

<b>Report To:</b>	<b>COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY SCRUTINY PANEL</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>10 DECEMBER 2020</b>
<b>Heading:</b>	<b>COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY</b>		
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>		
<b>Ward/s:</b>	<b>ALL</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>NO</b>		
<b>Subject to Call-In:</b>	<b>NO</b>		

### **Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to present the Panel with further details regarding COVID-19 response and recovery. This includes details of the revised three-tier restrictions implemented from 2 December 2020. Members are asked to consider the impact of the three-tier restriction system as Ashfield adapts to the new measures. Members are also asked to consider and approve Panel meeting dates for 2021, proposals for which are included in the report.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel are recommended to:

- a. Note the information contained within the report.
- b. Consider how the revised three-tier restrictions will impact communities, businesses, and the Council.
- c. Approve meeting dates for 2021 along with an updated work programme.
- d. Discuss and approve any comments and/or recommendations to be made to Cabinet at the next meeting to be held on 26 January 2021.

### **Reasons for Recommendation(s)**

The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel has been established to ensure dedicated and robust arrangements are in place as the Council performs a leading role in supporting communities, businesses, and employees.

## **Alternative Options Considered**

No alternative options have been considered.

## **Detailed Information**

### **CABINET – 1 DECEMBER 2020**

At the previous meeting of the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel, Members resolved that Cabinet be presented with the following ideas and suggestions raised at the meeting:

- a. Concerns for the ongoing viability and survival of sole traders and small businesses should lockdown restrictions continue.
- b. To avoid undue worry and to allow local businesses to react proactively to the current climate, a request for additional communication regarding the latest Government guidelines to be sent out to business communities.
- c. To make all businesses aware of existing local business forums such as Discover Ashfield and Town Centre Trader groups and encourage active participation. Furthermore, establish new forums where existing provisions are not suitable.
- d. To continue work around the establishment of a business recognition scheme for businesses that have provided exemplary COVID-secure environments for customers.
- e. Options for how the Council and local businesses can continue to work to support local foodbanks and health and wellbeing organisations during the pandemic.
- f. Appreciation to Cabinet for the imminent provision of hand sanitiser stations at car parking ticket locations.
- g. Concerns around the extensive cost of providing PPE to protect employees and a hope to see a tax relief or reimbursement scheme from the Government in the near future.
- h. The Economic Regeneration Team be requested to formulate some appropriate case studies to reflect the experiences shared by business owners and to highlight best practice across the District.

Members will be pleased to know that Cabinet positively received the suggestions put forward and will use them to inform decision-making going forward.

Members will also be pleased to know that following on from the previous meeting of the Panel, feedback from the six business representatives in attendance has been overwhelmingly positive. All were grateful for the opportunity to have an open discussion with the Council and a chance to have key questions answered and acknowledged. Engaging with local communities and business is one of the key reasons for the establishment of the Panel, and this will be continued in future meetings.

## **REVISED THREE-TIER RESTRICTIONS**

From Wednesday 2 December, a revised local restriction tier system has been introduced throughout England. Guidance has been published on the Government's Coronavirus information page setting out details of the three-tier restrictions system.

## Why are tiers being introduced?

Within published guidance, the Government has set out that tiers are being introduced as part of a regionally differentiated approach to tackling COVID-19, following the recent national restrictions aimed to bring transmission of the virus under control.

The revised three-tier system will be strengthened compared to the previous tiers in order to prevent a return to growing infections. The Government aims to target the toughest measures only in areas where the virus is most prevalent, or where there is a sharp increase in the rate of infection.

There are three tiers for local restrictions:

- Tier 1: Medium alert
- Tier 2: High alert
- Tier 3: Very High alert

On 26 November, ahead of the revised restrictions being put into place, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham were confirmed as Tier 3: Very High Alert areas.

Regional restrictions will be reviewed fortnightly following implantation from 2 December.

## What tiers mean

Government guidance sets out what can and cannot be done in each tier.

Support bubbles have been expanded – from the 2 December a bubble can be formed with another household if the following applies:

- you are the only adult in your household
- you have a child under 1
- you live with a child under 5 with a disability that needs continuous care

From the 23 December to 27 December, a Christmas bubble can be formed. A Christmas bubble will be able to spend time together in private homes, to attend places of worship, or meet in a public or outdoor place.

Please see below details of restrictions and exemptions that apply to Ashfield as a Tier3: Very High Alert area. Details of Tier 2: High Alert restrictions are also included in the event of Nottinghamshire and Nottingham moving from Tier 3 to Tier 2 as part of the fortnightly review process.

