

Worcestershire County Council Report
Meeting of Lower Sapey Parish, 20th January 2022

1. My report for January will be short due to the Christmas and New Year break at the County Council. I will concentrate on updates regarding Health matters, which hopefully will be of interest to everyone.
2. Latest Covid Figures as at 17th January 2022 are:
 - a. Worcestershire is showing an infection rate of 1,200 cases per 100,000.
 - b. The infection rate in the Malvern Hills District is 871 cases per 100,000.
 - c. The direction of travel is down, in all Districts within Worcestershire.
 - d. Wyre Forest has the highest infection rate in Worcestershire with 1,493 cases per 100,000. Malvern Hills District has the lowest infection rate.
 - e. The rate of infection in England as a whole is 1,272 cases per 100,000.
3. The above rates have increased dramatically in the last month for reasons which we are all aware, but in the last few days, rates have begun to come down throughout Worcestershire. Fortunately, Covid related hospital admissions and deaths in Worcestershire have not risen at the same rate. The message from the Director of Public Health at the County Council remains the same: Adhere to Government guidelines, ensure you are fully vaccinated, use doctors surgeries, pharmacies, Minor Injury Units, NHS111 etc., wherever possible and only call an ambulance or visit the Acute Hospital if it is absolutely necessary, in order to keep pressure off these two key services, as far as possible.
4. There is some good health related news in Worcestershire. Plans to transform urgent and emergency care services at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital will see the relocation and expansion of the Hospital's Emergency Department, Medical Assessment Unit and Ambulatory Emergency Care, hosting a wide range of diagnostic and treatment services. Works are already underway with a plan to be fully operational by the end of this year.

As you may know, I am a Member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and in November we held an all day meeting with representatives of West Midlands Ambulance Service, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust, NHS Herefordshire & Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and Worcestershire County Council. Although the Committee has no statutory powers, we are able to make recommendations. I am not able to give details of our recommendations at this time, as they are not yet in the public domain but hopefully we will see improvements with regards to Ambulance waiting times, late discharge of patients from the Acute hospital and so on, in the coming months.

An important step forward that will help, is an additional £8million capital funding from NHS England to the Worcestershire Royal Hospital, to create a 30 place, short stay Clinical Assessment Unit. This additional capacity will greatly improve the care of patients who are waiting to be transferred to a ward after being seen in the Emergency Department. It will help free up space in the Emergency Department, ease pressure on Emergency Department staff, reduce waiting times and improve ambulance handover times. This new Unit will hopefully be operational by the end of next month.

David Chambers
County Councillor, Tenbury Division.