

BERA E-Newsletter 31st July 2020 - www.bera.co.uk (printable version of Newsletter is available soon on website if needed)

Dear Member

Please see today's update, along with other information that is happening in our area.

Please also continue to look at the BERA website for the daily updates under the 'newsletters' section. We will endeavour to send out the next e-newsletter on Monday/Tuesday.

Keep well,

Regards

Ron

Weekly Briefing for Councillors on Local Decisions & Actions re Coronavirus outbreak - 31 July 2020

Key updates/actions

Prime Minister's statement: The Prime Minister made an announcement earlier today and confirmed that some higher-risk settings would not reopen as planned from Saturday 1 August: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19-31-july-2020>

National and local data: Please visit the test and trace section of our website for the latest national and local data: www.southend.gov.uk/testandtrace

A link to the national NHS Digital information shows information by time intervals (for example, 3-days, 7-days, 30-days, etc), as well as the total numbers and requests or referrals to NHS 111.

Southend Pier trains started running again from Tuesday. Read more on our website: <https://www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/1983/visitors-welcomed-back-aboard-iconic-pier-trains>

Visit Southend safely: A media release was issued earlier today on Operation Heatwave and reminding people to Visit Southend Safely: <https://www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/1988/operation-heatwave-plans-in-place-for-hot-weather>

Symptoms and testing: If people have COVID-19 symptoms (high temperature, new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste) they should stay at home, isolate and get tested by calling 119 or visiting www.nhs.uk/coronavirus

Discretionary business grant scheme: Small and micro businesses are being encouraged to check their eligibility and apply online at www.southend.gov.uk/businessgrants

We have received 349 applications, with 36 of those requiring further information. We have paid out £246,000 to 84 businesses. Businesses are being asked to apply as soon as possible and attach all relevant documents to their applications.

Retail, hospitality and leisure and small business grants: We have now paid out £37m to 3043 businesses.

Other

Out of hours:

Urgent issues arising out of hours should be reported to the out of hours service in accordance with standard practice.

The phone number is 01702 215000.

The out of hours service will then contact the relevant Council officer who is on-call or the relevant contractor such as Veolia. They also have access to the town link radio and CCTV.

Please continue to visit and promote www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus to local people.

Please encourage local people to sign up for regular e-newsletters on Coronavirus:

Please follow our social media accounts and share our Coronavirus related content.

Summary of the Government Announcements, 31 July 2020

Please see below the latest government announcements regarding COVID-19:

Prime Minister Boris Johnson made a statement today on England's lockdown measures:

- August 1 relaxations of lockdown measures are postponed until at least August 15. This includes the re-opening of 'High risk' settings such as leisure venues, performances, gyms, close contact services, and wedding receptions.
- From August 8, rules on wearing face coverings are to be extended to additional indoor settings.

- In Greater Manchester, East Lancashire, and parts of West Yorkshire separate households are unable to meet indoors.
- Guidance remains unchanged on workplace discretion over how employees can work safely.
- As planned, shielding will be paused from August 1.

Public Health England:

- Updated Guidance on shielding, to include information related to pausing on August 1.
- Published an illustrated PPE guide for health and social care workers.

The Student Loans Company

- Updated Guidance for current students.

The Department of Health and Social Care:

- Updated Guidance for businesses and organisations on how to recognise, contain and report COVID-19 incidents, to reflect a revised outbreak definition.
- Updated Guidance on how to self-isolate when travelling to the UK, and NHS test and trace guidance to reflect a 10-day symptomatic isolation period.
- Updated guidance on protecting care home residents and staff.
- Updated Local lockdown guidance for social distancing, for Leicester.
- Published guidance on Targeted restrictions are announced in the North west of England. Those in the affected areas should not:
 - o Meet people they do not live with in private homes or gardens (except support bubbles);
 - o Visit homes or gardens;
 - o Socialise with people they do not live with in other indoor public venues;
 - o Visit care homes.

The Department for Education:

- Updated guidance on Temporary changes to special educational needs and disability legislation.

HMRC:

- Published a policy statement on the Job Retention Bonus, giving further details on eligibility requirements and how to claim.

Amendments to the Local Authority meeting regulations, which enable remote meetings and public access to press, now include Mayoral Development Corporations, Transport for London, Urban Development Corporations and parish meetings.

