



ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY SELECT COMMITTEE

13 JANUARY 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART I

6. COMPOSITE DOCUMENT OF EVIDENCE COMPILED FOR THE REVIEW

To consider the supplementary evidence compiled for the review.
Pages 3 - 12

Supplementary Agenda Published 8 January 2021

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Environment & Economy Select Committee
Wednesday 13 January 2021

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

ITEM 6 – Composite document of research evidence requested by Members to assist with the review

(5) (iii) Impact on Young People - Job Centre Plus – YP targeted Kickstart Scheme (6 month job placements for 16 – 24 year olds) - Response provided by Mena Caldbeck, Business Relationship Manager

(7) Impact on BAME - Response from Gareth Wall, Corporate Policy & Research Officer.

(8) Impact on lower Socio Economic background - Response from Gareth Wall, Corporate Policy & Research Officer.

(10) Impact on Town Investment Plan - Response from Chris Barnes, Assistant Director Regeneration.

(13) Job Centre Plus (JCP) – all groups - Response from Mena Caldbeck, Business Relationship Manager.

(16) CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) / Stevenage Works - Response from Chris Barnes, Assistant Director Regeneration.

(17) Co-operative Economy Charter - Response from Paul Cheeseman, Community Development Officer.

Item 6 (7&8) Briefing note on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on protected characteristics

Gareth Wall – corporate policy and research officer gareth.wall@stevenage.gov.uk 8 Jan 2021

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has disproportionately negatively impacted all protected characteristics. This note provides a brief overview of what is known to date of both the health and wellbeing impacts as well as the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. A more detailed piece of work would need to be undertaken to gauge the depth of impact both by characteristic and on intersectionalities, with what limited data there is available for the town.

Protected characteristic	Summary of some key areas of impact and concern
Age	Higher age is highly correlated with the health vulnerabilities which increase the risks associated with the disease. There is a high risk of issues relating to isolation due to reduced social interaction from stay at home orders and lack on familial contact for extended periods. Whilst an economic slowdown will impact those entering the workforce, it will also risk greater financial hardship for those that are 50+ and facing redundancies. In younger ages, disruption of education especially those in exam years can impact future options.
Disability	Restrictions placed on face to face services increases the risk of reduced service access for those with disabilities, as well as reduced access to essentials such as food shopping. An move to more working from home norms provides some increased economic inclusion. Postponement of medical appointments.
Gender reassignment	Restrictions on social interaction and travel, as well as on medical access, reduce the access to vital support for those considering, undergoing or recovering from gender reassignment increasing is risk of isolation and mental health issues.
Marriage or civil partnership	Restrictions on social interaction and travel reduce the access to vital support for those that are single, increasing risks of isolation and mental health issues. More children at home from school closures & isolation requests increases the burden on single parents. Increased working from home for those in partnerships increases risk of partnership breakdown and reduces access to vital support networks resulting in increased incidents of domestic abuse.
Pregnancy & maternity	Restrictions on chosen partner access to hospital as well as social interaction, reduces vital support and advice for pregnant and new mothers. Increased working from home provides some increased partner support and economic inclusion.
Race	Health, social and economic inequalities have resulted in BAME community being at greater risk both from the epidemiological impacts as well as socioeconomic impacts. Extended family/ multi-generational household, increase transmission risk to vulnerable age relatives.
Religion or belief	Restrictions of freedoms of movement and congregation have impacted the ability for people of faith to practice their religion, including important religion life occasions such as funerals, especially minority faith who may be more isolated and required to travel further.
Sex	Health inequality has resulted in higher mortality rates among men. Greater concentration of women in front line essential services including NHS as well as retail, and greater childcare burden has resulted in more women being infected. A greater socio-economic vulnerability of women with greater employment in hard hit sectors such as hospitality and insecurity of employment has resulted in greater economic vulnerability. Restrictions on vital support systems and independence has resulted increased incidents of domestic abuse, disproportionately affective women. Greater child care responsibility from disruption to schools disproportionately falls on women.
Sexual orientation	Restrictions on social interaction and travel, as well as access to specialist support, reduces vital support for LGBTQI+ community increasing risk of mental health issues
Socio-economic*	Lower health is significantly correlated with lower socio-economic status, increasing the risk of serious illness from the virus. High concentration in front line essential services such as NHS and retail increased the risk of infection, as does the need to use public transport and living in higher density areas. Greater employment vulnerability significantly increases the risk of economic hardship and of 'falling between the gaps' in the government's economic support packages, especially for those with no recourse to public funds. Children from poorer households more likely to be excluded from online education access & digital divide.
Other – cultural/ linguistic minorities	Exclusion from vital public health messaging for those with limited functional English increases the risk from infection & of exclusion from economic & other support programmes.

