

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Economic Development decision meeting
Subject:	Economic Development ongoing response to COVID Pandemic Update Report
Date of meeting:	11 December 2020
Report by:	Economic Development Team (Economic Growth and Employment Learning and Skills)
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development

2. Purpose

To provide a brief summary of the on-going response to the COVID pandemic highlighting actions undertaken since the last report in July 2020 to support businesses and residents

3. Information Requested

Information requested on the following economic growth and skills support:

1. COVID 19 Portsmouth Business Help Line.
2. Business e-bulletin
3. Solent LEP partnership work.
4. Crowdfund Portsmouth "Pay It Forward" Scheme
5. Business Grants
6. Shaping's Portsmouth's Future Together initiatives
7. Markets
8. Future High Street Reports
9. Reopening High Streets Safely
10. Supporting Businesses in the Enterprise Centres
11. Commercial Tenants Support Programme
12. Digital Enablement programme
13. Youth Hub & Project 1624
14. Kickstart



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

- 15. Unemployment Support work
- 16. Adult skills work
- 17. Portsmouth Pledge
- 18. Skills and Workforce Strategy 20-25

4. Information Summaries

4.1 COVID 19 Portsmouth City Council Business Help Line and Business e-bulletin and Council business pages on the web site

On 20th of March the Business Help line was established at the suggestion of the Portfolio Holder with a unique number was set up by IT with a hunt group/contact centre system in place using (02392) 841641.

It was the first such Business Help line to be established in the Solent and has subsequently been copied by the Solent LEP and all other councils. We have 10 staff on the Help Line (now including staff that work at the Council's Enterprise Centres).

Performance figures are set out below.

The Help Line is operational very weekday and has operated every week day since March 20th.

All of the team use a Crib sheet which has been updated 134 times.

Most weeks there are new announcements from Government which the team supports businesses, residents and community groups with examples include Furloughing, SEISS (self-employment income support scheme), BBL (bounce back loan), CBILS (coronavirus business interruption loan scheme) etc.

A rota ensures every hour is covered and no more than 1 or 2 calls go to answer phone every day.

2300 businesses and residents helped.

4300 calls taken.

Countless thank you e-mails received for the help that people have been given.

100s of businesses helped to obtain critical financial assistance and hence stay in business.

4.2 Business Bulletin

During the Pandemic the Council's business e-bulletin has moved to a weekly and sometime twice-weekly missive whereas before it was only one a month.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

75 bulletins have been sent out during the pandemic with an open rate at 40% (industry average is 20%).

Businesses who have signed up increased from 2401 to 3356 during this period, an increase in 955 businesses, in effect 28 new subscribers each week.

Around 43% of businesses in the city now get this bulletin enabling them to keep up to date with all the help and support available.

The business pages on the PCC web site have had 44,169 sessions during COVID with 54% from mobile devices and 60% landing on the business grants pages.

4.3 Solent LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) and H&IOW Local Resilience Forum Work

Planning and Economic Development are representing the Council on both the Solent COVID 19 Task Force led by Chief Exec of LEP, work on the Solent Economic Recovery Plan, and on the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Business and Economy Group.

Summary of outcomes to date:

Participation in the Solent LEP Freeport Task and Finish Group to ensure Portsmouth International Port and Portsmouth key employment sites are included in the Solent LEP led bid for a Solent Freeport. The bidding opened on the 16th of November we are working to ensure key sites are included in the bid which will be submitted on 5th of February 2021 by the LEP.

Exchange of best practice as regards all Local Authority business grant funds and benchmarking of performance.

New Loan scheme launched by the LEP to provide extra funds for businesses - worked with a local business to assist them to obtain critical loan funding

LEP established similar Crowd Funding Scheme using the Portsmouth scheme as a model.

MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government) call for shovel ready capital projects (start in 18 months or less) Portsmouth submitted 10 prioritised schemes and was successful in gaining funding for 2 of the schemes:- The CEI (Centre for Enzyme Innovation) Industrial Hub at University of Portsmouth and the Solent wide Nutrients programme led by PCC.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Working as part of Solent Regeneration and Economic Development Leads on Solent Economic Recovery Plan with LEP and Lichfield's which has now been approved and submitted to Government to obtain new Local Growth fund support it has a strong emphasis on key priorities for Portsmouth, the Marine and Maritime sector and the creative and visitor economy.