1) Information Corner

11:15 a.m., Saturday, 1st August 2020 - NHS Spitfire to fly over Southend Hospital as thank you to healthcare heroes

Source: Echo News 30th July 2020: <https://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/18618637.nhs-spitfire-fly-southend-hospital-thank-healthcare-heroes/>

All eyes will be on the sky on Saturday at 11.15am as the NHS Spitfire flies over Southend Hospital as a thank you to all health workers who battled through the peak of the coronavirus pandemic.

And people are now being given the chance to nominate their own NHS heroes to be included on the iconic plane. The names will be handwritten onto the aircraft before it takes flight to raise money for NHS Charities Together.

The names will be nominated by the public as a way of recognising small acts of kindness throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

To submit a name - be it a friend or family member or someone you've been treated by - go to [justgiving.com/nhsspitfire](https://www.justgiving.com/nhsspitfire) and donate minimum of £10.

In return for the donation, the nominated name will be one of those written on the Spitfire, which has an 80,000 name capacity.

The founder of Aircraft Restoration Company, said: "The response to our initial flight over the last 8pm #clapfourcarers Thursday was incredibly humbling, with hundreds of people from the local community sharing how wonderful it was to not only see the Spitfire, but also to read the message emblazoned across its wings.

"After such positive response we decided to leave the message painted on the Spitfire for the rest of the flying season, this is where the idea to hand write the names of the nation's loved ones onto the aircraft to raise money for the NHS Charities Together began."

Care homes 'thrown to the wolves', MPs say

Ministers have been accused of a "slow, inconsistent, and at times negligent" approach to social care during the coronavirus pandemic, which has exposed years of delayed reforms to the sector. The cross-party Public Accounts Committee report

said the decision to discharge around 25,000 patients from NHS hospitals into care homes without first testing them was “an appalling error” and the chair said that care homes “were effectively thrown to the wolves and the virus has ravaged some of them.” LGA Community Wellbeing Board Vice Chair said: "Social care has been on the frontline throughout this crisis but this report's conclusions show that those who use, work and volunteer in these vital services were not given as much priority as the NHS from the outset. We cannot and must not allow any of these mistakes to be repeated again, if the country is to experience a second wave of coronavirus. Social care deserves parity of esteem with the NHS." Before the pandemic, the LGA warned adult social care services faced a funding gap of almost £4 billion by 2025.

PM warns of Europe 'second wave'

Boris Johnson has warned there are signs of a "second wave" of coronavirus in Europe, following the introduction of a 14-day quarantine on travellers from Spain. The Prime Minister said the Government had to be "swift" and hinted at further action against other countries if necessary. Meanwhile, it is reported that people entering the UK from at-risk countries who test negative for coronavirus twice within several days might be allowed to leave quarantine early, according to travel industry sources.

Oldham coronavirus infection spike prompts new measures

New measures to stop the spread of coronavirus have been introduced in Oldham following a “dramatic” rise in cases. Residents are being asked not to have social visitors to their homes and to keep two metres apart when outside, while anyone shielding has been asked to continue to do so until 14 August and care homes will not relax restrictions.

Banks reveal the 10 coronavirus scams to be wary of

Fraudsters are using the pandemic as an excuse to trick people out of their cash, according to British banks. UK Finance has warned that scamsters are preying on consumers' financial fears and has named ten COVID-19 scams the public should be wary of. The LGA has also warned about fake coronavirus test kits and hand sanitisers, and said scamsters are also offering medical products claiming to treat or prevent coronavirus. The LGA said: "People need to be cautious. If something doesn't seem right or sounds too good to be true, don't hesitate to end a phone call, bin a letter, delete an email or shut the door."

Surge in unexplained non-coronavirus deaths at home

Twice as many people are now dying at home from unexplained causes rather than coronavirus, with experts calling for an urgent investigation into what is causing the

excess deaths. Latest ONS figures show there were 766 more deaths at home than usual in the week to 17 July, compared to just 295 deaths involving coronavirus in England and Wales, of which only 29 occurred at home. It brings the total excess deaths at home during the pandemic to more than 20,000.

Studies to examine virus link with ethnicity

UK scientists are to receive millions of pounds of government funding for a series of studies to learn why people from an ethnic minority background are at greater risk from coronavirus. Six projects will analyse data on social circumstances, health and day-to-day activities, as well as investigating genetic risk factors, with one study following 30,000 health and social care staff for a year. Meanwhile, the Government has signed a deal for the supply of up to 60 million doses of a potential coronavirus vaccine developed by Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline.

