Report for Clifton upon Teme meeting – Thursday 1st October 2020
Dear Councillors,

A report for the meeting. I do hope everyone is keeping safe and well?

Coronavirus update: As you all will be aware, we are starting to see the rising number of coronavirus cases in Worcestershire, translate into increasing hospital admissions and people being admitted to intensive care. Numbers are small now but are expected to increase in-line with the national trend. The county mortality management group has started to meet again as a precaution. The number of calls to the Worcestershire Here 2 Help line are also increasing, mainly due to people who are self-isolating, needing help with food supplies. Issues with access to testing also means the number of official cases is not representative of how many people have got Covid-19 in our communities.

Update on testing: Below is a comprehensive update from Worcestershire County Council on the current testing situation.

In Worcestershire we have 4 different types of testing facility.

County Hall - This site is for community testing (Pillar 2) available for anyone experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. It was formerly at Worcester Warriors, and relocated earlier this month. This is where the residents of Worcestershire are currently asked to attend for a test if they have booked online. It is drive through and can only be used by residents who have booked online. Testing can be booked at https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test
Mobile Testing Unit - This works in the same way as the County Hall site but provides more local testing provision. The MTU is currently in Evesham and has the ability to move around the county. This is available to test anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 and can be booked online.
Essential Workers test site- A temporary test centre for essential key workers has been created. This will offer a limited number of tests each day to those who are considered to be frontline essential workers - social care, school staff who work with children, GPs, Healthcare workers, police, and fire crews. This is not a drop-in centre, and users must book in advance via their employer gateway. **It is not open to the public.**
District walk-in centres - Public Health has requested a walk-in test centre be established in each of the districts. These will take 3-4 weeks to put in place. The centres are designed to be accessible on foot, (i.e. not a drive through) but they are not drop-in centres. Residents will still need to go online and book a test before using the sites. These centres will not resolve the current testing shortage in the county. They are being created to ensure once community testing is back at capacity, more of our residents can easily access testing.

Background to testing issues: There is pressure on the testing system nationally, and Worcestershire is no different. Our county is facing the same problems as others around the UK. The planning, booking and delivery of Covid testing happens nationally, however we are working with colleagues at a regional and local level to try to find a local solution. - The Pillar 1 testing facility is an example of this. Central Government advises there has been no reduction in national testing capacity. Demand for testing is increasing and as such some test sites will have reductions of testing capacity so we can keep maximum capacity in highest risk areas.

We are facing challenges in our overall national lab capacity and this is continually increasing and will continue to do so in the coming months. This is not a processing issue but an overall capacity challenge.

Despite the difficulties, people with symptoms absolutely must come forward to get a test as this will help us stop the spread of the virus. We would urge them to keep trying to access testing.

Local provision is updated daily, and appointments become available. Anyone waiting for a test, should self-isolate for 10 days, however mild their symptoms.

Download the new NHS Covid-19 app: Last Thursday saw the launch of the new NHS Covid-19 app. This is designed to support the NHS Test and Trace Service. The app allows people to report symptoms, order a coronavirus test, check in to venues by scanning a QR code and it helps the NHS trace individuals that have coronavirus.

If someone you have been near to tests positive for Covid-19, NHS doctors and scientists will use an algorithm to work out how close you need to be to someone to be at risk of the virus. A random unique ID will then be used to alert other app users so they can self-isolate immediately and get a test.

The app will help the NHS understand if the virus is spreading in a particular area, and so local authorities can respond quickly to stop it spreading further and save lives.

The app does this while protecting a user's anonymity. Nobody, including the government, will know who or where a particular user is.

If you can download the app and share our messages on your own channels, I would encourage you all to do so.

[Introducing the NHS Covid-19 app](#)

[NHS Covid-19 app privacy FAQs](#)

[Factsheet for parents and carers](#)

£500 Self-isolation test and trace support payment: From **28 September,** it will be a legal requirement to self-isolate if you are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace. The Government has introduced a £500 support payment to help people on low incomes who have to self-isolate. Malvern Hills District Council will be responsible for administering these payments.

Although people will be eligible for payments from 28 September, we are still awaiting the full guidance from the Government on how to implement the scheme. We have until **12 October** to get the scheme fully up and running. People will be eligible for a back dated payment. We are asking people to temporarily give us their contact details using a simple form on our website. We will then call them back to ask them to provide their supporting evidence and arrange to make payment.
This will be available from the coronavirus page of our website from Monday 28th September.
https://www.malvernhills.gov.uk/community/coronavirus-covid-19-update

Take care all.

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