

ADULTS & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 8
17 NOVEMBER 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Cllr Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Recreation	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Recreation	
Contact Officer(s):	Adrian Chapman - Service Director, Communities and Partnerships.	Tel. 07920 160441

PORTFOLIO HOLDER PROGRESS REPORT : HOUSING, CULTURE & RECREATION

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM: Cllr Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture & Recreation	Deadline date: NA
<p>It is recommended that Adults & Communities Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider and scrutinise this report and endorse the approach being taken under the portfolio of the Cabinet Member. 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is presented at the request of the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 Each year, the Scrutiny Committee receives an annual report from the relevant Cabinet Members setting out achievements and challenges, as well as opportunities, which fall under the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 This report is for Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 – Overview & Scrutiny functions, paragraph No 2 Functions determine by the Council

- 3. Housing need (including homelessness, housing options and selective licensing)
- 6. Libraries, Arts and Museums

2.3 The portfolio responsibilities of all Cabinet Members directly contribute to relevant corporate priorities, and to the Children in Care pledge.

3. TIMESCALES

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

4.1 Context

This report is being presented to the to the Committee to allow them to scrutinise the work being undertaken under the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation, Cllr Steve Allen. Cllr Allen's portfolio covers the following areas:

- (a) the Council's housing strategy
- (b) the Council's response to homelessness including:
 - i the prevention of homelessness
 - ii the supply of temporary accommodation
 - iii the supply of affordable housing including the development of a housing revenue account
 - iv housing options and supporting people
- (c) the Council's response for rough sleeping
- (d) Culture and Recreation, and being the Strategic Partnership lead for the work of Vivacity and responsibility for the Council's functions in relation to:
 - i the Peterborough Museum
 - ii libraries and archives
 - iii the Arts
 - iv sports strategy

4.2 As can be seen, this portfolio broadly falls into two thematic areas: housing and homelessness, and culture and leisure. The following sections provide an overview under each theme.

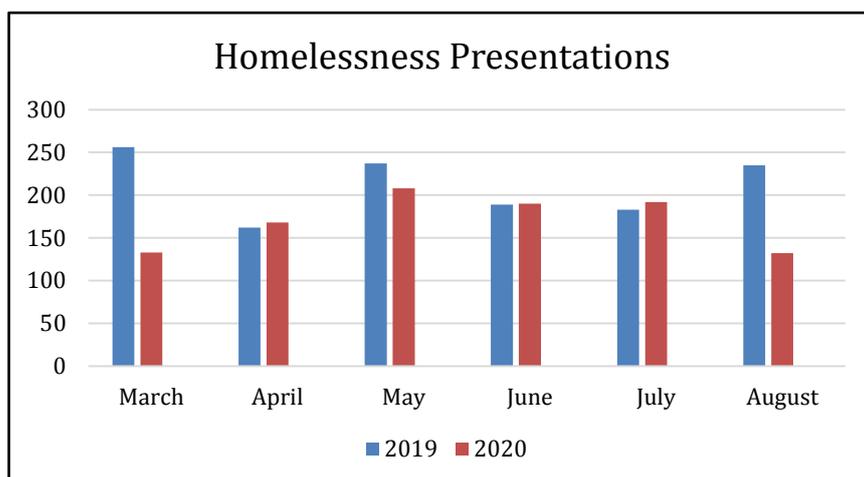
4.3 Housing and Homelessness Prevention

4.3.1 The Housing Needs Service

The Housing Needs service have amended their service delivery during the pandemic, as we have been unable to provide face to face appointments with clients. Staff have worked continuously through the pandemic and have been handling client contact via a telephone appointments system.

The number of clients contacting us for homelessness assistance has remained at a steady level during this time, but those actually becoming homeless as a result has reduced as measures put in place by the government to suspend eviction action has meant households in rented accommodation have been able to remain and still continue to. Also, the number of households becoming homeless from friends and family reduced while we were in the first lockdown as family units were required to remain isolated together. This has started to re-emerge as measures have been eased.

