

From: Charlie Stewart
Sent: 25 March 2020 08:49
Subject: Covid - 19 Update

Dear Councillors

National Position

The new arrangements for staying at home and closures bring us to a near 'lockdown' situation, but our essential services will of course continue and our people running those services can still go to work.

The new directive does confirm our decision on certain closures including our libraries.

Across the borough, it looks like the new directive is being adhered to. Social distancing does seem to be holding

Services

Our services are in general holding up well.

Not surprisingly adult social care is under the most pressure but is coping. PPE supply continues to be a problem. We are working closely with NHS colleagues and hope to have supplies soon.

Local schools in Harrow have been really helpful in keeping us informed of the numbers of children in school each day; and this information is shared daily with the DfE through an online portal .The majority of schools have stayed open. The schools that have closed is due principally to staff shortages which has made it non-viable for them to remain operational, whilst following public health and government guidance This remains a fast moving local picture, which changes almost daily. To-date , all children of keyworkers/critical workers in Harrow have been able to find places as a result of schools collaborating with each other. A range of options are being proactively considered for schools to remain open over the Easter Holidays. Further updates will be available as the viability of these options are fully assessed.

Our waste services is coping well with crews turning out. The Civic amenities site is now closed to the public and we will have to postpone the start of the Garden Waste service to May (although will keep under review as may need to postpone again).

We are also keeping a close key on the level of homelessness in the Borough. To date we have not seen an increase.

Playgrounds have now been closed.

Community Engagement

Our Covid-19 Support telephone line for residents has been launched. More details are provided in a separate e-mail. As we build our knowledge and capacity on the phone line, we will then build further access though our web site.

We are starting to set up our community hub as part of the Government's initiative to help the most vulnerable and susceptible to the virus. We are awaiting the details from the Government.

We are looking to allocate funding to support the voluntary sector. A pot of money to help them quickly develop capacity to support the community.

Our allocation of the hardship fund has been received and we are currently finalising how we are required and can allocate it.

Our People

The response by our staff to the requirement for most of them to work at home has been very good. The Civic Centre site is now nearly empty. Technology continues to be a problem and not everyone who can work from home will be able. The situation will improve over the next few weeks as we bring in new equipment and software.

Our focus for the next few days is to ensure those who need to come into work are able to (and do) maintain 'social distancing'.

Next update later in the week.

Keep safe and look after each other.....

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