

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

## Briefing for Breckland Council elected members (4<sup>th</sup> June 2021)

**Purpose of the note: To ensure members are aware of the plans that are being put in place to ensure that Breckland is prepared, as far as possible, to respond to the impact of coronavirus.**

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### 1. Recent Government advice/action

#### **NEW: Life-saving vaccination programme to hit more major milestones as new vaccine added to armoury**

The UK's rollout of life-saving vaccines in its fight against COVID-19 continues to take significant strides with another new jab authorised and major milestones [expected to be hit next week](#). Next week, it is expected that three quarters of adults will have received their first dose and almost half of all adults will have had their second dose of a vaccine. The UK remains on track to offer the vaccine to all adults by the end of July.

#### **NEW: One-dose Janssen COVID-19 vaccine approved by the MHRA**

The COVID-19 [Vaccine Janssen](#) has today been given regulatory approval by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). This is the fourth COVID-19 vaccine to be authorised by the UK's independent regulator and is the first to be approved for protection against COVID-19 with a single dose.

#### **NEW: Weekly national flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports published**

The main points from this week's [national influenza and COVID-19 surveillance report](#) are:

- Surveillance indicators suggest that at a national level COVID-19 activity increased slightly in week 20 of 2021.
- Case rates have increase or stayed level across all age groups.
- Case rates in week 20 were highest in those aged 10 to 19, with a case rate of 55.2 per 100,000 population,
- The lowest case rates continued to be in those aged 70 to 79, with a rate of 4.1 per 100,000 population.
- Case rates per 100,000 were highest in the North West, at 52.8.
- Case rates per 100,000 are lowest in the South West, with a rate of 9.2.
- The hospital admission rate for COVID-19 is 0.79 per 100,000 in week 20, compared to 0.75 per 100,000 in the previous week.

#### **NEW: Update on the Trade Credit Reinsurance scheme**

The government and the Association of British Insurers (ABI) have announced that the temporary [Trade Credit Reinsurance \(TCR\) scheme](#) will close on 30 June as planned. The scheme has directly benefitted over half a million businesses, providing certainty to firms across the UK and safeguarding

jobs. It protected more than £575 billion of business turnover by providing around £210 billion in insurance cover.

**NEW: Eddie Gray appointed chair of Antivirals Taskforce**

The UK government has appointed [Eddie Gray as the new chair of the Antivirals Taskforce](#).

Mr Gray has extensive experience in the pharmaceuticals industry, and has been involved in the field of antivirals throughout his career for a number of different diseases, including flu.

**2. Supporting businesses and employees**

**Reminder – if you know a business that needs financial support:**

Please ask them to engage via <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/15960/Grant-Information> - or directly to [regeneration@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@breckland.gov.uk).

We use our single grant application form to match companies to every available national scheme, and our revised discretionary policy should mean that every legitimate Breckland-based business should be eligible for some direct financial support.

We have now issued almost £50m in financial support since the start of the pandemic and want to make sure every business in Breckland that needs help, gets help – so please do flag any known issues to us.

**Restart Grants**

We have been able to pay businesses who meet the national eligibility for “Restart” Grants and have issued over £6.5m of grant monies.

The amount of money a business can receive is based on nationally set criteria, which looks at both the type of business they run, and the rateable value of their premises (only businesses in rateable premises are eligible under this scheme, although this does include those in receipt of 100% rate relief):

Category	Eligible businesses include	Grants Available (based on RV)		
		<£15k	£15–51k	51k>
<b>Non-essential retail</b>	Retailers whose products are not necessary to the health and well-being of the public	£2,667	£4,000	£6,000
<b>Hospitality &amp; leisure</b>	Hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym business	£8,000	£12,000	£18,000

Businesses who have not previously received support will also be able to engage via our single web form, and we will match against eligibility via: <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/16267/Covid-19-Business-Grant>

**The application closing date for the Restart Grant is 30 June 2021.**

**Additional Restrictions Grants – Breckland’s discretionary policy.**

Based on the gaps left from the LRS (Closed) policy we continue our complimentary set of support grants using Breckland’s discretionary resource. Under this approach, any business can apply if they are ineligible for LRS (Closed) and struggling.