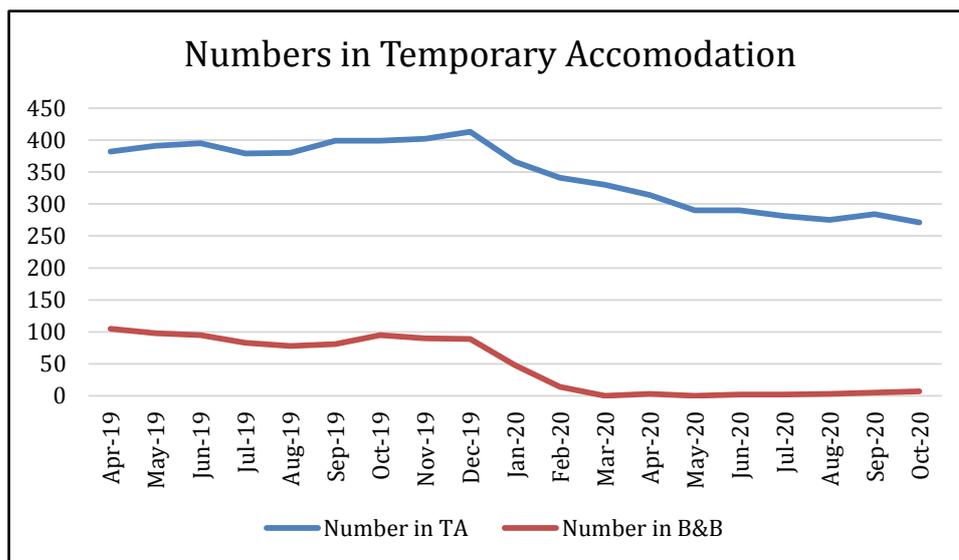
4.3.2 The following shows the number of homelessness presentations between March and September 2020 compared to last year:



4.3.3 Our work to reduce the number of Households accommodated in temporary accommodation has continued during the pandemic and we have been successful in continually reducing this number, having now reached the point that we have very few households with children accommodated in hostel accommodation and none in bed and breakfast accommodation.

For those who are accommodated in hostel accommodation, this is only for a very short period of time whilst alternative self-contained accommodation is secured. Bed and breakfast accommodation is no longer used for families, and for single applicants is now only used in an emergency and only for a very short period of time.

The following graph shows the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation and in bed and breakfast accommodation at the end of each month from April 2019 to October 2020:



4.3.4 The Housing Register & Choice Based Lettings

Apart from a few weeks during the first lockdown, the council has continued to operate a Choice Based Lettings scheme and we continued to let available properties promptly with very little delay. The team has been working hard to reduce the backlog of housing register applications and this was achieved in August. All new applications received are now being assessed and prioritised within our service standard timescales.

4.3.5 Rough Sleeping

4.3.5.1 In March 2020, just prior to the first lockdown, we received contact from our specialist advisor at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and were asked to set up a local response to accommodate all rough sleepers in the area. In addition, we were advised that our night shelter and crash beds provision could no longer operate because of the risk of transmission in settings with shared sleeping spaces.

4.3.5.2 Working with our Safer off the Streets partnership, we were quickly able to mobilise a rest centre response. We secured exclusive use of the Holiday Inn Express in Orton Northgate and over the first weekend we located and moved-in over fifty rough sleepers and night shelter/crash bed residents. The work was supported by volunteers, and charities, restaurants and food providers came together to provide three meals a day seven days a week. Health and welfare services were brought in to support clients' primary health needs and drug and alcohol misuse issues. Security was put in place and the Police and the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire COVID-19 Co-ordination Hub supported by providing reassurance for both guests and residents in the surrounding area.

4.3.5.3

Over time during lockdown, while accommodation availability was scarce, the number of people accommodated grew until we reached a point where we were accommodating over 100 rough sleepers across three hotels. As lockdown measures started easing and accommodation options opened up again, we commenced working with individuals to support them with moving to more appropriate supported accommodation or long term independent living such as the private sector or social housing.

4.3.5.4

As we resettled more clients and the number we were accommodating reduced we scaled the rest centre operation from three hotels to one, which we are still operating and we continue to receive the support of partners in staffing and support from providers with food.

4.3.5.5

Moving forwards, we are working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and have submitted a bid for funding which if successful will provide us with the opportunity to create a more permanent solution for meeting the needs of rough sleepers and should support our ambition to eliminate rough sleeping.

4.3.5.6

We have seen some real success while working in the rest centres, but have also had some clients whose behaviour was unmanageable and we were left with no choice but to ask them to leave. We do though continue to work with them in managing their issues and have been able to move some on to more appropriate accommodation settings which better meet their needs.

