

Leaders' update 26 June 2020

Deaths from coronavirus (both councils)

Data released on 24 June showed there were 263 confirmed cases of coronavirus recorded in Wychavon and 139 in Malvern Hills District. This is unchanged from last week for both districts.

There were 2 further deaths from Covid-19 in Wychavon in the 7 days from 5 to 12 June, with both of them occurring in hospital. The total number of deaths in the district is now 102 with 46 occurring in care homes. There were no further deaths from Covid-19 during the week from the 5 to 12 June in Malvern Hills District. The total number of deaths in Malvern Hills District remains 45 with 19 in care homes.

The R number and growth rate (both councils)

The R number is published by region and is an indication of whether the virus is growing, stable or reducing in terms of its spread. A value of less than 1 means the virus is shrinking and above 1 means it is growing.

In the Midlands the R value is 0.7 to 0.9.

The growth rate is also now being published and gives an indication of how fast the virus is spreading or shrinking. A large number above 0 means it is growing fast and a large number below 0 means it is shrinking slowly.

The growth rate for this region is -4 and 0

Summary of lockdown changes (both councils)

The Prime Minister made several changes to lockdown restrictions on Tuesday.

[Read more about what is changing from the 4 July.](#)

High Street Recovery Plans (both councils)

With non-essential shops being allowed to re-open from 15 June and the recent announcement about the reopening of cafes, pubs and restaurants it's been a busy time period for the gradual reopening of town and retail centres across the two districts. The economic development teams at both councils have in anticipation been liaising for the last 2 months with business groups, individual businesses and stakeholders.

Attached are the action plans which have been developed for each district and is currently being implemented. It's important to note that opportunities and needs are regularly changing and the plans will adapt as necessary.

Wychavon's Town Centres Panel met on Monday and discussed in detail the actions. The Economy Panel at Malvern Hills is due to meet on 14 July where the town centres action plan will feature significantly on the agenda.

Some members may be familiar with Bill Grimsey who has previously produced 2 town centre reviews which have helped to influence some of the government's policies. He has this week just published a third paper Build Back Better : Covid-19 Supplement for Town Centres. Its thought provoking and has the following statement "While previously, we've asked if Britain had too many shops, it's now time to ask whether we have too many streets?". A copy is attached for members consideration.

Changes to help pubs, restaurants, cafes serve people outside (both councils)

The Government has introduced plans to allow more pubs, restaurants and cafes to serve customers outside.

Changes for the hospitality industry introduced by the government will:

- Reduce the consultation period for applications for pavement licences from 28 calendar days to 5 working days, and grant consent after 10 working days if the council does not issue a decision
- Set a lower application fee for a pavement and street cafe licence of up to £100
- Remove the need for a planning application for outdoor markets and marquees, meaning they can be set up for longer
- Provide more freedoms for areas to hold car-boot sales and summer fairs

Under the Business and Planning Bill, introduced on Thursday (25 June), the Government will speed up and reduce the costs of the licensing process for outdoor seating and stalls. Temporary changes to licensing laws will also allow many more hospitality businesses, such as pubs, bars and restaurants, to sell and serve food and drink for consumption off the premises.

Draft guidance to accompany pavement licensing proposals introduced in the Business and Planning Bill has been published. The temporary pavement licences process introduces a streamlined consent route to allow businesses to obtain a licence to place temporary furniture, such as tables and chairs outside of cafes, bars and restaurants quickly, and for no more than £100.

Draft guidance on pavement licensing proposals:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pavement-licences-draft-guidance>

Under the Town and Country Planning Regulations, which were laid before Parliament on Wednesday (24 June), councils will not be required to get planning permission to use land for the purpose of holding a market. The right is time-limited and will cease to have effect from 23 March 2021.

The regulations will also give people greater freedom over how they use their land by doubling the length of time that temporary structures can be placed on land without needing an application for planning permission. This will allow land to be used for a broad range of purposes such as for car boot sales and summer fayres, as well as allowing pubs and restaurants to be able to use car parks and terraces as dining and drinking areas, using their existing seating licenses. The right is time-limited and will cease to have effect from 1 January 2021.

Councils are asked to continue to ensure their communities are consulted on licensing applications, that waste is disposed of responsibly, and that access to pavements and pedestrianised areas is not compromised.

Full announcement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-outlines-support-for-pubs-cafes-and-restaurants>

Planning system changes (both councils)

The Government has announced a number of changes to the planning system in response to the relaxation of lockdown.

