

Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing Annual Report to Scrutiny 2 November 2020

PUBLIC HEALTH AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Positive developments working across all our services and functions during 2019/20 and into 20/21 include:

- Embedded new triaging and coordination approaches to all Public Health customer service requests enabling us to build more effective business support functions and free up front-line enforcement resources. Included roll-out of new 'Noise' and 'Reportable' Apps for customers.
- Two lead Environmental Health Officers have gained Chartered Environmental Health Practitioner Status and two others officers are currently working towards that status.
- Reviewed, updated and refreshed the corporate Enforcement Policy covering all aspects of the regulatory work undertaken across the service and more widely to include Housing and Street Scene enforcement activities.
- Responded strongly to Covid-19, taking a lead local response, including:
 - Providing trained EHO resources – for example we have three members of the MDDC Public Health Team supporting the Health Protection Board (HPB) and local contact test and tracing and workplace standard operating procedures
 - Supporting the expansion of the HPB Workplace and Housing group to include Covid enforcement activities. This provides multi-agency liaison and ensures consistency of approach
 - Undertaking non-Covid infectious disease work on behalf of Public Health England to free up PHE capacity
 - Engaging with local businesses over Covid compliance and providing advice alongside our wider Public Health and Health inequalities work. We also enforce H&S legislation where required and have rolled out multi-contact Covid-secure checklists to support businesses
 - Mandating adequate Covid risk assessments for (permitted) planned events through the multi-agency Mid Devon Safety Advisory Group (SAG)
 - Supporting internal MDDC communications and function/workplace specific Covid risk assessments and leading on response information into the internal Incident Management Team (IMT)

- Briefings and updates to Members, Leadership Team and Corporate Management Team on a regular basis
- Supported MDDC Shielding Hub and supporting vulnerable persons
- Currently coordinating with Devon LA peers on proposals to utilise limited national Compliance and Enforcement Grant funding to district and unitary Councils.
- The service lead has been widely engaged with Covid-19 and emergency planning since February 2020 as well as taking on wider Corporate Management Team and Housing responsibilities. Also currently acts in the Chair role for East and Mid Community Safety Partnership and the Devon Strategic Environmental Health Managers Group.
- 93% of service requests were responded to within 5-working days in 19/20, just below target of 95%. However, this has improved to 98% to date in 20/21 despite Covid pressures. In respect of Covid, cases and intelligence service requests are being prioritised for a same day response where possible and Covid business advice requests being delivered with 2-days where possible.

In respect of specific functions:

Licensing

- Key performance:
 - *Issue of licenses:* 19/20 - 99% and 20/21 – 100% (to date) against target of 97%
 - *Issue of Temporary Event Notices (TENs):* 19/20 – 100% and 20/21 – 100% (to date) against a target of 99%
 - *Taxi vehicle inspections:* 19/20 – 45 against a target of 48 – Covid impact in March 2020 and lockdown meant no inspections could be completed that month and target will be revised for 20/21 due to extended impact of the pandemic. These are additional vehicle condition, safety and policy compliance checks by the team and all licensed taxis have continued to meet formal taxi testing requirements at approved garages.
- Licensing and other Public Health officers have worked closely in a multi-agency (Police, Border and DVSA) operation targeting a range of issues connected with migrant workers and the 2 Sisters site in Cullompton. In particular (for this portfolio) it included targeting modern slavery issues as well as unlicensed/illegal taxi's being used for worker transport.
- In policy terms, the team have successfully rolled-out new mandatory safeguarding provisions and training for taxi-drivers following key updates taxi licencing policy in 2019. The scheme of delegations for officers and the Licensing/Regulatory Committees have also been fully reviewed and updated.

