

Date : 27 April 2020

Dear resident

Coronavirus: important information for you, your family and your neighbours

We are writing to all Bath and North East Somerset residents to update you on what your Council is doing to help at this difficult time.

Thank you for following central government instructions on staying at home, protecting the NHS and saving lives. You will know the current restrictions have been extended until early May and we are working on the assumption that even if some changes are made at that time, it is unlikely we will return to pre-lockdown state immediately.

As residents, we understand the challenges and frustrations the current situation is presenting. Over the last few weeks the council has made many changes to deal with the impact of the COVID 19 outbreak. We are working to maintain as many services as possible but I hope you can understand that our priorities during this period are protecting the most vulnerable, supporting jobs and businesses and maintaining essential local services. We set out below the work we have been doing in each of these areas.

Protecting the most vulnerable

People across Bath and North East Somerset are looking out for each other like never before, delivering food and medicines. Thank you for everything you are doing in your local communities. You are helping us to deliver the key purpose of the council – “Improving People’s Lives”

We have heard a lot about the pressures the current situation has placed on many residents. It is wonderful to see so many different types of support springing up both formal and informal. You may already have heard from friends, neighbours, local businesses or organisations. However we also know there are vulnerable residents who still need help, so we have a telephone helpline to call if you don't have any other support. The number is **0300 247 0050** and it is open 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week. Council staff and volunteers can put people in touch with help and advice.

Supporting jobs and businesses

We know this is a particularly difficult time for local businesses and their employees. UK Government has put in place a number of schemes to help which are administered by the council. As this is an urgent task we have redeployed staff into special teams to process these grants.

We have established completely new processes to do this. So far about 50% of businesses eligible for support have applied for help. To date we have paid more than £12 million to local businesses. But we know more needs to be done to support local companies and jobs in their hour of need. So please could you also let any businesses you are involved with know about what is available. More information can be found here: <https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/coronavirus-support->

[business](#)

Maintaining essential local services

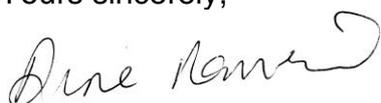
Some of our services such as libraries are closed by law. We will continue to follow UK Government guidance and update you when we are able to resume activity. Our immediate priority has been to maintain key local services such as waste collection and social care. You will have seen reductions in service levels and increases in waiting times. Thank you for your patience and understanding. We will try to get all services up and running as soon as possible.

The council, like local businesses, relies on income we generate to help pay for the services we deliver. For example under the current restrictions we have closed the Roman Baths, resulting in lost income of around £6 million over the next few months. In total we think we might lose over £30 million income in the 2020/21 financial year, and when including additional expenditure we are incurring, the overall deficit is currently projected to be £50m. Many councils will be in this position and we are asking central government for help. We will need to take action to address this position and will do our best to keep you informed on the impact this will have on services and the decisions we have to take as a result.

If you have internet access, you can get further information through our website www.bathnes.gov.uk . There is a dedicated section on coronavirus which provides information on how to get help from the council and the government if you are not working and do not get paid while you're off. Please also follow us on social media and sign up for our weekly e-newsletter to stay up-to-date.

For now we ask you to continue to follow Government advice, to please stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Dine Romero
Leader
Bath and North East Somerset Council



Will Godfrey
Chief Executive

This letter about support from Bath & North East Somerset Council during coronavirus can be made available in other languages or formats (including large print and Braille) on request. Contact 01225 477094 or equality@bathnes.gov.uk