What is known of the disparity in impact of the pandemic?

Back in March 2020, the parliamentary Women and Equalities Committee launched its inquiry '*Unequal impact: Coronavirus (Covid-19) and the impact on people with protected characteristics*' and due to their potential severity and complexity, three sub-inquiries have been launched: [Coronavirus and BAME people](#); [Gendered economic impact](#), and [Disability and access to services](#)

[Coronavirus and BAME people](#): In this sub-inquiry, the Committee wants to explore the pre-existing inequalities facing BAME people and how these inequalities have impacted on their vulnerability to the virus. The Committee was also interested in solutions to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on BAME people, and was particularly keen to hear from BAME people throughout this sub-inquiry. Published 15 December 2020, [the third report of the committee](#) found that Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) people have been acutely affected by pre-existing inequalities across a huge range of areas, including health, employment, accessing Universal Credit, housing and the no recourse to public funds policy. As the pandemic progressed, many of these underlying inequalities made the impact of the pandemic far more severe for BAME people than their White counterparts. The inquiry found that comorbidities pose a risk for BAME people in experiencing coronavirus more severely and, at times, with adverse health outcomes. The committee makes a series of recommendations to government and Public Health England to mitigate these increased risks and highlight a number of gaps and delays such as making recording ethnicity on death certificates mandatory and on work to formally establish the a link between the occupation of a person and their exposure, vulnerability and risk of contracting the virus. Other key areas highlighted by the committee are the known **barriers to applying to Universal Credit**, how **poor housing conditions have adverse impacts on health**, and the **impact of the no recourse to public funds policy**.

[Gendered economic impact](#): Committee is considering how the economic impact of Covid-19 has been different for men and women, to what extent any differential impact reflects existing economic inequalities, and to scrutinise the effectiveness of the Government's economic response from a gender equality perspective. The Committee is yet to publish its report following [its fourth and final evidence gathering session in November](#) which covered a wide range of issues and concerns raised during the inquiry including: effectiveness of emergency schemes, focussing on the furlough and job support schemes and changes to welfare; the economic impact on particular groups of people with protected characteristics; the gendered impact of the difficulties faced by the childcare sector; improving policy making by ensuring a gendered perspective and improving gender and equalities data, and the role of the Government Equalities Office. Evidence shows there is a mixed gendered impact and that whilst [more women were being furloughed](#), however [more men were being made redundant](#) (see tables at end of the note). Further, whilst some sectors which have greater numbers of women workers such as hospitality and hair and beauty have had to close due to the potential health impact, and sectors such as manufacturing and construction with more men workers have been allowed to stay open, other sectors especially in the public sector with more women continue to provide essential services such as teaching, local government, retail, and health and social care.