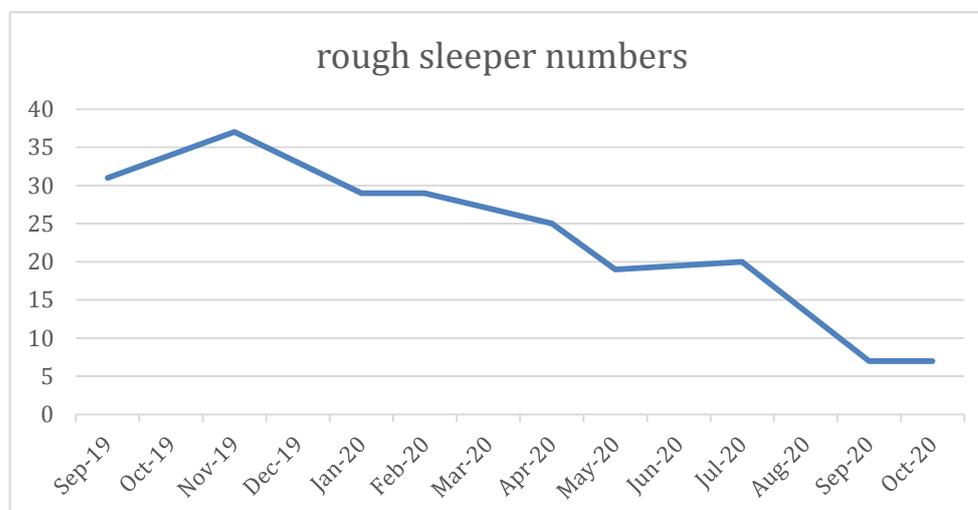
4.3.5.7

Our partnership working has been recognised nationally and we were fortunate enough to receive a visit from HRH Duke of Cambridge at the Garden House where we and our partners were able to showcase the work we had done.

4.3.5.8

The table below shows some key figures around the work at the rest centres:

Total number provided with emergency accommodation at some point	174 households
Number still in emergency accommodation	52 households
Number evicted from emergency accommodation	17 Households
Number found longer-term accommodation by the council or its partners	67 Households
Number who have left emergency accommodation of their own accord	10 Households



4.4 **Culture and Leisure**

4.4.1 At its September 2020 meeting, the Scrutiny Committee was provided with details of the delivery arrangements for services previously managed by Vivacity. For the avoidance of doubt, and to

ensure appropriate context, the background to the changes in delivery arrangements is repeated below. It should be noted that this report is being written and published at the same time as detailed guidance on the next national lockdown is also being published, and so some of the reopening plans described may be subject to change. The Cabinet Member and Service Director will provide the most up to date position at the Committee meeting itself.

4.4.2 The Council entered into a Funding and Management Agreement (FMA) dated 1st May 2010 with Vivacity Cultural and Leisure Trust under which the assets, staff and responsibility for delivering cultural and leisure services transferred to Vivacity in return for grant payments made by the Council. Services included libraries, culture and heritage venues, sports centres and swimming pools.

4.4.3 In June 2020, Vivacity served 90 Days' Notice of Termination of the Agreement on the grounds that Regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 constituted a force majeure which had persisted for more than 90 days preventing performance of the services. Services set out in the Agreement therefore ceased to be provided by Vivacity at the end of September 2020. Committee acknowledged, at its September meeting, the incredible legacy left by Vivacity in relation to those services.

4.4.4 From 1 October 2020, the services formerly delivered by Vivacity under the previous FMA have been managed by City Culture Peterborough and Peterborough Ltd, as summarised below:

- City Culture Peterborough – Arts, Culture and Heritage services
- Sports and Leisure services – Peterborough Ltd

City Culture Peterborough is a trading company of the City College Peterborough charitable foundation, the charitable arm of City College Peterborough. City College Peterborough is the council's own adult skills service, with the Principal jointly reporting to the chair of the governing body and the Service Director for Communities and Partnerships. Peterborough Ltd is a company wholly owned by the council as a Local Authority Trading Company.

4.4.5 The arrangements set out above are overseen via an officer partnership board, which brings together the leads from City Culture Peterborough and Peterborough Ltd, with senior council officers, and it meets monthly. A weekly transition board I also continuing to meet to ensure the full and effective transfer of all services and residual arrangements.

4.4.6 The Service Director for Communities and Partnerships is the Senior Responsible Officer for the delivery of all services, and the responsibilities of the Cabinet Member, as set out in section 4.1, remain unchanged. The Service Director and Cabinet Member will set, with partners' input, the vision and strategic direction for services going forwards. Services will be formally reviewed on a quarterly basis considering effectiveness, service usage, COVID-19 compliance, and value for money. From this the council will be able to build up a full understanding of service delivery in the COVID-19 and post COVID-19 environment to assess the ways in which people will want to access services going forwards.