- Adopted a new Key Performance Indicator to monitor and report performance of safeguarding standards for drivers to support the delivery of Community priorities within the new Corporate Plan 20-24.
- The team continue to bring forward a number of enforcement and licence decisions to both Licensing and Regulatory Sub-Committees as required. After a relatively quiet year for hearings in 19/20, numbers have increased in 20/21 to date:
 - 19/20: 1 Licensing Sub-Committee and 1 Regulatory Sub-Committee hearing
 - 20/21 (to October 2020): 3 Licensing Sub-Committee and 3 Regulatory Sub-Committee hearings.
- Successfully licensed 100% of relevant premises under new legislation for animal licensing in October (The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018). This introduced new law and conditions for dog breeding, dog boarding, cat boarding, pet shops and riding establishments. It also introduced a 'star rating' system for these premises. We continue to proactively identify and regulate any business operating without a licence.
- Learning from the application of the new animal licensing regime has been reflected in the Council adopting a new, specific Animal Welfare Licensing Policy in 2020 setting how we meet regulatory and best-practice requirements in this area. We are one of first Local Authorities regionally to do so.
- Seen the impact of Covid on licence numbers and income for 20/21 to date (up to 30% down). Licensing officers were re-deployed to front-line Covid duties during the first-wave lockdown including enforcing licenced premises business closure regulations.
- Successfully introduced new (temporary) Pavement Licensing regime.

Environmental Health (EH)

- Details of local Covid-19 response role set out above.
- Key performance:
 - *Private Water Supplies income*: 19/20 - £34.7k against target of £35k. Income during 20/21 hugely impacted by Covid as unable to complete water sampling work during lockdown and wider downturn with relevant business – income therefore only £6k to date for year and projected at just £12k overall. Recovery into 21/22 likely to be slow and uncertain
 - *% of premises compliant with Food Safety Legislation*: 19/20 – 92% against a target of 90%. Despite Covid redeploying resources, performance is currently 87% to date for 20/21 against the same target – a remarkable

result given the impact of Covid on the team priorities and on the hospitality sector as a whole

- *Food hygiene 'Scores on Doors'* continues to be effective with over 500 premises in the scheme with 97% rated 4 or 5 (of 5) – 'good' or 'very good' which is exceptional and on par with the previous year – however, the long-term impact of Covid on this sector is not fully realised or understood.
- The Food Standards Agency have temporarily relaxed all Local Authority inspection requirements on lower risk premises due to Covid which has helped us to redeploy same staff (infectious disease competent) into Covid front-line.
- Currently reviewing our charges for food export certificates and revised charges for private water supplies, other food safety work and exhumations.
- New fees for request re-inspections under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (Scores on doors) are also currently under review with adoption planned for 21/22. However, the current charges were suspended in 20/21 to support hospitality sector during Covid.
- Environmental Health staff formally responded to nearly 400 planning applications and a similar number of licensing applications during 2019/20 - providing professional opinion on matters ranging from air and land quality constraints, drainage, nuisances, water quality and health and safety.
- Successfully completed a major H&S prosecution of a haulage/warehousing business within MDCC with the company pleading guilty to a number of offences in October 2020. Court proceedings centred on the argument over the level of culpability and harm as defined by the sentencing guidelines and Court now adjourned for a written judgement, possibly in December.
- Adopted a new Key Performance Indicator to monitor and report performance around actively engaging and promoting a number of national and regional public health and safety communications initiatives to support the delivery of Community priorities within the new Corporate Plan 20-24.

Corporate Risk work

- Corporate risk team carried out 100% of required asbestos surveys, communal fire risk assessments, legionella sampling and leisure pool monitoring across our housing and corporate property portfolio during 19/20. Covid impacted on delivery in Q1 and Q2 20/21 due to lockdown, especially regarding our Council Houses and challenges of going into homes etc. This work has recommended and we're currently on track to delivery against revised targets for this year with inspections and sampling recommencing in July.

Emergency Planning

- Updated our Emergency Plan procedures following lessons learned from previous severe weather events.
- Updated Rest Centre and Recovery Plans during 2019/20.
- Launched updated Recovery Plan and delivered internal training at all levels.
- Emergency Planning lead (Service Lead) undertook formal tactical management training which is currently being cascaded to the wider Corporate Management Team to broaden response resilience within the organisation. Service lead also stepped up at strategic response level in support of Leadership Team during Covid as required.
- Overall, Covid response mode has dominated emergency planning activity during 20/21 to date and significant time has been put to this function within the service. Expected to continue for remainder of 20/21 and into 21/22 as we see a second wave of the pandemic and an extended pandemic response.
- Nonetheless, limited work on has recommenced on planning for a potential no-deal EU Exit through both the Local Resilience Forum and Devon Emergency Planning Partnership.