Tourist hotspots hit hardest by coronavirus unemployment

Tourist hotspots across the UK are seeing the greatest percentage rise of benefit claimants since the coronavirus lockdown compared to other areas, Labour analysis has shown. Figures from the party show that in areas heavily reliant on tourism, the rise in the number of people seeking unemployment benefits in recent months is an average of 65 percentage points higher than in other areas.

Vaccines

The Government has signed a deal for the supply of up to 60 million doses of a potential coronavirus vaccine, developed by Sanofi Pasteur and GlaxoSmithKline. With today's announcement (29th), the Government has now secured early access to 4 different types of immunisation and a total of 250 million doses.

Schools

The Department for Education has updated their guidance for schools on full opening from September. This outlines what all schools will need to do from the start of the new academic year. Specific updates include more advice on risk management, supporting those with education, health and care plans, and managing contractors and visitors to schools. It also provides clarification on the age requirements relating to face coverings on public transport, details of the test and trace programme and provides advice to staff who are clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable.

Volunteers

The NHS Volunteer Responders programme has been extended to social housing staff, who can now directly refer tenants who need help with collecting shopping, medicines or other essentials. Despite recent restrictions being eased and shielding

being paused in England from 1 August, the scheme will continue to help people who are at greater risk from COVID-19. It is open to anyone who needs to self-isolate for any reason, and to people who remain cautious about visiting shops or other crowded places. The scheme will be in place until at least December 2020.

International travel

You will have seen that the Foreign and Commonwealth's (FCO's) guidance changed late on Monday evening to advise against all non-essential travel to Spain, including the Balearic and Canary Islands. Those returning from Spain are required to self-isolate for 14 days on their returning to the UK. This is accurate at the time of writing. The Government's foreign travel advice is being kept under constant review and they advise that travel disruption is still possible, and national control measures may be brought in with little notice. People are encouraged to check the FCO's travel guidance which will include the very latest information, including on travel corridors.

Pets

This week, the Government has updated the guidance for pet owners and livestock keepers after it was found that a pet cat in England had contracted coronavirus. The update emphasises that this is a very rare event and that there is no evidence to suggest that pets directly transmit the virus to humans. It also states that there is no evidence to suggest that SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus is circulating between animals, including both pets and food-producing animals in the UK.

Self-isolation period for COVID-19 expected to be extended to 10 days

The deputy chief medical officer for England is expected to announce that the self-isolation period will increase from seven to 10 days for those with coronavirus symptoms. Guidance will be updated amid growing concerns about a second wave of COVID-19 across Europe. It comes as the Culture Secretary warned that the Government will add more countries to its quarantine list if they fail to control coronavirus outbreaks.

Wait for date to fully reopen theatres spells disaster for panto season

Theatres will have to wait until November "at the earliest" before the Government gives a target date for reopening without social distancing measures, Culture Secretary has announced. It comes amid growing pressure from theatres for the Government to provide a clear timescale to reopen performance venues. Outdoor performances with social distancing are currently allowed across England, with indoor productions for limited audience numbers permitted from next month.

Home visits banned in parts of northern England

Separate households have been banned from indoor meetings in Greater Manchester and parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire following a rise in coronavirus

cases. Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the ban was down to people not observing social distancing.

UK sees highest daily COVID-19 cases for month

The Government has reported the highest daily number of coronavirus cases in more than a month. A total of 846 new cases were reported on Thursday, the highest UK total since June 28. The Office for National Statistics also said England suffered the highest levels of excess deaths of any country in Europe over the first half of 2020. The Government has extended the isolation period from seven to 10 days.

Water safety

Children and young people need to be aware of the dangers of swimming in open water as the summer holidays get underway, the LGA warns today. It said 223 people died in accidental drownings in the UK last year, of which 60 people drowned in July and August.

2) Can you help?

We have been contacted by a member who is trying to contact an ex-colleague of his who he worked with in HM Customs and Excise and also at the National Coastwatch Institution (NCI) Station at Shoeburyness East Beach.

Our member is currently working with the NCI Station Manager who wants to write a history of the station and he would like to talk to someone who was involved when it was originally set up in about 2000.