Participation in the Business and Economy Group of the LRF and have succeeded in getting one of the first comprehensive business survey revealing the impact of the COVID crisis across Hampshire and the IOW with the highest percentage of respondents in Portsmouth.

4.4 Crowdfund Portsmouth "Pay It Forward" Scheme

Portsmouth City Council launched its new Crowdfund Portsmouth in January 2020, in partnership with Shaping Portsmouth to help increase start-ups and business growth.

In early March, we adjusted the Crowdfund Portsmouth match funding criteria to offer a new scheme called "Pay It Forward", to ensure that our business community who had been adversely affected by COVID-19 had the help they needed, particularly those who have not been supported with government funding packages. We were one of the first 4 councils in the country to launch such a scheme, which has been duplicated across the country, with Solent LEP replicating the provision across the wider Solent area. The scheme aims to help small eligible businesses to access immediate alternative revenue stream, and a community of business support.

In the ten months:

- the scheme has attracted interest from 136 local businesses
- the council has pledged a total of £ 43,230 which raised a further £125,317 from the crowd, to support 17 businesses across a range of sectors
- plus additional funding leveraged from external sources of £35,500
- Total financial support to local businesses of £204,047 in just 10 months with the new scheme.
- £43,230 of council funds has levered in £160,817 of other funds.

The City also has benefitted from further pledges from Solent LEP funding on ten Portsmouth projects total of £26,250 which raised a further £61,365 from the crowd.

- Solent LEP we have brought in an additional £87,615 of financial support for local businesses.
- Therefore in total Crowd Funding has brought £291,662 of finance to local businesses to help them through the COVID 19 Pandemic.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

4.5 Business Grants

Central Government announced in March 2020 a total of £12.3B of business grants to support small businesses, retail, leisure and hospitality businesses across the country. Portsmouth received £41M.

Economic Development worked with the Business Rates team, IT, Corporate Communications and finance to provide these to businesses across the city as fast as possible. Key statistics:

- 100% of the Discretionary Grant paid out in 8 weeks a total of £1.9M
- More than 3500 businesses were supported across Portsmouth.
- A total value of £46M given to businesses in Portsmouth in the form of rate relief this is for the retail, leisure and hospitality sector and for nurseries and early year's settings.
- 44% of the 7880 businesses in the city have received grant support so far.

We are now working with the Business Rates team, IT, Finance and Corporate Communications to allocate further grant funding which has just been obtained of £8.2M to help businesses get through Lockdown 2.0.

Latest position is that we have dispersed £932K of the Local Restriction Support Grant from a total of £3.9M with 604 businesses paid. The £4.3M of Additional Restriction Grant is yet to be dispersed this is a discretionary grant. After 2/12/20 TIER 2 will mean additional grants will be obtained for businesses effected.

4.6 Shaping Portsmouth's Future Together Initiatives

The wider economic development team has worked with Shaping Portsmouth to establish a new action group to co-ordinate and drive recovery in the city. It is very much about re-igniting the city economy. Objectives are:-

- Protection and Creation of employment
- Training, Retraining & Employability Skills provision
- Digital Enablement for those most in need
- Employee Mental wellbeing provision
- Community based projects in support of the hardest hit sectors e.g.: Care Homes

Membership includes:

PCC - Deputy Leader and Lord Mayor

PCC - Economic Development, Education, Corporate Communications and Strategy

The Portsmouth News.

Local Resilience Forum.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Portsmouth Hive.
Pompey in the Community.
Hampshire Chamber of Commerce
Federation of Small Businesses.
University of Portsmouth.

Solent NHS.
City Care Homes
Radian
Portsmouth Creates
DWP

Outcomes include:

Portsmouth Chamber of Solutions set up by PCC, Hampshire Chamber and Shaping Portsmouth. To date 203 Businesses have attended 6 "Master-classes" led by expert panellists. Masterclasses have included preparing for BREXIT, Kickstart and Employee Health & Wellbeing. The programme will now be transitioned from the Hampshire Chamber to Shaping Portsmouth for the 2021 programme and the list of events will be published in January 2021.