## All tiers

Across all tiers, everyone:

- must wear a face covering in most indoor public settings, unless they have an exemption
- should follow the rules on meeting others safely
- should attend school or college as normal, unless they are self-isolating. Schools, universities, colleges and early years settings remain open in all tiers
- should walk or cycle where possible, plan and avoid busy times and routes when travelling

- must follow the gathering limits at their tier except for in specific settings and circumstances

Visits to care homes can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Regular testing will be offered to up to 2 family members or friends per resident by Christmas, which – when combined with other infection-control measures such as PPE – will support indoor visits with physical contact.

All businesses and venues that are open are expected to follow COVID-19 secure guidelines to protect customers, visitors and workers.

In all tiers, the following businesses and venues can remain open:

- essential and non-essential retail, including indoor and outdoor markets and car boot sales
- certain leisure and sporting facilities such as gyms, sports courts and facilities, leisure centres, fitness and dance studios, golf courses, swimming pools, riding centres, outdoor playgrounds – subject to relevant social contact rules in each tier. Indoor group activities and classes should not take place at tier 3
- personal care and close contact services such as hairdressers and barbers, beauty salons, tattoo parlours, nail salons, spas and beauty services, massage parlours and tanning salons
- public buildings, such as libraries, community centres and halls. They should not host events for private hire, such as birthday parties or most other social activities in tier 3
- allotments, recycling and waste centres, public toilets, car parks
- essential public services such as the NHS and medical services, courts, and jobcentre plus sites
- places of worship – communal worship can now resume, subject to relevant social contact rules in each tier

Everyone who can work from home should do so. Where people cannot do so – including, but not limited to, people who work in critical national infrastructure, construction, or manufacturing – they should continue to travel to their workplace. Public-sector employees working in essential services, including education settings, should continue to go into work where necessary.

### Tier 2: High Alert

These restrictions are for areas with a higher or rapidly rising level of infections, where some additional restrictions need to be in place.

In Tier 2:

- you must not socialise with anyone you do not live with or who is not in your support bubble in any indoor setting, whether at home or in a public place
- you must not socialise in a group of more than 6 people outside, including in a garden or a public space – this is called the ‘rule of 6’
- businesses and venues can continue to operate, in a COVID-Secure manner, other than those which remain closed by law, such as nightclubs

- pubs and bars must close, unless operating as restaurants. Hospitality venues can only serve alcohol with substantial meals
- hospitality businesses selling food or drink for consumption on their premises are required to:
  - provide table service only, in premises which sell alcohol
  - close between 11pm and 5am (hospitality venues in airports, ports, transport services and motorway service areas are exempt)
  - stop taking orders after 10pm
- hospitality businesses and venues selling food and drink for consumption off the premises can continue to do so after 10pm if this is through delivery service, click-and-collect or drive-through
- early closure (11pm) applies to casinos, cinemas, theatres, museums, bowling alleys, amusement arcades, funfairs, theme parks, adventure parks and activities, and bingo halls. Cinemas, theatres and concert halls can stay open beyond 11pm in order to conclude performances that start before 10pm
- public attendance at outdoor and indoor events (performances and shows) is permitted, limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- public attendance at spectator sport and business events can resume inside and outside, subject to social contact rules and limited to whichever is lower: 50% capacity, or either 2,000 people outdoors or 1,000 people indoors
- places of worship remain open, but you must not socialise with people from outside of your household or support bubble while you are indoors there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on numbers of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies and receptions, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, and 15 people can attend linked commemorative events such as wakes or stone settings.
- organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes will only be permitted if it is possible for people to avoid mixing with people they do not live with (or share a support bubble with). There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s, which can take place with larger groups mixing
- you can continue to travel to venues or amenities which are open, but should aim to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible
- if you live in a tier 2 area, you must continue to follow tier 2 rules when you travel to a tier 1 area. Avoid travel to or overnight stays in tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through a tier 3 area as a part of a longer journey

### Tier 3: Very High Alert

These restrictions are for areas with a very high or very rapidly rising level of infections, where tighter restrictions are in place. Ashfield is currently in this tier of restrictions.

In Tier 3:

- you must not meet socially indoors or in most outdoor places with anybody you do not live with, or who is not in your support bubble, this includes in any private garden or at most outdoor venues
- you must not socialise in a group of more than 6 in some other outdoor public spaces, including parks, beaches, countryside accessible to the public, a public garden, grounds of a heritage site or castle, or a sports facility – this is called the ‘rule of 6’
- hospitality settings, such as bars (including shisha venues), pubs, cafes and restaurants are closed – they are permitted to continue sales by takeaway, click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery services.
- accommodation such as hotels, B&Bs, campsites, and guest houses must close. There are several exemptions, such as for those who use these venues as their main residence, and those requiring the venues where it is reasonably necessary for work or education and training
- indoor entertainment and tourist venues must close. This includes:
  - indoor play centres and areas, including trampolining parks and soft play
  - casinos
  - bingo halls
  - bowling alleys
  - skating rinks
  - amusement arcades and adult gaming centres
  - laser quests and escape rooms
  - cinemas, theatres and concert halls
  - snooker halls
- indoor attractions at mostly outdoor entertainment venues must also close (indoor shops, through-ways and public toilets at such attractions can remain open). This includes indoor attractions within:
  - zoos, safari parks, and wildlife reserves
  - aquariums, visitor attractions at farms, and other animal attractions
  - model villages
  - museums, galleries and sculpture parks
  - botanical gardens, biomes or greenhouses
  - theme parks, circuses, fairgrounds and funfairs
  - visitor attractions at film studios, heritage sites such as castles and stately homes
  - landmarks including observation decks and viewing platforms
- leisure and sports facilities may continue to stay open, but group exercise classes (including fitness and dance) should not go ahead.
- there should be no public attendance at spectator sport or indoor performances and large business events should not be taking place. Elite sport events may continue to take place without spectators