We have reviewed our available funding against current applications and have extended this support to provide additional monies to all recipients to cover businesses through to restrictions lifting in the current roadmap. Eligibility and awards are grouped into four categories and are being reviewed under two periods; 5 January - 15 February and 16 February – 12 April.

DESCRIPTION/BUSINESS CATEGORY	AWARDS (5 JAN – 15 FEB)	AWARDS (15 FEB – 12 APR)
Businesses with high fixed property costs, who are forced to close (i.e. B&Bs)	£2,001	£2,668
Businesses with high fixed property costs, who can still open but are struggling (i.e. supply chain, manufacturers)	£1,500	£2,001
Businesses with low / no fixed property costs, who are forced to close (i.e. regular market traders, hairdressers renting space)	£1,500	£2,001
Businesses with low / no fixed property costs, who can still open but are struggling – (i.e. self-employed, open market traders)	£1,001	£1,334

Business can apply direct on our [website](#). Current awards from Breckland now total over £2.6m, supporting over 1,250 businesses.

### Spring Back Business Support Programme

Our “Spring Back” Programme is fully operational to support Breckland businesses who may now access a further £2m of support, our grants schemes are proving popular:

- **Shop Front Improvement Scheme** – investing in the biggest ever “Spring Clean” across the District. Any businesses based in Breckland’s primary shopping areas, or any customer facing business, will be able to get financial support for improvements and enhancements to their shop frontage – from a lick of paint through to a replacement frontage.

To date grants have been approved to 13 businesses totalling £25,000 with further applications progressing forward.

- **Covid Safe and Adaptions Grants** – helping businesses shoulder the burden of trading in a Covid-safe way and meet the challenges of serving under restrictions. Grants of up to £5k will be available to invest in safety; or change business practices. From extra PPE and screens, through to a new marquee or outdoor seating.

To date grants have been paid to 27 businesses totalling just over £62,000 with further applications progressing forward.

- **Digital Breckland** – building on the highly successful scheme – Breckland Digital High Streets enabling any Breckland-based business to get support for their digital offer, with grants towards making key digital changes from a new payment system, through to search engine optimisation. To date grants have been paid to 56 businesses totalling just over £130,000 with further applications progressing forward.

- **Expanded enterprise and start-up scheme** – having already created 10 new businesses since Christmas, we are looking to grow the pipeline of new innovative businesses further. With finance and advice for new entrepreneurs looking to start-up locally. Claims of £84,000 received. To date grants have been paid to 14 businesses totalling just over £63,000 with further applications progressing forward.

### **Growth Programme**

#### **Town Delivery Plans – the ‘Future Breckland’ Project**

- Evidence base is in the first draft for the project, and is expected to be completed at the end of the project.
- Decision on placement of town delivery to be decided by mid-June

#### **Dereham**

- Engagement sessions have been conducted and completed through ‘Meet the team’ events and dedicated session with key partners, including a walking workshop.
- Wider engagement complete with 100 survey responses to our strategic and local partners.

#### **Thetford Place Branding**

- Engagement phase complete with 1,750 public survey responses (well in excess of 5% of entire Thetford population), 30 1:1 consultation with strategic stakeholders and 100+ other stakeholders engaged through workshops
- Themes identified include the crucial value of the river, forest and brecks landscape and a widespread feeling that Thetford could be on the cusp of great things. But hard messages also relating to capitalising on opportunities, issues around perceived under-investment and community tensions.
- Second phase now well underway which includes development of the brand narrative and brand values which will be fed back to the community via further engagement in a ‘test and learn’ approach to iterate the new brand.
- Simultaneous work ongoing on events to activate the riverside area this year and beyond, with an emphasis on high quality, authentic town centre event curation – alongside businesses, community and TTC
- Branding itself due to complete in totality in late July/early August, at which point workshops and tutorials will properly embed the values locally.

#### **REMINDER: Advice following easing of restrictions on 17 May**

You should continue to work from home if you can, travel safely, and follow the rules in the Coronavirus Restrictions guidance.

The changes mean that Indoor areas of hospitality venues can reopen for groups of up to 6 people or larger groups consisting of no more than 2 households. This includes:

- restaurants
- pubs
- bars, including those in hotels or members’ clubs
- social clubs
- cafes and canteens

Hospitality venues providing alcohol for consumption on the premises, such as pubs and restaurants, will be required to provide table service.