Community Safety

- Delivered strongly against the planned activity in the East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership Action Plan for 19/20 (note separate report to Scrutiny in July 2020).
- Provided an in-depth update to Community PDG in respect of refreshed Action Plan and Priorities for 20/21 and onwards (note CPDG report July 2020). In particular, this focussed a 'trauma informed approach' which takes into account adverse childhood experiences. This approach encourages practitioners and staff to recognise that many service users had experienced some form of traumatic event which may impact on their life choices, activities and activities. The report also set out extra support during the pandemic where there had been an increase in domestic violence and anti-social behaviour during the lockdown.
- Following departure of Police chair of the CSP in September, MDCC have stepped in to chair this statutory group and provide steer going forward working closely with all statutory partners across East Devon DC, Police/Police and Crime Commissioner, Fire and Social Services.
- Adopted a new Key Performance Indicator to monitor and report performance of the CSP action plan programme going forward to support the delivery of Community priorities within the new Corporate Plan 20-24.

ICT

- ICT is currently carrying a number of vacancies due to resignations/ retirements. We were unable to recruit at the last round of interviews for the ICT Operations Manager and therefore are changing our recruitment approach and hope to recruit to the vacant posts soon.
- The team are working hard and continuing to support the organisation and ensure that ICT services and systems are secure and up to date. Prioritisation of support issues and systems uptime is being prioritised to minimise impact to our internal customers.
- The teams(s) are either permanently home working or in small work 'bubbles' to try and ensure resilience over the pandemic. We have also established a relationship with a local Exeter company for retained technical services to ensure we have additional assistance for any urgent infrastructure issues and to provide additional support to the team.
- In the short term once the team are back up to capacity we will be moving forward with a comprehensive review of telephony for the authority, including MS Teams as well as progressing the project for a CRM business case. On the latter we have started to receive informal expressions of interest from the market prior to any official procurement exercise.
- The decision has been taken to use Zoom for virtual committee meetings at MDDC as we currently do not have a platform that will work comfortably for both members and officers.
- To that end, the GM for Business Transformation and Member Services have been testing and the Monitoring Officer has been confirming the appropriate meeting protocols. Members are urged to ensure that they have read the additional meeting protocols before they enter a virtual meeting.

STRATEGIC GRANTS REVIEWS

- The Community Policy Development Group has set up a Working Group to review the Strategic Grants Programme. The working group has met twice over the summer, and has recognised the extraordinary nature of this year, and the importance of maintaining vital voluntary sector services for the benefit of residents at this time. The Working Group will be reporting back to the committee in January, once the overall level of the grants budget for 2021-22 is known.

LAND CHARGES

- The team is very busy with income (as a result of the number of searches) up considerably. Unofficial figures from monitoring carried out, reveal net income (but before expenses) in excess of £14k for September. It is suggested that this would have been c£9k in previous years for that month.

- Some of this increase will be down to people having to delay their house searches from earlier in the year, some will be a desire to move to Devon/work remotely as a result of the pandemic and some will be down to the stamp duty holiday which runs until April next year. On the latter, the team is anticipating a very busy March as people try to get their purchases through before the Stamp Duty holiday comes to an end.
- All targets are being met by the Land Charges Team.

LEISURE SERVICES

Overview

Overview of the current position and key points on the reopening strategy to ensure a continued Covid-19 safe service offering:

- Membership subscriptions (Adult) recommenced from 14/08/2020 and 28/08/2020. Memberships subscriptions (Juniors) recommenced from 14/09/2020 and 28/09/2020, with members having the opportunity to request a further suspension, on a rolling monthly basis, should they feel the time is not right for them to return.
- Any activity on site will be bookable and payable in advance, or per course enrolment. Walk in bookings will not be possible a strategy for engaging new members and customers will continue to be developed, with regular review of participation and operational capacity.
- Call centre – This continues to provide a successful initiative removing customer interaction in the reception areas at the Leisure sites, whilst maintaining a supportive customer experience. The Call Centre team utilises the experience of the existing front of house team members, whilst retaining a lesser extent of team members at the reception of each site to assist with customer flow and on site needs.
- Resources from poolside and casual workers have been utilised to manage customer flow prior to building entry and through the facility during all operational hours. Staff will manage customer flow from pre entry to post to exit the facility.
- Cash payments will not be re-established, payments can still be made on site for future items such as membership subscription upon joining, although payments for activities will be made over the phone at the time of booking for pay and play members.
- External coverings are going to be provided shortly to enable customers to shelter when collecting family members outside following swimming lessons considering the change in season.

