but total material was up over 7% in May and over 36% in June.

The HRC has seen overall material, both residual wastes and recycling materials, up by on average over 18% per day open for the first quarter ending June 2020. June was the peak month so far with recycling and green waste up by 31% and residual waste up by over 50% in the month when compared to the same period a year ago.

The HRC is seeing a strong increase in the volumes/weights of materials associated with DIY, so rubble and hardcore, wood and metals, with a lower than one might expect volume of cardboard and similar packaging materials arising from home deliveries of good. Materials like

this are mainly captured by the kerbside service.

The Council and its contractor FCC have followed both the latest National Guidance specifically on the management of such facilities in the light of the Covid-19 situation, both that produced by the government and industry experts. Of note is the fact that FCC operate a significant number of these facilities and bring that experience and learning to Peterborough.

The Public Health team for Peterborough have been and continue to be involved in the management of the facility through the development and evolution of procedures and issuance of guidance taking account of the specific needs of Peterborough and the continually changing situation locally.

New signs have been installed including new floor stickers reminding people of the 2-metre Social Distancing rule as well as two number larger signs reiterating the need to remain vigilant and maintain social distancing also highlighting that visitors may be asked to leave if they fail to comply.

Additional staff members have been employed, initially on a temporary basis, specifically to increase the presence and guidance available on the top deck where parking and skip access is located as well as to manage the traffic entering the facility. Alternate parking bays have been closed off to improve the distance site users can maintain and this has led to reduced capacity that has necessitated the above-mentioned staffing increases and traffic management measures.

RECAP Fly Tipping Group

SCRAP It Fly Tipping Campaign in conjunction with the Recycling for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (RECAP) Partnership continues to work together on sharing intelligence and best practice in the fight against fly tipping. The Covid-19 situation has curtailed much of the practical aspect of the project however the project is continuing to deliver and move forward. The PES team are currently investigating several fly tipping incidents which occurred since the start of lock down - 58 in total, we are also looking at how we can start PACE interview again in line with guidance.

The special CCTV cameras have been purchased but limited opportunity to use them considering the pandemic and associated issues. The situation has allowed works to be undertaken to explore opportunities with neighbouring councils on sharing different technologies for locations and incidents to bring the best equipment to bear as required.

Resources and Waste Strategy – RECAP

A project is being undertaken across the RECAP Authorities (Cambridgeshire County Council and its constituent District Councils and Peterborough City Council), to develop proposals for waste and recycling collection to allow partners to move services towards ways of working that will align with the developing government Resources and Waste Strategy.

The Covid-19 situation has directed significant efforts across the partnership to meeting the operational challenges that have arisen and as such progress locally, and nationally on the wider strategy consultations, has understandably been quite limited.

However, members of the partnership have been able to continue to participate in the preparatory works being undertaken by local authority and industry groups through developmental workshops as the second round of government consultation is developed. The second round of consultation is expected to be released in spring 2021 and the partnership is gearing itself up to participate actively in this process.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation through the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee will note the content of this report and any comments will be fed back to aid in future improvements to the services delivered.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 To allow scrutiny of work undertaken by the Place and Economy Directorate in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The alternative option was to not present this report to the Growth, Environment and Resources Scrutiny Committee. This option was not taken forwards as it was important to allow clear and transparent scrutiny of these front-line services.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 The budgetary control report for August includes the following forecast variances covering the period April 2020 to March 2021, resulting from Covid-19:

- £0.3m Development Management (reduced Planning Fee, Building Control and staffing income);
- £1.1m Waste and Recycling and Aragon Services (reduced Electricity income from Energy Recovery facility, reduced Garden and Bulky Waste collection fee income, and additional costs for Covid-secure measures such as at Nursery Lane and the Household Recycling Centre);

These costs are partially covered by £13m of additional un-ring-fenced grant funding from Government, which is also supporting other Covid-19 related costs across the Council, resulting in a current funding gap of £12.3m attributable to Covid-19.

The Active Travel costs referred to in the report are separately funded by ring-fenced grant.

Applications for further grant funding are pending, specifically in relation to rough sleeper costs and loss of income.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 This report is to give an overview / progress update for Place and Economy during the Covid-19 outbreak as such there are no direct legal implications. As regards specific projects, legal advice has been sought on a case by case basis.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 This report is to give an overview / progress update for Place and Economy during the Covid-19 outbreak as such there are no anticipated equality implications.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 The Emergency Active Travel funding detailed in the Active Travel section of this report has been allocated to areas of the city where there is a high propensity to cycle and as such does not propose any schemes in rural areas of the city. However, the Council has allocated funding to make significant improvements to the Green Wheel Cycle Network and more detailed plans for this work will come forward in due course.

Carbon Impact Assessment

9.5 No impact - This report is an update report. Committee Members are not being asked to make any decisions or recommendations as a result of this report.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None

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