Shaping Cluster building project using funding from RHSS (Reopening high streets safety fund). Focus in the retail areas of Fratton, Southsea, North End, building upon existing trader groups and strengthen/widen connections. Encouraging traders/businesses to work together and action plan for the area. Palmerston Road Traders association being launch on December 9th December with 20 interested venues confirmed for the meeting.

GO Christmas campaign launched and a big push on this over the next three weeks. We are promoting those shops that have click and collect and we are also working with Fratton & Albert Rd Traders Association on the Dec 3rd reopening.

Free Contactless Menu App and Local My Stores App pilot these have been piloted with respectively 40 and 25 local businesses free of charge to help small independent hospitality businesses and small independent shops to compete with national chains.

4.7 Markets during COVID 19 and the Markets Move

We have constantly adapted to the changing COVID restrictions as regards the markets to ensure COVID secure operations. This has meant that the Commercial Road market, Palmerston Road markets and Cosham High Street markets have all been able to operate for some periods.

All market traders were provided with a rent holiday during the first lock down, with all supported with government grants. This has resulted in the retention of all traders with the exception of one, who has decided not to continue trading on Commercial Road.



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

In Lockdown 2.0 only 25% of traders are able to trade but we are providing them with government business grants to sustain.

The market move in Commercial Road was held up by COVID and the fact that one of our contractors went into Administration. The electrical works were finally completed on the 16th of November one month behind schedule. Because only a limited number of market stalls are operating during the Lock-down 2.0 it has been decided to delay the move until the full market is back in operation.

The "We Create Market" in the old Debenhams building, has taken place over several weekends attracting at its height, 160 stalls both inside and outside in Palmerston Road. This has provided an amazing opportunity for local makers and creatives to sell in an indoor market setting. The use of outdoor space supported traders to sell food. As non-essential markets closed, this offered an additional opportunity for traders who missed markets during lockdown

4.8 Future High Streets Bids

Economic Development is part of a multi-disciplinary team in Regeneration working up these bids

- This is part of £3.6B Towns Fund from MHCLG of which Future High Streets is £1B.
- Portsmouth one of 100 successful towns and cities in first round bids.
- Fratton Road and Commercial Road both awarded £50K each to work up full business cases.
- Portsmouth 1 of only 4 cities and towns to have 2 high streets included in the successful bids at stage 1.
- Full stage 2 bids submitted for £10.5M in July 2020. We expect to hear if we have been successful before Christmas

4.9 Reopening High Streets Safety (RHSS)

Since May 2020 the Economic Development team have been working in partnership with Infrastructure, Transport, Licencing and Public Health colleague to support the safe reopening of retail and hospitality. Interventions have included establishing safe queuing, providing COVID secure guidance to retail and hospitality and business connection work in partnership with Shaping Portsmouth.

Engagement includes:

- Go! Project launched with RHSS funding to highlight reopening, social distancing,



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

- Pass points in suspended parking spaces - implemented through working with businesses on best positions for these- this enabled many restaurants, cafes, bars and pubs to gain essential extra income from having space for tables and chairs outside their premises, boosting takings.
- Licensing work around additional amenity areas for hospitality businesses to reopen and use space on the pavement for seating/additional covers
- Palmerston Road South intervention, working with businesses to close the road and use space for social distancing, walking/wheeling to the area and businesses to have seating outside - "Al Fresco" dining changed the whole feel of the street.
- Castle Road Active Travel scheme working with businesses to add pass points, additional amenity space with plants provided by Waterfront Plants and planted by volunteers.
- Additional Christmas Go! Campaign, online directory linked to We Create market traders, opportunity for businesses to add offers and gift voucher info on PCC website, one hour free parking in Cosham, City Centre and Southsea PCC car parks in December to help drive customers to local businesses and support them
- Through use of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding a larger tree pit in Palmerston Road precinct has been put in place so that a 30 foot Christmas tree can be put there - now in place and lit.
- CIL has also been used to fund new Christmas lights motifs all the way down Fratton Road, London Road and Kingston Road these are now in place and lit.