Disability and access to services: In this sub-inquiry, the Committee looks in more detail at ways of easing some of the problems disabled people are facing when they need access to essential services during the pandemic. They looked at access to food, health and social care and education. They also thought about how the Government could improve its communications and consultation with disabled people about guidance and policies that are having substantial effects on their daily lives. The [fourth report of the committee](#) found that disabled people who already faced substantial barriers to full participation in society have suffered a range of profoundly adverse effects from the pandemic, including starkly disproportionate and tragic deaths. The Committee found that the Government's focus on people defined as "clinically extremely vulnerable" (CEV) to the virus, while rational from a medical perspective, was an inappropriate proxy for the need for support with access to food and had unintended consequences. Further, potentially discriminatory critical care guidelines and doctors' blanket use of do not attempt resuscitation (DNAR) notices caused disabled people great distress and anxiety and left them feeling their lives were less valued than others'. A robust response is required to restore disabled people's confidence that their needs are given equal consideration. Pre-existing health inequalities and poor outcomes for people with learning disabilities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and that it is vital that their annual NHS health checks are reinstated. The much more widespread adoption of continuous mask wearing has made effective communication impossible for people who lip-read and much more difficult for British Sign Language users and disabled people who are more reliant on facial expressions for communication. The pandemic has demonstrated and exacerbated a widely acknowledged pre-existing crisis in provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). While Ministers described their engagement with disabled stakeholders during the pandemic as very positive, open and effective, some disabled people and their organisations felt excluded and ignored. The way the Government has communicated with disabled people during the pandemic has, on occasions, caused confusion and compounded already keenly felt anxiety. Communications have sometimes been poorly thought out, with insufficient consideration given to the psychological effects on recipients and their families.

Data on Economic impact by Sex – furlough scheme

CJRS Furloughed employments by country, region, local authority and gender as at 30 September 2020

County and district / unitary authority	Female			Male			Unknown	Total		
	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take up-rate	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take- up rate		Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take- up rate
England	1,038,000	12,928,300	8%	981,300	12,649,500	8%		2,019,300	25,577,900	8%
East of England	116,500	1,463,400	8%	100,700	1,428,600	7%		217,200	2,892,000	8%
Hertfordshire										
County	25,800	294,400	9%	22,400	281,900	8%		48,200	576,300	8%
Broxbourne	2,300	24,700	9%	2,000	22,400	9%		4,300	47,200	9%
Dacorum	3,400	37,500	9%	3,000	36,100	8%		6,500	73,500	9%
East Herts	3,700	37,000	10%	3,100	35,400	9%		6,700	72,400	9%
Hertsmere	2,800	26,000	11%	2,300	23,800	10%		5,100	49,900	10%
North Herts	2,400	32,600	7%	2,200	31,700	7%		4,600	64,300	7%
St Albans	2,900	34,800	8%	2,400	34,400	7%		5,300	69,200	8%
Stevenage	1,400	23,400	6%	1,400	22,100	6%		2,800	45,400	6%
Three Rivers	2,100	22,800	9%	1,800	21,000	8%		3,900	43,800	9%
Watford	2,300	27,000	9%	2,200	26,000	8%		4,500	52,900	8%
Welwyn Hatfield	2,400	28,600	8%	2,000	29,000	7%		4,500	57,600	8%

Data on Economic impact by Sex – Claimant count on 8 Oct

Local area data

Under Universal Credit a broader span of claimants are required to look for work than under Jobseekers Allowance. As Universal Credit Full Service is rolled out in particular areas, the number of people recorded as being on the Claimant Count is therefore likely to rise.

CC01 [Claimant Count¹ by unitary and local authority](#) (experimental statistics)

