



Briefing

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL WEEKLY ROUNDUP

09 October 2020

Good afternoon,

Those of you keeping a watchful eye on the national news will know that we have seen a notable rise in confirmed cases of COVID-19 this week. This has been caused, in part, by the correction of an error in Public Health England's national reporting. With this error corrected, we now have a more accurate understanding of the case numbers in Rutland.

It is clear that the UK is in the grip of a second wave and Rutland is by no means immune to this. We currently have a recorded 120 confirmed cases per 100,000 population. This means it is more important than ever that we follow public health guidance intended to protect our communities and the people we care about.

We are continuing to work closely with our regional partners in local government and health. Currently, our case numbers are such that we remain subject to the minimum restrictions that are applicable to the whole of England.

With the possibility of further announcements from government next week, we are in a good state of readiness to take any action needed to provide further support to our communities.

We've all worked extremely hard to control the virus in Rutland and must continue to do so.

Regards,
Mark

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1. COVID-19

a. Latest situation

As of 4.00pm on Thursday 8 October, 561,815 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the UK.

As of 4.00pm on Thursday 8 October, of those tested positive for coronavirus in the UK, 42,592 people have died across all settings within 28 days of a positive test.

These figures will also be published on the daily dashboard: coronavirus.data.gov.uk.

The latest weekly number of new cases of COVID-19 in Rutland, up to 6 October, is 48 (120 cases per 100,000 population). The latest weekly number of COVID-19 related deaths in Rutland is 0.

b. Update from the Rutland Tactical Coordinating Group

Resourcing

We are continuing to monitor our preparedness for system pressures in areas such as hospital discharge and care home finances, should we see a further increase in demand arising from COVID.

Staff capacity has been considered and information has been sent to managers in order to gain an understating of the resource and skill sets available, to be called on if and when they are needed.

We have received communications from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) querying how prepared RCC is in the event of a second COVID wave. For example, medicine collections etc. can be supported. Community medicine collectors have been contacted and a positive response received.

There are no significant changes or pressures to note at the moment. We are confident with the current position and monitoring will continue.

Availability of flu vaccines in Rutland pharmacies

Discussions have been held with local pharmacies and they have confirmed that there is a shortage of flu vaccinations. There is not enough nationally, this is not just a Rutland issue.

Anyone eligible for the free NHS Flu vaccination will receive contact from their GP surgery.

Pressure on GP services

We are continuing to look at whether any additional support is needed for local GP services who recently reported increased call volumes from members of the public seeking information or clarification about aspects of COVID-19 guidance.

Further discussion is taking place to understand whether this was an isolated spike in enquiries, linked to the [updates to government guidance announced on 22 September](#), or if these enquiries have persisted.

If ongoing, it is likely to be a nationwide issue and therefore escalated to SCG and the Health Protection Board for further advice and guidance, before any decisions are made.

c. COVID response in schools

If a school or early years setting is notified of a positive Covid-19 case, either a member of staff or a pupil, they have clear guidelines to follow issued by the Department for Education (DfE).

Settings are instructed to contact a DfE helpline and to follow the advice given by National Health Service or Public Health England advisers. The advice may differ between schools and settings depending on the individual context of the school including the size of the school, the layout of the building and the school or setting's own mitigation processes.

RCC has a single point of contact for schools and settings to report any positive cases; this information is then shared internally so that schools and settings do not have to worry about who to contact.

The first positive Covid-19 case was reported in Casterton College last week. The school followed the advice provided through the DfE helpline and initially two year group bubbles were sent home but these have now returned and the College has fully re-opened. To date, three further schools and an early years setting have reported a positive case at their site and are acting as advised.

RCC is holding a weekly 'keep in touch' meeting with the DfE to review the impact of Covid-19 on the education sector and works in partnership on further actions required.

d. Self-isolation payments

People are now required by law to self-isolate, supported by payment of £500 for those on lower incomes who cannot work from home and have lost income as a result.

We have now set up a scheme which will go live from 12th October to administer self-isolation payments. Those who started to self-isolate from 28 September will receive backdated payments.