Planning permission deadlines will be extended, planning appeals will be sped up and builders will be allowed more flexible working hours following agreement with their local council. [Read the announcement in full.](#)

The full detail of applications which will be impacted by this and the length of any extension has yet to be clarified. The implications of these changes will be assessed by both Councils once the detail is provided and we will keep you updated if there are significant impacts.

Changes to working hours on building sites (both councils)

Attached is a list of sites that have taken advantage of the Government's relaxation of the planning rules around work hours.

MHCLG has also published draft guidance that provides further detail on the proposed new route for developers to seek to amend planning restrictions on construction site working hours. This will temporarily allow extended working hours, for example work during the evening and at weekends, as introduced in the Business and Planning Bill.

Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/construction-working-hours-draft-guidance>

The Bill will also extend the expiration of certain planning permissions and listed building consent, as well as provide the Planning Inspectorate with the flexibility to use more than one procedure type when dealing with a planning appeal, enabling appeals to progress at a faster pace.

How are staff feeling? (both councils)

We recently carried out a survey of staff working for both councils to find out how they are finding various aspects of remote working and how Covid-19 is impacting on them.

Over three quarters of staff across the two councils responded. Overall the results were very positive. As some of you have been asking how staff are getting on so we thought we'd share some of the survey headlines with you.

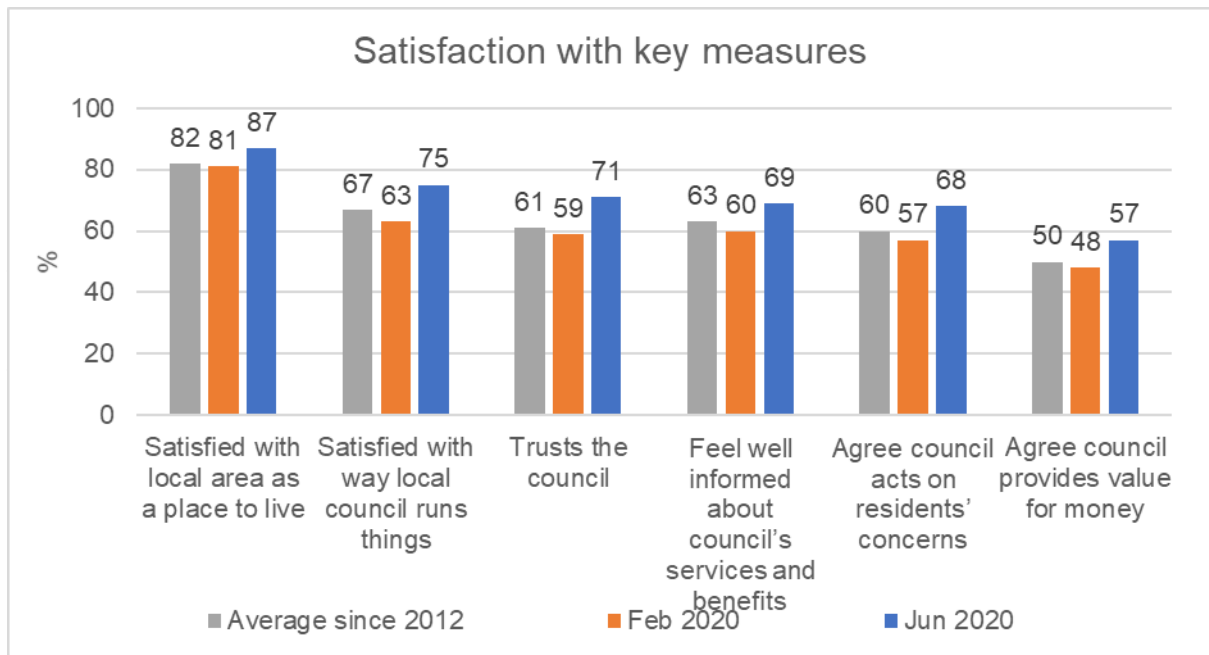
- The majority of staff are satisfied with their current work environment, although there are some issues with phones and suitable furniture, such as chairs, and providing appropriate IT for longer term remote working.
- The majority of staff are enjoying working from home and would like to continue to do for at least part of the week on a permanent basis.
- A small number of staff are finding working from home really difficult for a mixture of reasons including childcare responsibilities, feeling isolated and lack of an appropriate work space.
- Covid-19 and remote working have had an impact on the health and wellbeing of two thirds of staff. There were over 400 comments describing a wide range of positive and negative impacts.
- Over two thirds of staff have had a discussion with their manager about their health and wellbeing.
- Around 22% of time is being spent on coronavirus related work, around 65% on usual work and 12% on keeping in touch with others.
- Multiple methods are being used to communicate with managers, teams and other colleagues. In addition to emails and phone calls, what's app groups and video conferencing are being well used and proving to be effective.
- The vast majority of staff feel the amount of contact with their manager and team is about right.
- Nearly all staff read the staff bulletin and all staff emails and feel the content is relevant.
- Most staff feel well supported and informed by their managers.
- 97% of staff have confidence that SMT is managing the council's response to the Covid-19 situation well.
- Most staff feel valued by SMT at this time and that SMT cares about their health and wellbeing.

