

Report To:	COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY SCRUTINY PANEL	Date:	2 FEBRUARY 2021
Heading:	GUIDANCE AND RESTRICTIONS UPDATE		
Portfolio Holder:	NOT APPLICABLE		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel with an update regarding the latest guidance and restrictions in place relating to COVID-19 and reducing the spread of the virus. This includes key details of the national lockdown measures imposed. The full guidance relating to the national lockdown is appended to this report as Appendix A.

Recommendation(s)

- a. Note the information contained in this report relating to COVID-19 guidance and restrictions, including Appendix A.
- b. Consider how the latest guidance and restrictions will affect the Council's COVID-19 response and recovery plans and the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel work programme.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

As part of the established terms of reference for the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel, regular updates are provided to the Panel concerning up to date guidance and restrictions introduced to reduce the spread of the virus.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options have been considered.

Detailed Information

NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

On 4 January 2021, the Prime Minister announced a national lockdown, instructing people to stay at home to control the virus, protect the NHS, and save lives. National lockdown was introduced following a rapid rise in infections, hospital admissions, and case rates across the country, with hospitals under more pressure than they have been at any other point throughout the pandemic.

The rise in cases has been attributed to a new variant of COVID-19 confirmed by scientists to be up to 50 and 70 percent more transmissible.

Once again, guidance has been published alongside the new national lockdown. Please see below some of the key details within the guidance. The full guidance document released by the Government is appended to this report as Appendix A.

Leaving Home

You must not leave or be outside of your home except where necessary. You may leave the home to:

- shop for necessities, for you or a vulnerable person
- go to work, or provide voluntary or charitable services, if you cannot reasonably do so from home
- exercise with your household (or support bubble) or one other person (in which case you should stay 2m apart). Exercise should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.
- meet your support bubble or childcare bubble where necessary, but only if you are legally permitted to form one
- seek medical assistance or avoid injury, illness, or risk of harm (including domestic abuse)
- attend education or childcare - for those eligible

If you do leave home for a permitted reason, you should always stay local - unless it is necessary to go further, for example to go to work. Stay local means stay in the village, town, or part of the city where you live.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable you are advised to only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. We recommend that you do not attend work.

Meeting Others

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone you do not live with or are not in a support bubble with (if you are legally permitted to form one).

You may exercise on your own, with one other person, or with your household or support bubble. This should be limited to once per day, and you should not travel outside your local area.

You cannot meet other people you do not live with, or have not formed a support bubble with, unless for a permitted reason.

Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

Education

Colleges, primary and secondary schools will remain open only for vulnerable children and the children of critical workers. All other children will learn remotely until February half term.

Early years settings remain open.

Higher Education provision will remain online until mid-February for all except future critical worker courses.

Hands, Face, Space

Approximately 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it.

Remember - 'Hands. Face. Space.'

- hands – wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds
- face – wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will meet people you do not normally meet
- space – stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 metre with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings)

You should avoid all non-essential meetings and interactions.

Coronavirus spreads from person to person through small droplets, tiny airborne particles known as aerosols and through direct contact.

To reduce the chance of catching or passing on coronavirus to or from the people you live with, you should:

- wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds
- regularly clean frequently touched surfaces
- make sure you let plenty of fresh air into your home without getting uncomfortably cold. This should be balanced with other considerations such as comfort, safety, and security.

The police can take action against you if you meet in larger groups. This includes breaking up illegal gatherings and issuing fines (fixed penalty notices).

You can be given a Fixed Penalty Notice of £200 for the first offence, doubling for further offences up to a maximum of £6,400. If you hold, or are involved in holding, an illegal gathering of over 30 people, the police can issue fines of £10,000.

At the initial announcement of the national lockdown measures, it was suggested that measures may start to be eased around the middle of February. Recently, MPs passed legislation allowing the Government to keep the current restrictions in place until the end of March. The Government may also choose to extend restrictions past this point if measures are deemed necessary to control the spread of the virus.

It is unknown if restrictions will ease around the middle of February – it will be contingent on the progress of the vaccine rollout and the rate the virus is spreading in February.

The Panel will continue to be updated on the most recent guidance and restrictions in place.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

The Panel continues to review the Council's response and recovery plans in line with the objectives set out within the refreshed Corporate Plan.

Legal:

Any legal implications relating to COVID-19 restrictions and guidance continue to be fully considered by the Council.

Finance:

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Any implications arising as a result updated restrictions will be considered as part of the Panel's future work, in accordance with the approved work programme.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
The Council's Corporate Risk Register has been reviewed to take account of impacts and increased risks as a result of COVID-19.	Monitoring and updating the COVID-19 related risks through the Council's existing Corporate Risk Management processes and through the work of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel.

Human Resources:

There are no direct HR implications resulting from this report. Any HR implications identified will be considered appropriately.

Environmental/Sustainability:

There are no direct environment or sustainability implications resulting from this report. Any environment or sustainability implications identified will be considered appropriately.

Equalities:

There are no direct equalities implications resulting from this report. Any equalities implications identified will be considered appropriately.

Other Implications:

None.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

- Cabinet Office, *National Lockdown: Stay at Home Guidance*, January 2021 (attached as Appendix A).

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