The gentleman he is trying to contact was a founder-member, who he saw by chance some months ago in Southchurch Park.

If this is you or you know who it is, please email Ron at ronwoodley@hotmail.co.uk or call 01702 588662 so that he can pass on the details. Thank you.

3) Government responded to “Stop nitrous oxide (N2O / laughing gas) abuse in our communities.”

Please see below the Governments response:

Tackling drug misuse requires a multifaceted approach, including education. The Government keeps drugs controls under review, but we have no current plans to change the law relating to nitrous oxide.

There are legitimate uses for nitrous oxide, such as in medicine, dentistry and as a propellant for whipped cream canisters. However, there are offences, with limited exemptions, in the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (the 2016 Act) relating to the

supply and possession with the intent to supply nitrous oxide. Those convicted of either of these offences may be subject to a maximum sentence of seven years' imprisonment, or a fine or both. There were 152 convictions for offences under the 2016 Act in England and Wales in 2017, 107 convictions in 2018 and 52 convictions in 2019. These included convictions related to nitrous oxide.

When the 2016 Act was introduced the Government published guidance for retailers to satisfy themselves that they comply with the law. This is available on the GOV.UK website and remains relevant to support retailers today. The guidance recommends that retailers, including those operating online, should pay particular attention to the potential for abuse of nitrous oxide, especially where customers seek to buy in bulk or large volumes.

In the Queen's Speech on 19 December 2019, the Government committed to develop legislation to improve internet safety for all. This will build on the proposals in last year's Online Harms White Paper, which set out the Government's plans for world-leading legislation to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online. Illegal and harmful activity online such as the supply of psychoactive substances for their psychoactive effect will fall within the scope of the planned legislation. The Government intends to establish in law a new duty of care on companies towards their users, overseen by an independent regulator. The duty of care will ensure companies have appropriate systems in place to deal with harmful content on their internet services and keep users safe. On 12 February the Government published an initial response to the Online Harms White Paper consultation. A full Government response is being worked on, which will include more detailed proposals on online harms regulation. Following this, the Government will introduce Online Harms legislation when parliamentary time allows.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs provided advice on both the harms of nitrous oxide and public health safety in 2015. It concluded that its harmfulness did not warrant control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Nitrous oxide is not controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and there is no offence of simple possession in the 2016 Act, except that it is an offence, subject to limited exemptions, to possess a psychoactive substance in a custodial institution such as a prison because of concerns about the effects of psychoactive substances in prisons. This stems from the origin of the 2016 Act in addressing so-called 'legal highs' at the time and the focus on preventing supply while not criminalising those who use the substances for recreational purposes.

FRANK, the Government's free advice drugs service, contains a section on nitrous oxide. FRANK receives over 500,000 visits per month with high levels of awareness and trust. User research commissioned by Public Health England has shown that 83% of 18 to 24-year-old adults are aware of the site and 85% of its users trust FRANK to provide reliable information about drugs.

Schools play a key role in enabling young people to make positive choices about their wellbeing, including resisting drug use. Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) will become a compulsory subject in schools from September 2020. However, in light of school closures the Department for Education recognises that some schools may not be able to begin teaching the new content until the start of the summer term 2021. Schools will have the freedom to ensure the curriculum meets the need of their pupils. This flexibility will allow schools to respond to local public health and community issues such as nitrous oxide misuse and adapt material and programmes to suit the needs of pupils.

Home Office

To view the response online:

https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/301247?reveal_response=yes

The Petitions Committee will take a look at this petition and its response. They can press the government for action and gather evidence. If this petition reaches 100,000 signatures, the Committee will consider it for a debate.

The Committee is made up of 11 MPs, from political parties in government and in opposition. It is entirely independent of the Government. Find out more about the Committee: <https://petition.parliament.uk/help#petitions-committee>

Thanks,

The Petitions team

UK Government and Parliament

4) Is it safe to play? Safeguarding your children over the summer holidays

With the school summer holidays now here, the council's sport and leisure team, in partnership with the NWG Exploitation Response Unit, is offering advice to parents and carers before they let their children attend any sports or physical activity clubs and sessions.

Although many summer activity clubs are closed due to COVID-19, this does present opportunities for those not affiliated to any sport governing body or active partnership, to exploit the situation and set up activities in parks and green spaces which could initially appear to be legitimate holiday activities.