Not everyone who is self-isolating qualifies for the payment and therefore the eligibility criteria on the website should be checked. Further details can be found on our website: www.rutland.gov.uk/testandtracepayments

e. Finance updates

The Council will receive an additional £13k to spend on COVID-19 related compliance and enforcement activities. The Council is reviewing its position with the Health Protection Board to determine if any additional action is required.

The Council is making payments from its Infection Control Fund, in line with Government guidance, of £438k to care homes, community care providers and other care settings to support wider workforce resilience.

f. Culture Recovery Fund

It has been announced that Rutland County Museum and Oakham Castle will receive financial support through the government's £1.57 billion Culture Recovery Fund.

The Culture Recovery Fund is designed to secure the future of Britain's museums, galleries, theatres, independent cinemas, heritage sites and music venues with emergency grants and loans.

If approved by Rutland County Council's Cabinet, it is proposed that the Castle and Museum grant of £132,100 would be used to investigate and deliver a programme of transformation to support the continued sustainability of both venues.

The grant funding will be discussed by Rutland County Council's Cabinet at its next meeting on Tuesday 17 November 2020.

h. Down to Us campaign

The Council's Communications Team is continuing to work with neighbouring authorities in Leicester and Leicestershire to deliver our localised COVID-19 information campaign, 'Down to Us'.

The campaign has been heavily active on social media channels over the past three weeks and is now being introduced into traditional media by way of a joint press release to local and regional news outlets.

The combined reach of social media activity across RCC channels has led to more than 50,000 impressions.

The Communications Team is continuing to develop local case studies to be the face of the campaign in Rutland. The team is also carrying out a gap analysis to identify any areas where RCC's COVID communications can be increased.

2. WIDER COUNCIL OPERATIONS

a. Schools update

Brooke Hill Primary Academy, Whissendine Primary Academy and Catmose College have received Ofsted interim visits over the last two weeks. These one day visits are not Ofsted inspections and do not result in a graded judgement or judge schools on their response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, but are intended to support schools in their important work to welcome all pupils back full-time. The lead Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) will write a short letter after each interim visit which will summarise briefly the discussions inspectors had with leaders. Letters will be published on the Ofsted reports website: reports.ofsted.gov.uk approximately 38 days after the visit.

More information on these visits can be found at: www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-phase-maintained-schools-and-academies

Uppingham Community College

The College has fully re-opened following the fire at the start of term and it is reported that things have been going really well, with the measures put in place due to COVID-19 e.g. break times and lunchtime arrangements and the way that pupils navigate around school proving beneficial and may see these plans continue after COVID.

Attendance was really strong to start with 98% but has reduced slightly due to general illness and isolating – this is still above the national data. The temporary classroom arrangements have worked well so far.

b. Department for Education: Consultation on the School Admissions Code

The School Admissions Code is statutory guidance produced by the DfE for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels.

The Code imposes mandatory requirements and includes guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to school admissions. The current Code came into force in December 2014.

On 26 June 2020, the DfE launched a consultation on a revised School Admissions Code with a closing date for the consultation of 16 October 2020. The overarching aim of the proposed changes to the Code is to better support the admission of vulnerable children, thus reducing to a minimum any gaps in their education. A summary of the proposed changes are:

- Introducing a dedicated section in the Code setting out a clear process for managing in-year admissions where children are transferring from one school to another

- Clarifying the section in the Code describing Fair Access Protocols to improve their effectiveness

In addition, there are proposals to make the following changes to support children who have been adopted from care outside of England, service children and children of crown servants.

It is also proposed to make a number of minor drafting changes to certain provisions of the current Code, which will improve the clarity of the relevant provisions and the efficacy of existing processes.

Rutland County Council's response to the consultation was submitted to the DfE on 13 August 2020 and confirmed our strong agreement to all proposed changes.

c. National Allied Health Professionals Day

Rutland County Council has been working with a wide range of partners to say 'thank you' to all our Allied Health Professionals, in the build-up to National Allied Health Professionals Day on 14 October.

