

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 30TH SEPTEMBER 2020**POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HEALTH**Covid-19

I would like to start by noting that the last time the Council met was on the 8th July, ten days after the first 'local lockdown' was announced in England covering Leicester City and parts of Leicestershire. It seems like a long time ago. Last week saw it being 6 months since lockdown measures were first announced. In that time Leicestershire has seen 134,000 tests completed with 4300 tests positive and Leicestershire having recorded 540 deaths.

In what has been a difficult and pressurised time, I do not want to overlook the success the Council had in leading efforts to reduce the rate of infection in the County from twice the national average, to below the national average.

In Melton we showed what can be done when we launched a campaign designed to reduce rates following a rise in cases there through testing, good local communications, engagement with the population and enforcement activity when needed. It proved very effective.

But since the start of September, as the Director of Public Health, Mike Sandys, has said in his briefings to members, that the local and national picture has deteriorated markedly with a rapid rise in cases.

At the time of writing this, Oadby & Wigston continues to have the highest rate in the County (91.1 per 100,000 population) followed by Blaby (48.8), Charnwood (48.7) and Harborough (41.1). Compared to yesterday all areas in the county, except Blaby and Harborough, have stabilised or increased their rate. The rate in Leicestershire has increased to 44.4 per 100,000 population but has remained below the national average (58.5 per 100,000 population). The national rate has continued to increase daily over the past nine days climbing from 33.2 per 100,000 population

These were the figures as of 9am today and they will soon be out of date. That is how quickly we are moving. We know what we have to do. We know it is asking a lot to continue to ask our residents, many of whom do abide by the rules, to continue to do so for some time to come. But the virus is not going away, and we cannot drop our guard.

With the current testing programme under strain. now, more than ever, we need to recognise that this is something that affects the whole of our County. Whatever people may think of the Government, the guidance and statutory regulations, it is up to the people of Leicestershire to do the right thing and get this done.

As Mike has said throughout his numerous TV and Radio appearances and media releases for which we are all very thankful for the way he has represented our Council, we are doing everything we can to stem the rise and we are urging residents to play their part. By doing so, you are protecting yourselves, your loved ones and your livelihoods.

By reinforcing the following messages, we can all play our part:

- If you have a high temperature, a new continuous cough or loss of smell/taste, book a test.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Keep two metres away from others.
- Wear a face covering as per the guidelines including public transport, unless you have a good reason.
- Do not meet up with family or friends you don't live with – inside or outside.
- If you're contacted by test and trace, you must isolate for 14 days.

On top of all of the Covid 19 work, the Public Health team have continued to offer support in all of their defined work areas including Mental Health, Weight Management, Warm Homes, Winter Flu, Domestic Violence, Supporting the O&W health inequality work – Well Fest, as well as the key link work with Adult Social Care and Children & Family Services. I would also say thank you for the work the team did during World Suicide Prevention week under the Start a Conversation banner.

The work of this Council has continued, even with all that this pandemic has thrown at us and it is a tribute to Mike Sandys and his team in guiding us all safely through it this far. The Management team for Public Health consisting of Adrian, Kath, Fiona, Liz, Joshna, Claire and Kelly, who have delivered all of this, should be thanked. The Public Health administration team of Beth, Manveer and Lewis have dealt with directing so many queries and FOI's. I would like to give a special mention for Natalie who has delivered our data reports and Natasha for running our local contact tracing service. Finally, a mention for the

media team including Jo and Katie who have been invaluable making sure that we get key messages out in time and on time.

I know we are not out of the woods yet, some may call it a forest. But we all need to remain focused on following the expert advice that we get based on the evidence. Together we can support all of our residents in getting them the support they may need and once again enjoy the health and wellbeing that we all have come to expect and deserve.

Remember we really do all own this and have our part to play.

As the Prime Minister said in his latest address to the nation “ ... we must rely on our willingness to look out for each other, and to protect each other. Never in our history has our collective destiny and our collective **health** depended so completely on our individual behaviour. If we follow these simple rules together, we will get through this winter together. There are unquestionably difficult months to come. And the fight against Covid is by no means over...”

Mr L. Breckon

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