- Sports that we are currently unable to welcome back without comprising our covid-19 secure risk assessment includes; Vending, Retail, indoor sports such as 5aside, martial arts and Squash, sauna and unstructured public swimming.
- Communications have been achieved via Video, member letters, social media and library images so customers are aware in advance of the changes to the facilities and the expectations upon them in order to participate safely.
- Staffing- The Leisure Service was key in supporting other colleagues in the Council across other services for delivery during the lockdown and recovery period. Thanks to all leisure staff for their continued support.

Health & Fitness Operations

Adult Membership Recovery

- Following the reopening of health and fitness facilities in Phase 2, participation and membership recovery has been progressive and encouraging. The current position from a comparison to October 2019 shows a percentage of recovery for each leisure site as shown in Table 2.

Facility	% Recovery
Culm Valley	58%
Lords Meadow	61%
Exe Valley	58%
TOTAL	59%

Table 1 - % Recovery of adult memberships

Fitness Participation

- Following the reopening of the facilities in Phase 2, fitness classes and fitness studios have been operational Monday to Sunday and are fully supervised to ensure support and guidance is available to participants at all times. Sanitisation routines are in place to at the end of each session and the Covid safe measures have been well received by the members. Participation has steadily grown from reopening in August 2020, with Monday continuing to be the most well attended day of the week.

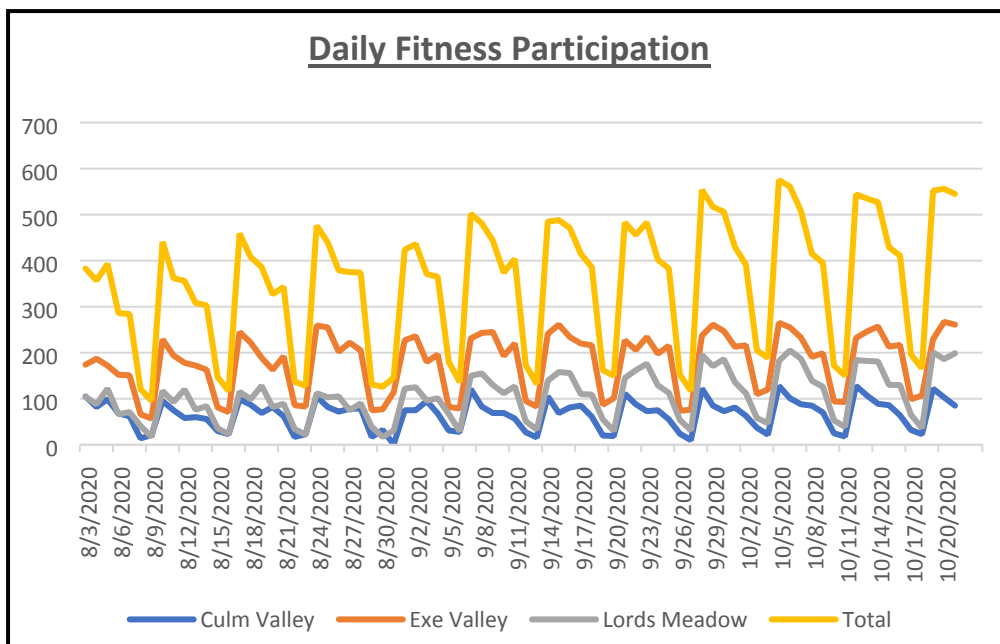


Chart 2 – Daily Fitness Participation

- A strategy for the reintroduction of selected NHS referrals is currently being developed, in conjunction with local GP surgeries and specialists such as Cancer and Cardiac Rehabilitation.

Wetside Operations

- Phase 4 and 5 focussed on the reopening of firstly the junior lesson programme and club usage of the swimming pools at Exe Valley and Lords Meadow. Covid safe systems have been implemented and returning participation demonstrates positive consumer confidence.
- The measures implemented have required for the lesson programme to occupy a greater amount of pool time to ensure safe access to the facilities and customer flow. Changeover between lessons is managed and structured to ensure social distancing of children parents and employees, allowing sufficient scheduling for and sanitisation measures.