We are extremely proud of our AHP workforce and recognise the unique contribution that they bring to everyday care. A week of virtual events (12 to 16 October) is taking place to celebrate the valuable contribution of AHPs across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

On Tuesday 13th October Rutland County Council, in conjunction with Northampton University, are delighted to be presenting our experience of being one of the first places to offer a completely virtual Occupational Therapy student placement.

d. Better Hospitals Leicester

University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust is consulting on plans to transform acute and maternity services at Leicester's Hospitals. Proposals include moving acute care to the Leicester Royal Infirmary and Glenfield Hospital, as well as range of wider improvements.

A dedicated website has been launched with full details of the proposals and a link to the consultation online: www.betterhospitalsleicester.nhs.uk.

Anyone wanting to request a copy of the summary consultation document and questionnaire to complete at home can do so by emailing: beinvolved@LeicesterCityCCG.nhs.uk or calling: 0116 295 0750.

e. Was Not Heard film

This short film was commissioned in 2019, by Leicestershire Safeguarding Children's Partnership, to share learning from a review, where a child was not heard.

There were 11 occasions where the child voiced the abuse they were experiencing. These multiple disclosures of abuse were not 'heard', were minimised, and were not acted upon by several practitioners.

Rutland young people were invited to share their views on the importance of being listened to and their views considered. Rutland's contributions were put forward from members of SUSO (Speak Up, Speak Out), the RYC (Rutland Youth Council) and Thursday Youth Group.

Young People who took part in this were then invited to the virtual premiere. Two members of SUSO and two RYC reps joined in the virtual premiere, supported by Officers from Children's Services. Each young person who took part will receive a certificate acknowledging their involvement, a memory stick with the film on and some promotional literature. We will be distributing these soon.

Since the premiere, the film was chosen for the Portabello London Film Festival and may even be picked up by UNICEF. The film was used recently to support a participation and engagement training session for professionals from across Rutland County Council children's services. The film can be [watched online, here](#).

f. FOI and Complaints – September

Please find below the latest figures in relation to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) for September 2020, as well as Compliments and Complaints data for the same period

FOIs & EIRs

| | |
|---|------|
| FOIs & EIRs requests received | 161 |
| FOIs & EIRs responses sent | 168 |
| Average No of days taken to provide a response to an FOI / EIR Request* | 6/20 |
| Average time (minutes) spent on FOI Request | 69 |

*Legislation states that a public authority must comply promptly and in any event not later than the twentieth working day following the date of receipt.

(<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/36/section/10>)

Compliments & Complaints

| | |
|---|------|
| Compliments received | 13 |
| Complaints received | 5 |
| Complaints responses sent | 1 |
| Average No of days taken to provide a response to a Complaint** | 7/10 |

**In accordance with Corporate Policy, Complaints at Stage one, will be dealt with within 10 working days. Complaints at Stage two will be completed within a further 10 working days.

g. Road Safety: response to ‘Rutland TT’

There is a particular 92-mile circular route around Rutland water has come to be known as the ‘Rutland TT’ among some motorcycle enthusiast. This route passes through Melton Mowbray, East Langton, Medbourne, Uppingham, Market Harborough, Morcott, Great Casterton, Ryhall, Corby Glenn, Old Somerby and Easton.

Leicestershire Police have been liaising for some months with Traffic Management, and have been working with the Road Safety Partnership and RCC’s Communications Team regarding this and other road safety issues.

The police, along with partners, are attempting to address both community concerns and issues around the use of the motorbikes. The police road safety team have been deploying the road safety van, along the route. In addition, in July, they implemented a police operation over a number of weekends to address and tackle the issue of the speeding motorbikes.

The issue of dealing with the noise continues to pose a challenge for police and partners if bikes meet all current standards. Therefore, the road safety partnership have been working with biking groups to understand their impact on communities.

Finally there are proposals in place for a joint road safety partnership group, between Melton, Harborough and Rutland to look at road safety matters as well as issues around the TT.

h. Rutland Neighbourhood Watch app

Rutland Neighbourhood Watch provides the latest news and community safety information for Rutland.

In addition to a dedicated website, the group recently launched its own app for smartphone and tablet devices.