not seasonally
adjusted

	CLAIMANT COUNT ON 8th OCTOBER 2020									Change on year									% Change on year	
	Levels					Percentage of Pop ²				Levels					Percentage ²			Levels		
	Men	%	Women	%	People	Men	Women	People	Men	Women	People	Men	Women	People	Men	Women				
	1		2		3	4	5	6	7		8		9	10	11	12	13	14		
ENGLAND	1,311,410	58.9%	916,740	41.1%	2,228,150	7.5	5.2	6.3	746,675	60.2%	493,935	39.8%	1,240,610	4.3	2.8	3.5	132.2%	116.8%		
Hertfordshire	21,255	57.4%	15,810	42.7%	37,060	5.8	4.2	5.0	14,000	58.9%	9,760	41.1%	23,760	3.8	2.6	3.2	193.0%	161.3%		
Broxbourne	2,200	55.9%	1,740	44.2%	3,935	7.6	5.6	6.6	1,510	59.1%	1,045	40.9%	2,555	5.2	3.4	4.3	218.8%	150.4%		
Dacorum East	2,780	56.7%	2,115	43.2%	4,900	5.9	4.4	5.1	1,915	57.9%	1,390	42.1%	3,305	4.0	2.9	3.4	221.4%	191.7%		
Hertfordshire	2,065	56.7%	1,580	43.3%	3,645	4.5	3.3	3.9	1,480	57.6%	1,090	42.4%	2,570	3.2	2.3	2.8	253.0%	222.4%		
Hertsmere North	1,970	55.0%	1,615	45.0%	3,585	6.5	4.9	5.7	1,285	55.4%	1,035	44.6%	2,320	4.2	3.2	3.7	187.6%	178.4%		
Hertfordshire	2,105	58.3%	1,505	41.7%	3,610	5.2	3.6	4.4	1,390	60.6%	900	39.2%	2,295	3.5	2.2	2.8	194.4%	148.8%		
St Albans	2,085	57.4%	1,550	42.6%	3,635	4.7	3.4	4.0	1,350	59.7%	905	40.0%	2,260	3.1	2.0	2.5	183.7%	140.3%		
Stevenage Three Rivers	2,010	61.3%	1,270	38.7%	3,280	7.2	4.5	5.9	1,240	63.4%	715	36.6%	1,955	4.4	2.6	3.5	161.0%	128.8%		
	1,490	56.4%	1,155	43.8%	2,640	5.3	4.0	4.6	1,015	58.3%	720	41.4%	1,740	3.6	2.5	3.0	213.7%	165.5%		
Watford Welwyn	2,435	58.5%	1,725	41.5%	4,160	7.8	5.6	6.7	1,505	58.6%	1,060	41.2%	2,570	4.8	3.4	4.1	161.8%	159.4%		
Hatfield	2,120	57.7%	1,555	42.3%	3,675	5.3	3.8	4.5	1,305	59.3%	895	40.7%	2,200	3.3	2.2	2.7	160.1%	135.6%		
ENGLAND	1,311,410		916,740		2,228,150	7.5	5.2	6.3	746,675		493,935		1,240,610	4.3	2.8	3.5				

1. The experimental Claimant Count consists of claimants of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and some Universal Credit (UC) Claimants. The UC claimants that are included are 1) those that were recorded as not in employment (May 2013-April 2015), and 2) those claimants of Universal Credit who are required to search for work, i.e. within the Searching for Work conditionality regime as defined by the Department for Work &

Item 6 (10) Impact on Town Investment Plan - Response from Chris Barnes, Assistant Director Regeneration.

Town Deal

Introduction

Towns Fund was announced in December 2019 by MHCLG as a way of levelling up towns and boroughs across the country through capital funding. Towns Fund includes 101 towns across the UK, who will work to create Town Investment plans to submit to central government to secure up to £25 million of funding. Where a town can demonstrate that it will deliver not just local, but regional and national benefits, these could be deemed as exceptional cases and seek funding greater than £25m. The types of investment which align with the fund include unlocking jobs and economic growth, regenerating town centres, delivering infrastructure, and investing in skills and training.

