

26 April 2020

Good afternoon everyone and I hope you are enjoying your weekend in the sunshine at home ... I have to admit when out on my daily walk yesterday there seemed to be a lot more traffic on the roads which is disappointing.

It's now been five weeks on lockdown and the start of another busy week ahead across both the county and district.

I can advise that as of Friday the cumulative of tested hospital cases of COVID-19 across the county was 955 up from 742 the previous week with 198 confirmed cases in Stratford on Avon District, an increase of 68 cases down from 79 the previous week. This doesn't account for all the cases in the community and very sadly there is a cumulative total of 65 deaths across the district.

The district's hospital capacity is continuing to hold up well which has a total of 431 beds and is currently looking after 39 Covid-19 patients with one patient in intensive care. Non Covid-19 patients are occupying 45% of the other hospital beds, which means the spare capacity of beds is currently 46%. There is a reduction in people showing Covid-19 symptoms being hospitalised, which is encouraging, but clearly this demonstrates the importance of staying home and keeping social distancing practices in place to stop the spread.

WCC is working with authorities across the region on PPE with staff working 7 days a week and currently all clinical needs are being met and continue to replenish supplies from certified sources to maintain quality assurance. Contact has also been made with every care home setting across the region and PPE is being used by all care providers. WCC is continuing to work with the CCG's to boost the primary care offer into the Care Homes and details are expected to be announced and communicated next week. The hospital discharge process continues to work well.

Testing for Covid-19 is being rapidly expanded across key workers but you have to be symptomatic to qualify for a test. Whilst contact tracing will be managed nationally, Public Health Warwickshire will have a key role to support the offer locally.

Waste collections are operating as business as usual although the tonnage from kerb side collections has increased significantly. Household Recycling Centres will continue to remain closed for the time being although new guidelines are anticipated from DEFRA, whilst there have been instances of fly-tipping this is in line with volumes for this time of year.

There has been a small increase in the number of children attending schools across the county from under 2% to over 2% and all schools opened for distance learning to children last week. WCC is being proactive in providing necessary equipment to those children in need.

In terms of vulnerable children and families, WCC is continuing to meet and contact everyone they are concerned about and new legislation is anticipated shortly which relaxes some of the processes to make the issues of adoption and fostering easier. There have been various instances of resistance to the lockdown measures amongst young people to stay at home but these have been addressed by the team of youth workers in liaison with the police.

Domestic abuse continues to remain at similar levels for this time of year but is being carefully monitored with hotlines extensively promoted through a big awareness campaign.

WCC is now turning its attention to getting council business done and the democratic process swings into action next month with virtual Cabinet Meeting taking place in May to be followed by both Regulatory and Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting. The focus from next week is on economic recovery and services.

More than 1100 food parcels have been distributed to the Tier 1 shielded community and further support is being given to vulnerable people within the Tier 2 category. Everyone within the Tier 1 category is being contacted personally. A mailshot to every household is being sent out to outline all the support measures offered. There has been a 70% increase in the library services with users doubling over the lockdown period.

The focus moving forward is centred on developing a road map about what the new normal will look like embracing reform and improvement rather than settling into established ways. WCC is also introducing its own Coronavirus business loan scheme comprising a £1 million fund for up to 24 businesses.

SDC has already paid out over £21million to small businesses through the Business Grant Scheme but there are still nearly 500 business which have not applied! There appears to be a misconception by some businesses that this is a loan ... this is NOT the case at all – if you are registered for business rates and even get small business rates relief you qualify for £10,000!

Whilst the highways maintenance programme has been paired back to safety works only, the introduction of new processes involving safe working practices means that the capital highways maintenance programme will be restarted from 4<sup>th</sup> May.

I hope you continue to enjoy a safe weekend at home and take care over the coming week.

Anne

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