

SCC CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING FRIDAY 17TH JULY 2020

I have received enquiries in relation to the mobile testing centre at Dillington House – appointments need to be made in advance, preferably using this link.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing-and-tracing/get-an-antigen-test-to-check-if-you-have-coronavirus/>

Covid-19 infection numbers across the county remain low, and no specific figures were provided as this week's briefing.

It is anticipated that the pandemic WILL return during the cooler months (as evidenced by the increase in numbers in Australia, triggering further lockdown).

Local lockdowns are continuing across the country, and attention is being given to the situation in Leicester.

An additional £3m. has been received from central government, which will largely help to bridge the expected £3.5m. funding gap as a result of the Coronavirus. This money is not ring fenced.

An additional £276k has also been allocated to SSDC.

The Local Outbreak Management Plan is being implemented.

Local authorities now have the power to close down public places and facilities without referring to magistrates, enabling swift action, in liaison with public health and environmental officers.

It is unclear at present whether or not district councils have this power.

It is anticipated that any business closures will be by mutual agreement where possible.

The long-awaited draft regulation providing clarity in relation to local lockdowns will be published next week, indicating how central government will intervene to restrict movements if felt necessary (e.g. parks, beaches, transport, businesses etc.).

Pub social activities – it is assumed that usually social activities, such as dart leagues, will now resume as long as social distancing measures are applied. Official guidance states that no activities should take place that encourage shouting or singing.

Bowling alleys can re-open from 1st Aug.

SCHOOLS – Preparation for Sept. - all schools are planning to be fully open.

The key challenge will be in relation to staffing levels and home to school transport (where additional costs will be incurred).

There will be staggered start and finish times in place.

It is expected that when pupils return to school there will likely be behavioural issues – anxiety, phobias, adapting to the new environment etc. Measures are in place to minimise exclusions, as this is seen as a high-risk area for exploitation, particularly for vulnerable families.

Fines for parents who choose not to send their children to school – for the first half term after pupils return to school it is not expected that parents who for a variety of reasons allow their child not to return, or to be absent, that they will be fined.

Elective home-schooling resources are limited; expected guidance from central government has not yet been received.

Any parent choosing to take their child out of school permanently needs to register this. There is however difficulty with families moving into the area if they choose not to notify the local authority.

Work is continuing on updating the helpline to ensure that a co-ordinated response continues – at present numbers are very low (20-30 calls per day).

Shielding is coming to an end but there is an awareness that some people may need ongoing support e.g. in relation to food banks etc.

Active travel schemes – in addition to the 'Commonplace' app.

(<https://somersecovidactivetravel.commonplace.is/>), an additional app. 'Widen My Path' <https://www.widenmypath.com/> is now also available.

A scheme in Glastonbury has had to be closed due to safety concerns.

£480k. has been made available from central government for tranche of suitable schemes – it is expected that formal hard demarcation structures be put in place to separate vehicular and other traffic – the bid is to be submitted by the first week in Aug. Local community engagement is key to this.

There has been a funding gap identified in implementing the first tranche of schemes.