- large outdoor events (performances and shows) should not take place, with the exception of drive-in events
- places of worship remain open, but you must not attend with or socialise with anyone outside of your household or support bubble while you are there, unless a legal exemption applies
- weddings and funerals can go ahead with restrictions on the number of attendees – 15 people can attend wedding ceremonies, wedding receptions are not allowed, 30 people can attend funeral ceremonies, 15 people can attend linked commemorative events
- organised outdoor sport, and physical activity and exercise classes can continue, however higher-risk contact activity should not take place
- organised indoor sport, physical activity and exercise classes cannot take place indoors. There are exceptions for indoor disability sport, sport for educational purposes and supervised sport and physical activity for under-18s
- you can continue to travel to venues or amenities which are open, but should aim to reduce the number of journeys you make where possible
- avoid travelling outside of your area, including for overnight stays other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities. You can travel through other areas as part of a longer journey

#### Exemptions from gathering limits in all tiers

The following exemptions from gathering limits apply to all tiers of restrictions:

- as part of a single household, or a support bubble
- for work or providing voluntary or charitable services, including in other people's homes
- for childcare, education or training – meaning education and training provided as part of a formal curriculum
- for supervised activities provided for children, including wraparound care (before and after-school childcare), groups and activities for under 18s, and children's playgroups
- for formal support groups, and parent and child groups – up to 15 people aged 5 and older
- to allow contact between birth parents and children in care, as well as between siblings in care
- for arrangements where children do not live in the same household as both their parents or guardians
- for prospective adopting parents to meet a child or children who may be placed with them
- for birth partners
- to attend a funeral – with no more than 30 people present – or a commemorative event such as a wake for someone who has died – with no more than 15 people present
- to see someone who is terminally ill or at the end of life
- to attend a wedding or civil partnership – with no more than 15 people present
- to provide emergency assistance
- to avoid injury or illness, or to escape a risk of harm
- to fulfil a legal obligation, such as attending court or jury service
- to provide care or assistance to someone vulnerable or to provide respite for a carer
- to facilitate moving home

## NEXT STEPS

As this is the last scheduled meeting for the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel, Members are asked to consider meeting dates for 2021. Please see some suggested dates:

- Tuesday 2 February 2021
- Tuesday 23 March 2021
- Thursday 15 April 2021

These dates have been selected to align with meetings of the Council's Cabinet to ensure any relevant comments and recommendations can be presented in a timely manner.

Members should also consider the key focus themes of each meeting in 2021. The Panel has previously focused on:

- The Council's immediate response and Recovery Strategy/Action Plan
- Local Recovery Themes
- Small Business Recovery – working with local businesses
- Town Centre Recovery
- Multi-Agency Working
- Key Worker Tribute/Memorial

Future meetings could potentially focus on themes such as organisational recovery and partnership working with the charity/voluntary sector.

## Implications

### **Corporate Plan:**

The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Scrutiny Panel will continue to work in line with the Council's refreshed Corporate Plan, focusing on:

- Community and Economic Recovery
- Organisational Recovery

### **Legal:**

There are no direct legal implications resulting from this report. Any legal implications identified by the Panel will be considered appropriately.

### **Finance:**

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Any financial implications identified by the Panel will be considered appropriately.

<b>Budget Area</b>	<b>Implication</b>
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	



Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	
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**Risk:**

Risk	Mitigation
Revised restrictions will require the Council to quickly communicate with communities and businesses in Ashfield to ensure compliance with the new rules.	The COVID-19 Response and Recovery Panel will work to ensure effective communication between the Council, communities, and businesses in Ashfield, whilst ensuring robust response and recovery measures are in place.

**Human Resources:**

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

**Environmental/Sustainability:**

There are no direct environmental/sustainability implications resulting from this report. Any environmental/sustainability implications by the Panel identified will be considered appropriately.

**Equalities:**

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

**Other Implications:**

There are no other implications resulting from this report. Any other implications identified by the Panel will be considered appropriately.

**Reason(s) for Urgency**

None.

**Reason(s) for Exemption**

None.

**Background Papers**

None.

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