4.10 Supporting Businesses in the Enterprise Centres

The Council's Enterprise centres have been open throughout the COVID period (with reduced opening hours during April 2020 only) providing access and support and to arrange postal deliveries. Normal opening hours were reintroduced at the start of May 2020. During this period all businesses have been regularly informed with updates by email, e-business bulletin and information about the various grant schemes. Additional support has been provided, such as arranging access to loading bays for deliveries out of working hours when needed and increasing the frequency of security patrols at each centre while businesses were not able to operate from the centre.

The team has also helped two businesses downsize units within the centres to help them keep trading with reduced cost while maintaining an income for PCC, met with representatives of tenants at Portsmouth Enterprise Centre who had grouped together to engage with the Council and agreed rent deferrals to support tenants.

Following the department restructure the enterprise centres are now within the Economic Development team, enabling us to deliver an enhanced business support service. The Enterprise centre team are supporting the business helpline as other staff have returned to normal work activities.



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

The enterprise centres have continued to update and invest in their service delivery infrastructure, which has helped during the pandemic and will also greatly assist in the recovery period, such as our in-house high speed business grade broadband service offered to tenants along with VOIP (voice over the internet protocol) phones. Before the covid-19 pandemic we agreed a contract for a new CRM system which will help with

record keeping of tenants, demand for services & the needs the accommodation required for local businesses.

Before the pandemic plans and funding was achieved for an upgrade of the reception & central area of Portsmouth Enterprise Centre. The project has been delayed due to the pandemic (other projects/priority work for PCC staff) but is now progressing. The new area will include booth style seating and work spaces for businesses similar to co-work areas. We are looking to help & support all business types and sizes (both resident & external to the ECs) while achieving an income stream for PCC. Some areas of the new refurbishment will have connections direct to the PCC network to enable staff members to continue to work away from the civic offices and/or complete work after site visits to the area.

Only two businesses have vacated as a direct result of Covid-19 (Phlex - co-work space & Check Health, recruitment company for the hospitality sector), one other bought forward his retirement plans and gifted all his catering equipment to HIVE who in turn contacted several small charities who shared the equipment. We have been able to continue to facilitate viewing and rent out units to new business tenants during the period, with 7 new tenants at Victory BC, 1 let at Challenge EC and 2 new businesses at Portsmouth EC. In total we currently support 124 businesses in the 3 centres

4.11 Portsmouth City Council Commercial Tenant Support Scheme

The Commercial Tenant Support Scheme has been implemented to assist all 530 of the council's commercial tenants. The application of the scheme is in sync with the Governments recently published Code of Practice for commercial property and is our way of recognising the devastating impact of the COVID pandemic and supporting our tenants in a way that works synergistically with the governments other grant, and loan based financial support schemes.

To-date we have supported 59 tenants with re-scheduling rental payments in value over £1,000,000 in rent.

4.12 Digital Enablement Programme

The project led by Shaping Portsmouth brings together partners from across the City, including culture and economic development colleagues working with vulnerable residents. Resources have been secured within Education and Portsmouth HIVE and these have been deployed to school children (particularly identified as at need by the

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

schools and support services) and vulnerable residents. Concerns for adult user's deployment have been linked to the community learning service to deliver targeted 121 support to ensure resources are accessible to overcome social inclusion and employment support.

The project is now considering the use of lease schemes in partnership with Neil Mcleod as a Portsmouth College Apple partner, as a way to extend resources to ensure we obtain a cost effective service for the limited funds we hope to obtain. Further work is being done to obtain additional funds / resources and provide a business volunteer support helpline to support resources roll out.

Shaping Portsmouth are strongly advocating a managed process to deliver a centralised approach, with the costs efficiencies this offers and partners from education and Portsmouth HIVE are reviewing the viability.

4.13 Youth HUB and Project 1624

Portsmouth City Council (skills and education partners) are working with DWP to create a Youth Hub in the city to support the high numbers of 16-24 year olds disadvantaged under COVID and now facing unemployment. This project is still at application stage (commenced July 20) but intends to offer a joint delivery to meet the needs of young people across the city, including outreach delivered in communities to support all communities. The application is progressing well and we anticipate resources for an additional 2 staff to supplement existing teams supporting the age group into work.