Indoor entertainment and visitor attractions can reopen. This includes:

- amusement arcades and adult gaming centres
- bingo halls

- circuses
- bowling alleys
- snooker and pool halls
- museums and galleries
- adventure playgrounds and activities
- escape rooms, paintballing and recreational driving facilities
- play areas (including soft play centres and inflatable parks)
- zoos, safari parks, aquariums and other animal attractions
- stately or historic homes, castles, or other heritage sites
- The following businesses must remain closed:
- nightclubs, dance halls, and discotheques

Extended guidance is available on the [national Government website](#).

### 3. Community Support

Breckland Council have been passed funding by Mid-Norfolk Primary Care Network to deliver Social Prescribing services on behalf of the following GP Surgeries:

- Theatre Royal Surgery, Dereham
- Orchard Surgery, Dereham
- Toftwood Surgery
- Mattishall Surgery
- Swanton Morley Surgery
- North Elmham Surgery

We are delighted to share that we have now successfully recruited two Social Prescribing Link Workers who join the organisation in June. The role of a Social Prescribing Link Worker is to work with people referred by their GP, community group or similar services, to identify what matters to them and support them to connect with activities to help improve their wellbeing.

Social Prescribing is about making connections, giving people a sense of belonging in their community and helping them find a sense of purpose. This helps them stay physically and mentally well. It is good for people and good for communities.

#### **New – Breckland Council sign up for HEAR campaign**

Breckland Council has signed up for the HEAR campaign, which calls on employers to break the silence around domestic abuse and HEAR, help and provide support to their staff on this important issue. By signing the pledge below, our organisation agrees to:

- Provide access to specialist support for your employees
- Make sure your staff get the right training, so they know how to help colleagues
- Not tolerate domestic abuse in any form
- Make sure your workplace is supportive for colleagues who experience domestic abuse
- Review your policies and processes around domestic abuse to make sure they are implemented correctly.

[The campaign is run by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Group in Norfolk for White Ribbon Day 2020 and beyond.](#)

## 4. Breckland service updates

### Covid Support/Public Protection

- The Covid Team have been continuing their coverage and extended hours. Despite being a hot and busy bank holiday weekend, nothing untoward was noticed in terms of negative behaviours. Some targeted work to educate and engage with street drinkers and groups congregating in public was also undertaken.
- Currently the team is dealing with 3 Covid Active Outbreaks, 11 Active Situations and 1 Active Cluster in the business and public venue settings. Since April 2020, the Public Protection Team have dealt with 43 Covid Outbreaks. Officers are also continuing with their investigations into breaches of Covid legislation within the community.
- Since the 1 January 2021, over 170 physical food hygiene inspections have been conducted. The team are working through the backlog, but are seeing an unprecedented number of new food premises registration applications.
- Covid Safe Scheme - Over 90 premises have received accreditation and the list is growing.
- An Animal Welfare Officer is now in post and has already undertaken a number of animal welfare inspections and renewals.
- The Covid Support Team is supporting Vaccination Bus locations in the district, identifying sites and assisting with planning/maps, etc

### Commercial waste service update

- 2 new businesses commenced the commercial waste service
- 11 quotes issued
- 17 new customers in the process of signing up
- Total of 60 businesses signed up to date.
- Further promotion being sent to Breckland Business this month via the Regeneration Team.

### Serco Contract

- Work on new depot in Watton progressing should be up and running from depot from 5 July.
- Serco and Breckland will be assisting volunteers taking part in the Keep Britain Tidy Spring Clean this month by providing sacks for their waste and recycling and collecting the bags at the end of the event.
- Officers and Serco supporting residents in Thetford with their 100 day litter pick

### Enforcement

The Enforcement and Communications Team are currently sharing a micro-campaign on fly tipping and littering. Case studies have been shared online at:

- <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/17306/27-05-21-300-fine-for-fly-tipping-outside-charity-shop>
- <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/17293/24-05-21-600-fine-for-people-who-dumped-waste-in-Watton>

With our Enforcement officer currently away for four weeks, please ensure that any fly tip reports - with or without evidence - continue to be made via our website: <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/report-flytipping>

**Breckland Council**  
**02.06.21**