Proposition

Stevenage was selected as one of the towns eligible to bid for funding, with Stevenage Borough Council acting as the accountable body. The Council has worked at pace with its partners across the private, public and community organisations to develop a Town Investment Plan for Stevenage, which is the first step in securing a Town Deal. Since January 2020, we have:

- Recruited an independent Chairperson, Adrian Hawkins, to lead the Board
- Established a Stevenage Development Board, replacing Stevenage First, which includes key stakeholders and local leaders from the business, community, public service and development sectors
- Completed a number of work packages, including economic analysis, vision and theme development, project development and appraisal, and production of the investment plan
- Undertaken scrutiny and challenge sessions with the professional support team
- Engaged with the local community, including through our virtual visitor centre
- Submitted our completed Stevenage Town Investment Plan seeking £50m of funding through Towns Fund

Potential benefits

Stevenage Borough Council has demonstrated through the use of Growth Deal funding and its own capital investment that investing public funding in Stevenage has the ability to act as a catalyst to attract private investment, at a ratio above 1:10; for every £10m invested, it is expected that over £100m of private investment will follow. This is one of the key reasons why securing a strong Town Deal for Stevenage has the potential to make a positive contribution to our £1bn regeneration programme, complementing projects and investment already being

delivered on the ground. Some of the benefits that the Town Deal funding would unlock include:

- 2,000 homes and 8,000 jobs, with over £2bn gross value added by 2035
- Strengthen Stevenage as the heart of the UK's Bioscience
- Establishing a gateway for international business and visitors
- Securing new locations for high value business, innovation and incubation space
- Creating connections between jobs, skills and people
- Deliver clear pathways to employment and opportunities for local people

As part of our wider regeneration programme, this provides an excellent opportunity to support our local economic recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Item 6 (17) Co-operative Economy Charter - Response from Paul Cheeseman, Community Development Officer

Co-operative Economy Charter

The Council launched its Cooperative and Inclusive Economy Charter on 19th November. The Charter aims to support a fairer society and more resilient economy, and provides some practical examples of how to achieve this. These include shopping locally, developing local supply chains, supporting the development of cooperatives, and offering work placements and apprenticeships. The Charter is aimed at both individuals and employers.

The Charter provides the Council and its stakeholders with an important lever to draw upon when tackling the social and economic challenges caused / accentuated by the Covid-19. Nevertheless, the roots of the Charter predate the pandemic, and are based within the Council's wider body of work linked to Community Wealth Building. This work is underpinned by four key themes. These are procurement and social value, training and skills, cooperative and social economy growth, and tackling climate change.

Some key milestones have been identified to support the development of this work. These include securing pledges of support for the Charter, and working with the Hertfordshire Growth Board to develop a Community Wealth Building proposal.

Author – Paul Cheeseman Community Development

Item 6 (16) CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) / Stevenage Works - Response from Chris Barnes, Assistant Director Regeneration.

CITB on-site construction experience hubs

Overview

In 2020, Stevenage Borough Council, together with North Herts College, Job Centre Plus, and a number of our construction partners, were able to secure £300k of funding from CITB over a three-year period for Hertfordshire's on-site construction experience training hub. When added to the match funding, this presents a circa. £450k investment in skills and training. The aim of the fund is to get people 'site ready' for construction jobs – through a mix of learning & an on-site experience placement, so that after completion, employers can be more certain someone is ready to hit the ground running, leading to successful job starts and sustained jobs for local people.

There is no single pathway model for delivery – some people may need 2-3 weeks of support, whilst some people may need much longer (e.g. if they are long-term out of work). The scheme will include a number of different access routes, linking with Job Centre Plus and North Herts College, and it presents an opportunity to target some support to people who have lost work due to Covid-19

The funding aims to offer opportunities to circa. 300 local people, with the aim to get at least half (150 local people) into job starts when they have completed the programme. This builds on our desire to use the physical transformation of Stevenage Town Centre as a catalyst for socio-economic change, and securing benefits for local people. The scheme will be delivered alongside Stevenage Works, the collaborative partnership between SBC/NHC/JCP & contractors/developers to provide opportunities for local people through building contracts in Stevenage