The app provides instant access to information and updates on matters relating to crime and community safety, including an option to receive news alerts and other notifications.

Further information about Rutland Neighbourhood Watch and how to download the app can be found online at: rutlandnhw.org.uk.

i. Planning White Paper

Rutland County Council’s Full Council on Monday 12 October will discuss the Government’s proposed changes to national planning policy.

The debate on Monday will help RCC’s Cabinet respond to the White Paper, called “Planning for the Future”, which proposes to streamline and modernise the national planning process.

The White Paper was launched in August 2020 and all local authorities have until 29th October 2020 to provide their feedback on the consultation.

The Paper proposes several key reforms, including:

- Simplifying local plans and for three different categories of land to be identified for future growth, renewal, or protect.
- Providing identified Growth areas with outline planning approval. These areas would be designated for substantial development, such as new settlements or urban extensions.
- Proposing that Renewal areas would also be considered favourably for development, but within a specified criterion.
- Ensuring Protect areas – green belt, conservation areas and areas of outstanding beauty - remain untouched.

Other proposals include:

- Ensuring local plans meet a test of sustainability, rather than soundness.
- Ensuring local plans are completed within 30 months.
- Supporting people to engage better with the planning process by making it more visual and digitised.
- Replacing the Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy with a National Single Infrastructure Levy.

3. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

a. Full Council

The agenda and reports for the Full Council meeting on Monday 12 October 2020 are [available to view in full, online](#).

The meeting will take place at 7pm on Zoom. In order to join the webinar, simply go to: zoom.us/j/98853845018 and enter the ID code: 988 5384 5018.

b. Look ahead

The latest version of the RCC Forward Plan [can be viewed online, here](#).

4. STAFF NEWS

a. Introducing Saverio Della Rocca, Strategic Director for Resources

I've worked for the Council permanently since September 2013 – following a short time as Interim cover. Prior to that I spent 18 years at KPMG working with a range of public sector organisations helping them manage risks, reduce costs and improve performance. My background has helped me enormously look at what we do, challenge the way we do it and deliver improvements which benefit both staff and residents.



I am Finance professional by trade and a full Member of the Chartered Institute of Public Financial Accountants (CIPFA).

As the Director for Resources, my ambition for the Council is for it to be financially sustainable during these difficult times. For the Directorate, it is to deliver on its statutory responsibilities and key priorities but in doing so to make the lives of staff and customers as easy as it can be. We are getting there but there is so much more to do.

We have a great team at Rutland which I am proud to lead. As a Directorate we cover a wide range of support services from Finance, Legal, HR, IT, Governance, Project and Business support, Elections and Revenues and Benefits. We also provide the front face of Customer Services.

We have delivered many improvements to the way we work through various initiatives such as the introduction of online recruitment, increasing resilience through moving IT systems off site and partnering with other organisations to deliver audit, legal and payroll services.

One of our key priorities moving forward are to transform the way in which we deliver support upskilling managers to feel confident to do more in the first instance. We are also working with other teams to improve the customer experience – the launch of MyAccount will really help our move towards being digital first in the way we do business. Finally, we will be leading the organisation as it works towards taking the necessary action to close our financial gap.

b. New starters

We have welcomed the following new starters to RCC this week:

- Jacqui Elliott – Transport Inspector
- Lee Egleton – Civil Enforcement Officer

c. Leavers

We have also said goodbye to the following colleagues in the past week:

- Jane Burditt – Castle Learning Officer
- Pippa Skinner – Casual Community Support Worker - Supported Living

5. RCC IN THE NEWS

a. Press releases issued this week

- [‘It’s down to us’ to control the virus, says new campaign](#)
- [Community radio project launches listener survey](#)
- [Heritage venues receive grant from government’s Culture Recovery Fund](#)
- [Council Leader responds to rise in COVID case](#)

b. Other media coverage

- [Rise in number of Covid-19 cases in South Kesteven and Rutland after IT technical issue with reporting is identified](#)
- [Cottesmore Hunt in Rutland defends decision to apply for £25,000 Covid business grant](#)

ENDS