SMT has agreed an action plan is designed to address the key issues/themes identified through the survey and interviews with managers. Service Managers and SMT are individually considering the results for their service areas and any additional action required.

Polling on resident satisfaction with councils: June 2020

Overall satisfaction with local councils reached its highest ever level in the latest Local Government Association polling on resident satisfaction. Of the randomly selected population, 75% were satisfied with how their local council runs things in June 2020, an increase from 63% in February 2020. Those who agree that their council provides value money (57%) was also at its highest ever level since the research began in 2012. There were also significant increases in the level of trust that people have in the council, satisfaction with their local area and how the council acts on resident concerns.

The key measures are summarised in the chart on the next page.



More support to help rough sleepers (both councils)

The Government has announced that £105 million will be used to support rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness into tenancies of their own.

The funding will be used to help with deposits for accommodation and to secure alternative rooms that are already available and ready for use, such as student accommodation.

A further £16 million is also being provided so that vulnerable people currently in emergency accommodation can access the specialist help they need for substance misuse issues.

The £105 million is made up of £85 million of new funding from HM Treasury and £20 million from refocusing existing homelessness and rough sleeping budgets.

Announcement: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/105-million-to-keep-rough-sleepers-safe-and-off-the-streets-during-coronavirus-pandemic>

Coronavirus financial monitoring survey – Rounds 1 and 2 publication (both councils)

MHCLG has published a summary of the results from the first two rounds of the coronavirus financial monitoring survey.

Across the first two rounds of MHCLG's Covid-19 financial monitoring survey the department received data from every single authority asked. MHCLG is extremely grateful for councils continued collaboration, which allows them to understand pressures at a national and local level. The first two rounds of the survey collected financial data from March and April, as well as forward looking estimates to gather the best possible information about the pressures that councils are facing.

The third round of the monitoring survey closed on 19 June. The results are currently being analysed and summary of the findings will be published in due course.

Summary of results: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-covid-19-financial-impact-monitoring-information>

Hybrid meetings (both councils)

The LGA has been raising on your behalf the future of public meetings with central government, including councillors being allowed to hold 'hybrid' meetings in the same way Parliament is able to, if they wish to. In particular, LGA Chairman, Cllr James Jamieson, has been raising this directly with the Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government, Simon Clarke.

This week the Prime Minister confirmed that “our courts, probation services, police stations and other public services will increasingly resume face-to-face proceedings” from 4 July. We are enquiring if this could similarly apply to council meetings. The legal advice we have received states that the current Regulations in place (Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020) would need to be amended, or guidance issued, to allow for councillors to meet in this way if they wish to. We continue to push for these changes to be made so councils can decide on the most appropriate local solution - whether that is the continuation of entirely remote arrangements or a move to a 'hybrid' model.

List of upcoming meetings (both councils)

WYCHAVON

July and August Public Meetings

Date	Wychavon	Time
25 Jun	Planning	2pm
8 Jul	Exec Board	6.15 pm
15 Jul	Rural Matters Panel	4 pm
15 Jul	O&S	6.15 pm
22 Jul	Council Followed by Annual Council	6.15 pm
23 Jul	Planning	2pm
24 Jul	Audit	2pm

29 July	Licensing (if required)	2pm
17 August	TCA Panel	2.30pm
20 August	Planning	2pm

MALVERN

June, July, August Meetings

Date	Malvern	Time
24 Jun	SAPC	2pm
25 Jun	O&S	10am
1 Jul	NAPC	2pm
9 Jul	PDP Environment	4pm
14 Jul	PDP Economy	10am
14 Jul	PDP Communities	2pm
16 Jul	Audit & Standards	2pm
21 Jul	Council Followed by Annual Council	6pm
22 Jul	SAPC	6pm
5 Aug	NAPC	6pm
19 Aug	SAPC	6pm

If things change these dates/ times will be reviewed and members will be updated.

At the moment they are all going to be virtual/ zoom meetings however if guidance changes we will look at other options.

Cllr Sarah Rouse, Leader of Malvern Hills District Council

Cllr Bradley Thomas, Leader of Wychavon District Council