

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING – 17TH FEBRUARY 2021

POSITION STATEMENT FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HEALTH

As we start to look towards the anniversary of the first national lockdown announced by the Prime Minister on 23rd March 2020, it is only right that we remember the 1200 people who have died from Coronavirus in Leicestershire. This Council will not meet again now before the anniversary of the first Leicestershire case that occurred on March 6th last year.

The continual decrease in infection rates during the current national lockdown is welcomed, with rates in Leicestershire now below 200 per 100,000, which is half the rate it was at its peak in mid-January.

However, it does remain a concern that rates of infection are still very high compared with the position before October last year. Rates are not falling as fast as the national average, with the East and West Midlands currently the two regions with the highest rates in the country. It therefore still remains imperative to follow lockdown rules and advice as much as possible to drive down the rates to more manageable numbers.

The Council, working with other partner organisations, continues to lead the local fight against Coronavirus. Through the almost weekly all Member briefings, Members have been appraised of the significant workload made in communications and engagement, testing, enforcement and compliance, as well as supporting the clinically extremely vulnerable. The other work reported on has included the local contact tracing services and the detailed outbreak investigation and control.

The rolling out of testing for those without symptoms who are unable to work from home has been a key focus of the work of the Public Health Department so far this year. Seven sites are now fully operational across the County with over 3000 tests carried out so far. To put in place a service operating across the County with over 200 newly appointed staff is a real testament to the continued hard work of this County Council.

The vaccination programme goes from strength to strength with our NHS partners achieving high coverage in the most vulnerable cohorts of the population. While it is important that we all carry on practicing the key message of HANDS, FACE and SPACE, Members will recognise that vaccination offers the country the best chance of getting through this crisis. I would therefore echo our Director of Public Health's clear message that we continue to urge the public to take up the offer of vaccination as it is offered to them.

I am sure that we will all have been profoundly affected by the pandemic in so many ways and I would like to give my continued thanks to not only our Director of Public Health, Mike Sandys and his incredibly hard-working team, but to all of the officers of the County Council for their continued efforts above and beyond the call of duty.

I would also like to say thank you to all of you as the Members of Leicestershire County Council, for all of your continued work on behalf of the residents of Leicestershire and continuing with all we do, in these difficult and challenging times.

For me as Lead Member for Health, the above Position Statement covers what we have done in dealing with this Pandemic as a County.

We have all felt and seen every day the effects of this pandemic. To overcome these impacts and effects, we have needed inspiring people and no one inspired us all more than Captain Sir Tom Moore. He inspired so many of us to make a difference and lifted our spirits at those much-needed times.

It is sad that he will not see life begin to return to normal. But he remains an inspirational figure to all of us, and we should all salute him for all he did for us as we all look forward to the future.

Mr L. Breckon CC

Cabinet Lead Member for Health