It is important to look for a club, sport, activity and coach that takes the safety and wellbeing of your child seriously. Always check whether the club or organisation is accredited or otherwise affiliated to a body (e.g. a sports governing body or national

voluntary sector) as this should mean they have the right safeguarding policies and procedures in place.

Even if they are accredited, there are some key things to look for to ensure they take children's safety seriously.

- Review their website or the information you may have been sent. Do not be influenced by glossy flyers, smiley children in pictures and lots of quotes from 'satisfied' parents.
- Look for safeguarding policies – these should be fully accessible, visible and readily available on their website. If they are not visible, then please think twice about sending your child into the care of someone who does not have safeguarding arrangements in place.
- Where is the sport activity taking place? Is it COVID-19 secure? If it is in the grounds of a school or a leisure centre, then please ask the headteacher or centre manager about what due diligence has taken place to ensure the clubs providing activities have the correct safeguarding procedures in place.
- A safe recruitment process for staff and volunteers, including vetting. This means that they have appropriate references, DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks – please ask about the last time these were renewed, and ensure the staff have the right technical qualifications for the activity.
- What safeguarding training have staff and volunteers received and can you see the evidence of when this training was delivered. What about new staff, as coaches do move around quite frequently
- Check if they have a code of conduct/practice for sport coaches – this code provides a guide for good and safe coaching practice. A good code will be incorporated into the club and its policies, procedures, governance and training and will not be a stand-alone document
- First Aid procedures – what happens if a child is taken ill? What are the club's policies and how many people at the club have full first aid certificates?
- Is there a designated welfare officer/safeguarding lead? – find out who the point of contact is that you or child can speak to if you have any concerns or worries
- Parents/carers should speak with their child/children often to ensure they are happy and have no concerns. Maintaining an open dialogue with your child/children is very important.

ActiveSouthend – the Borough's sports partnership, which is linked to Active Essex – the county sports network, has compiled a list of summer holiday activities that are being run by reputable clubs in Southend-on-Sea. Please visit the Latest News section of the ActiveSouthend website www.activesouthend.com for more information.

If you have concerns about a summer holiday activity/club or coach, or have concerns about inappropriate behaviour by anyone involved in a sports club in Southend, then please contact Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's Sport and Leisure Team on 01702 212057. You can also contact NWG for advice on 01332 585 371, or visit www.nwgnetwork.org, or if you think a crime has been committed, then please contact your local police force on 101.

5) Temporary Road Closures

a) York Road Southend-On-Sea – 3rd August and 6th August 2020 from 20.30 hours to 05.00 hours the following morning - Essential carriageway Works

Whilst this notice is in operation, all vehicles will be prohibited from **Entering York Road from its junction with Chichester Road to the dead end at the High Street and**

Whilst the works take place a Temporary suspension of the One-Way Street Order for York Road and Baltic Avenue will be in place thereby making the Roads Two-Way during the times stated

These prohibitions or restrictions will come into effect **on 3rd August and 6th August 2020 from 20.30 hours to 05.00 hours the following morning**. This notice will remain in force for **5 days** to allow for unexpected events/delays and possible remedial works. Whilst the closure and temporary suspension are in operation, a diversion route via Tylers Avenue, Baltic Avenue and York Road will be in place.

b) Tylers Avenue Southend-On-Sea – 4th August and on 6th August 2020 from 20.30 hours to 05.00 hours the following morning - Essential carriageway works.

TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF ENTRY in TYLERS AVENUE and a TEMPORARY SUSPENSION of the ONE-WAY STREET ORDER in CLIFFTOWN ROAD SOUTHEND-ON-SEA.

Whilst this notice is in operation, all vehicles will be prohibited from **Entering Tylers Avenue from its junction with Chichester Road to its junction with Clifftown Road; and**

Whilst the works take place a Temporary suspension of the One-Way Street Order for Clifftown Road will be in place thereby making the Road Two-Way during the times stated to allow vehicular access by the contractor's vehicles

These prohibitions or restrictions will come into effect **on 4th August and on 6th August 2020 from 20.30 hours to 05.00 hours the following morning**. This notice will remain in force for **5 days** to allow for unexpected events/delays and possible remedial works. Whilst the closure and temporary suspension are in operation, a diversion route via Chichester Road, Queensway, A13 London Road, Milton Road, Cambridge Road, Scratton Road to the junction of Clarence Road will be in place.