4.4.7 At time of writing, the status of culture and leisure services was as follows:

- Central Library – reopened on 10 August
 - Bretton, Orton and Werrington libraries – reopened week commencing 24 August
 - Hampton library – reopened on 3 September
 - Dogsthorpe and Eye libraries – are due to reopen week commencing 9 November
 - Stanground, Thorney and Woodston libraries – are due to reopen during December
 - Mobile library services – reopening details to be confirmed
- Please note, at time of writing we are awaiting Government guidance on whether or not libraries will need to close during the new national restrictions effective from 5 November*
- Key Theatre – whilst closed to the general public, the Key Theatre was available throughout summer for pre-arranged summer schools, and has been running cinema

events in a socially distanced way. A full reopening was being planned for later in November, however theatres are required to close as part of the new national restrictions effective from 5 November

- Peterborough Museum – was due to reopen with a special launch event on 11 November, however museums are required to close as part of the new national restrictions effective from 5 November
- Flag Fen – was due to reopen in Spring 2021; however, we are working on exciting plans to seek to reopen sooner as part of our commitment to the successful Towns Fund programme to extend Peterborough Museum to showcase the internally-significant Must Farm Boats
- Vivacity Premier Fitness – reopened on 17 August
- Regional Swimming Pool – reopened on 17 August
- Athletics Track – reopened on 17 August
- Hampton Leisure Centre – reopened on 4 September
However, all indoor and outdoor leisure facilities are required to close as part of the new national restrictions effective from 5 November
- Jack Hunt Swimming Pool, Werrington Sports Centre and Bushfield Sports Centre – are all located on sites shared with schools, and facilities reopened for school use only from the start of term. Reopening dates for community use will be agreed with the school management teams
- Peterborough Lido and Bretton Splash Park – will reopen for the 2021 season
- St George’s Community Hydrotherapy Pool – will reopen on a date to be confirmed, following further work to determine how the facility can be made COVID-secure

4.4.8 The Cabinet Member recently hosted a meeting of representatives from the various Friends’ Groups that continue to do some hugely positive work in our city. The meeting introduced the representatives to the Service Director and to the City Culture Peterborough lead officer. The meeting, which was extremely positive and very constructive, agreed that a fully collaborative approach should be taken to the future design and delivery of services, and that regular meetings should be arranged. There will be a further meeting of the same group just prior to Christmas.

4.4.9 Two important strategic documents will set out the agreed vision for culture and leisure services: (i) the existing Active Lifestyle Strategy will be reviewed and refreshed; (ii) work will recommence to develop, in close cooperation with a wide range of partners, a long-term Culture Strategy. Both of these documents are vital to describing the aspirations we have as a city, to demonstrate the significance we place on culture and leisure to support the city’s growth and cohesion, and to attracting the levels of investment from third parties and the quality of productions that Peterborough deserves. Both documents will be brought to Scrutiny early in their development, and throughout, in order for Members to provide direction and insight.

4.4.10 The council successfully secured funding from the national Arts Council England Culture Recovery programme to support the sustainability of cultural services as a consequence of the pandemic. A grant of £493k has been secured to support the safe reopening of venues, the development of systems, tools and content to communicate with the public and build audiences, to develop a new web presence and box office booking system, to work with community groups and artists to deliver events and activities to kick-start a cultural offering, and to set up youth panels for each service to advise on making services more engaging.

4.4.11 The council has previously agreed to carry out a feasibility study into new leisure centre provision in the Werrington area. A brief and specification is currently being agreed ahead of specialist consultants being appointed as a result of Sport England confirming a shortage of facilities in Peterborough.

- 4.4.12 Table Tennis England and Viridor have granted Living Sport and its partner, Peterborough City Council £20,000 (£10,000 each) for outdoor table tennis tables across the city. Due to the current restrictions, Table Tennis England have advised installation to take place in March 2021 which will see at least a further six tables installed in more rural areas of our city. Additionally, Table Tennis England are keen to see the development of a Ping Pong Parlour in Serpentine Green or Queensgate, similar to those that exist in Cambridge and many other busy developing city centres nationally. This service would offer free activity to residents in a safe environment and promotes social interaction using table tennis as the catalyst.
- 4.4.13 Following the approval of Football Foundation Local Football Facility Plans in September 2019, delivery work had just started early in 2020 but was subsequently slowed due to the pandemic. This project is an opportunity for grant funding to be made available to be used for grassroots football provision and increased participation in the sport, and the council will continue to push progress forwards as far as possible.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

- 6.1 It is anticipated that this report will provide the committee with an overview of some of the work that is being undertaken under this portfolio. It also provides an opportunity for the Committee to ask questions and scrutinise the work being undertaken

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 To ensure that the Portfolio Holder is working to deliver the priorities set out for the role in the Council's constitution.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Not applicable.

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 9.1 Not applicable.

Legal Implications

- 9.2 Not applicable.

Equalities Implications

- 9.3 Not applicable.

Rural Implications

- 9.4 Not applicable.

Carbon Impact Assessment

- 9.5 Neutral impact – this report provides an update detailing the work carried out over the past 12 months under this portfolio, and the priorities for the coming year which will be subject to individual carbon impact assessments

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