Junior Service recovery percentages- Pre Covid-19 v October 2020

- Exe Valley Leisure Centre – 62% recovered pre Covid-19 enrolment
- Lords Meadow Leisure Centre – 74% recovered from pre Covid-19 enrolment
- Overall 66% recovered on the junior swimming programme.

Swimming Participation

- The reintroduction of the structured lane swimming has proven successful with a steady increase in participation notwithstanding the reduced operational capacity.

- The table below shows the customer flow on a daily basis from the implementation of phase 5. Note that the operation hours at the weekend allow less time for lane swimming and are reflected in the trend. Monday continues to be the most popular day for participation.

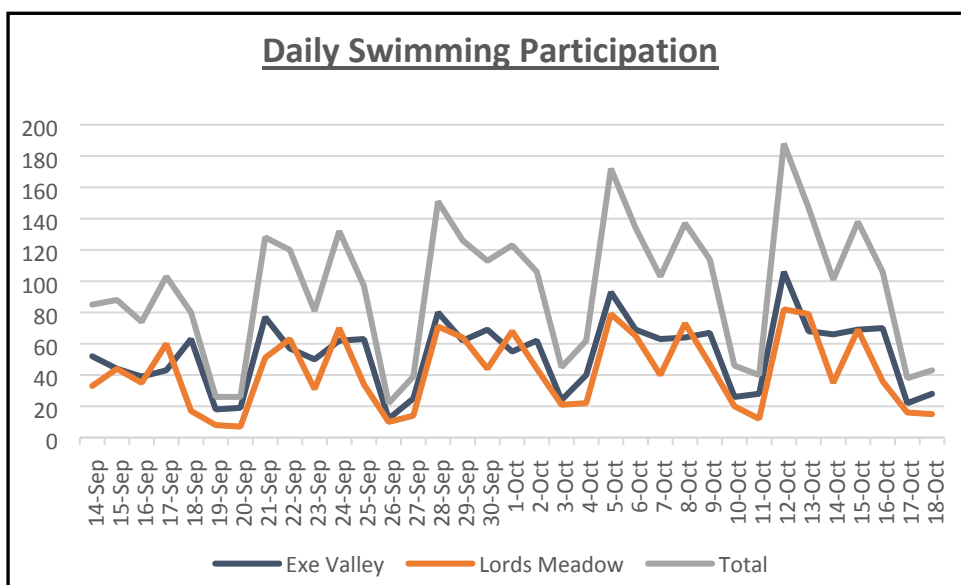


Chart 1 – Daily Lane Swimming Participation

Dryside Operations

- Elements of sports club activity have recommenced for outdoor sports such as Tennis, hockey and football. Mid Devon Leisure holds overall accountability for Covid safe control measures, whilst clubs are responsible for the Covid risk assessment, controls and operational management of the sessions taking place. Table 2 shows the comparison of club pitch booking against October 2019.

Facility	% Recovery of Pitch bookings
Culm Valley	71%
Exe Valley	89%
Lords Meadow	70%
Total	77%

Table 2 - % Recovery of outdoor pitches

- A strategy for the reintroduction of selected indoor activities, such as martial arts clubs, and gymnastics is currently being developed.

Play Areas

- Westexe Recreation Ground Tiverton playground refurbishment is being completed now with Glebelands, Cheriton Bishop to be undertaken in November 2020 and additional equipment being installed at Everett Place Tiverton in December 2020.

- Further planned works to play areas are proposed for Barnfield, Crediton; Linear park Cullompton; Puddington, Amory Park, Tiverton; Peoples Park, Tiverton; Wembworthy; Chestnut Drive, Willand and more significant spend in Crediton for play and recreation subject to decision on project after Town Council and other stakehold engagement.
- The Property Services team will keep Ward Members informed.

Market Square

- The Town Square in Crediton is being resurfaced to improve appearance and drainage in November 2020.

Former Youth Drop In Centre – Centre Space

- Linked to the Property portfolio and the recent press release new space to inspire freelancers, small business and community groups has opened in the former youth centre building.
- Local Community Enterprise awards winner Caro Bushnell has launched the new space in the centre, Centre-Space aims to rejuvenate the venue, offering a place for community groups to grow.

Councillor Dennis Knowles, Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing