

# County Councillor report March 2020

## Virus update as of writing 17<sup>th</sup> April

All critical services are running satisfactorily.

Performance against PPE to date has been checked, and inside Cambridgeshire we have never run out of PPE in a hospital setting nor in community services, however in both cases there have been occasions when it has relied on redistribution, or stocks coming in just in time or working hand to mouth. However primary care originally had no stock so the situation was not the same for them at the start. As I understand it all sectors now have appropriate PPE and if the system continues to operate correctly, normal supply, local intervention when necessary and government supply there should not be further issues. If stock is used appropriately following Public Health guidance, which is evidence based. **Additional ventilators** have been received in the last week - which are starting to be used in Cambridgeshire's hospitals with additional hospital staff trained to work in Intensive Care.

Addenbrookes is anticipating building an additional facility on land next to Car park 2. This is surge capacity, or perhaps what we may refer to as step down facility. A second surge capacity unit for the Eastern Region is to be built at Norwich. Inside Addenbrookes the ICU will be increased to 350 beds, these include equipment such as ventilators. In the new facility a new capacity of 254 general acute beds will be housed and piped with Oxygen for example. It is anticipated by the regional lead that this will be needed for 18 months. This is because they are predicting a succession of Coronavirus peaks and also winter pressures. Remembering that all NHS resources are national, so these beds may not be full of Cambridgeshire residents. This project is led by regional NHS not the local CCG or Hospitals trust.

The cost of PPE is rising significantly, some examples below.

	JANUARY COSTS	APRIL COSTS
Aprons (pack of 100)	£3.66 +VAT	£13 +VAT
Gloves (box of 100)	£3.66+ VAT	£9.38 + VAT
Facemasks (box of 50)	£7.15 + VAT	£30 + VAT Increasing to £40 +VAT

The County Council is also purchasing food from local supermarkets. To date, the County Council has spent around £14million expected to rise to £20million in the coming weeks.

**Testing** -prioritisation of staff who will receive testing continues in all areas, with priority given to acute hospital staff, primary care staff and staff in care homes - areas where there are small numbers and capacity could easily become over stretched. This will be opened up wider as soon as there is additional capacity. Yesterday I was informed that extra testing was being set up at Addenbrookes and Royal Papworth

1,233 children attended schools yesterday (16<sup>th</sup> April). In the vulnerable group the numbers were up to 210 children but these are all on social care's radar. We also had a 1,000 children in early year's settings with 30% of those open yesterday (16<sup>th</sup> April).

The Director of Education has told me that our reporting systems of all of this are better than the Department for Education, which is a tribute to our schools and their willingness to work with the County Council. There are some national newspaper journalists that are picking up in their personal tweet chains that Cambridgeshire is doing a sterling job. Early year's provision is sufficient to meet the needs of key workers and we are still offering advice to providers where they are having financial difficulties.

**Co-ordination hubs.** Currently we are aware of 20,000 people in the 'shielded' category across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. 13,000 have registered and the Countywide Co-ordination Hub is concentrating on support to those in this cohort with no reliable network of family or friends to provide food, care or medical assistance. We have been told that with the push to GPs over last weekend to identify other shielded people that there could be a further 10,000 notified to us this week. We have

now 150 call staff who will be making 10,000 calls a week to this group to make sure they are okay and to ensure they are getting what they need. This is a massive operation but necessary as we know needs change within this group, and we want to ensure all know that we are here to help them. This may create a spike in demand but the hub is staffed to pick this up.

The work to convert Marshall's site to a temporary mortuary has started for body storage, and it is anticipated that it will be up and running by the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> April. Let's hope it isn't needed.

### **Strategic Co-ordinating Group update**

**Health:** Additional modelling on the epidemic curve in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is showing:

- Social distancing measures are beginning to take effect locally
- This is moving the expected peak of the epidemic to around the end of April. The peak is also expected to be lower than anticipated, but only if the social distancing and stay at home measures continue to be observed
- There is still work to be done on how long the 'tail' of the epidemic will be - which may be longer - but with lower numbers of cases.

Currently there is bed availability in all hospitals - including intensive care beds, and staffing levels across all essential services are stabilised.

However SCG stressed again how vitally important it was for all organisations to continue to promote the stay at home, social distancing and hygiene messages, as this is the best defence we have against the virus spreading.

The impact that social distancing and the 'stay at home' message is having on **families at risk of domestic abuse** is being considered at both a local and also national level with discussions taking place between Directors of Children's Services and we are playing our part in making recommendations on how to mitigate this risk. A campaign to help people spot the signs of domestic abuse and where to report it locally has been developed by the Warn and Inform group, and there was a request for all partners to promote it.

**A campaign to help mitigate the likely impact on mental health** issues created by social isolation and social distancing - which will link into support being provided for citizens, volunteers and staff - is also planned for launch this week.

**There has been a great response from schools** across the region to offering support in the current emergency. Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 280 schools remained open throughout the Easter Holidays including the Easter weekend bank holidays, to support key worker and vulnerable children, there is also good availability across early year's settings.

**The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority** is working to support for public transport which will keep essential routes running for keyworkers. National government has confirmed a bus service support grant will be available for routes which run 50% of a normal service and will be working with the tactical support group to identify which routes should be prioritised for this support.

**In these difficult days, it's really important that you keep in touch with friends and family, a short call regularly can make all the difference if your friends or family are struggling, or just need to chat.**

**Peter Hudson  
County Councillor  
Longstanton, Northstowe, Oakington, Westwick, and Over**