The project managers continues to seek a digital hub which will not be funded under the Youth HUB to offer a full remote provision to reach the target audience effectively and are working with the Strategy Unit to apply for external funds.

Project 16-24 is a new Shaping Portsmouth initiative launched in Nov 2020 to bring together the support currently available and target additional support at gaps in provision. This work links to the Portsmouth Pledge, Youth Hub and Skills strategy work delivered in partnership.

4.14 Kickstart

The Kickstart scheme provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16 to 24 year olds currently in receipt of Universal Credit. Employers must apply for a minimum of 30 placements, or work with a Gateway organisation who can represent them in the application for funding.

Portsmouth City Council have submitted 2 applications as a gateway organisation, seeking kickstart placements for 50 Portsmouth City Council hosted placements and a

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

further 36 external partner placements. Both applications remain in the DWP assessment process awaiting response in line with DWP timelines.

PCC is working closely with Shaping Portsmouth, Solent Apprenticeship HUB and DWP to promote the programme to employers across the city and increase the funded work placement opportunities for young people aged 16-24.

Shaping Portsmouth are looking to provide an offering to businesses for a series of professional development modules as a full cost recovery which will be for employers on a voluntary basis.

4.15 Unemployment Support delivered by ELS

The Work and Health programme moved to remote delivery under COVID and has continued to deliver support to the long term unemployed throughout the crisis period as a priority service under DWP contract (as a subcontractor to our Prime Contractor SEETEC Pluss). The service has engaged with 352 individuals in 2020 has support 37 into work since March 20 (65 YTD) and continues to support DWP referred adults with multiple barriers to work to move toward employment over an 18 month delivery programme.

Work and Health JETS commenced delivery in October 2020 under extended contract with SEETEC Pluss, providing support for the short term unemployed (those receiving universal credit (UC) for a min of 13 weeks and defined as negatively impacted by COVID). The team is supporting 56 individuals and have already supported 5 into employment since the programme commenced despite lower than expected referrals to date.

Solent Employment Support (SES) is an ESF funded programme supporting the long term unemployed with multiple barriers to employment over a 2 year period. Individuals self-refer and on this specialist support programme we have supported 50 individuals and moved 7 into work since March 20.

4.16 Adult and Community Learning

The CLS (Community Learning Service) has continued to deliver from The Learning Place throughout COVID, working against its ESFA (Education Skills Funding Agency) requirements. During lockdown 1 the service supported 30 individuals to achieve their Function Skills in maths or English. 8 of those achieving Maths level 1 have progressed to take their Functional Skills Maths level 2 with 7 passing (87.5%), with the remaining learner sustained in learning and retaking in December 2020.

The service has delivered remote learning and remains open for pre booked IT access and employability session access at The Learning Place, along with formal learning delivery in line with education policy and within restricted numbers providing a COVID

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

safe environment. This has helped 21 adults achieve their award in Food Safety and Hygiene to support their move into employment and 5 council employees achieve their business admin apprenticeships using remote assessment.

IT access supports the work of the library service to increase IT access for digitally excluded adults.

4.17 Portsmouth Pledge

The Portsmouth Pledge is a Shaping Portsmouth initiative working with Portsmouth City council and supported by the Solent Apprenticeship HUB to provide a simple skills solution for employers in the city. Formally launching at the Shaping Portsmouth Conference in Jan 21, the programme offers a partnership between our skills providers and a commitment to businesses and individuals that we will work together to provide simple access to information advice and guidance to help them access training.

The partnership with local skills providers provides a "one stop" access to providers using Shaping Portsmouth as a portal for referrals, encouraging skills engagement at all levels of organisations.

The launch will include a 100 in 100 campaign across the city to recognise the opportunities provided for young people and adults to enter into Apprenticeships, traineeship placements, kickstart opportunities and new job creation with a campaign in the Portsmouth Evening News financially sponsored by the skills partners, Solent Apprenticeship HUB and Portsmouth City Council.

4.18 Skills and Workforce Strategy 20-25

The Skills and Workforce Strategy 20-25 has now been published and delivery will be monitored and reviewed through the Shaping Portsmouth Skills group and will collate key targets and achievement from the wider economic development work.

TRISTAN SAMUELS (REGENERATION)

.....
Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972



THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location