



Leader's Statement to Cabinet 21.10.2010 – COVID ALERT LEVEL

Last Saturday morning (17th October 2020) the Covid alert level for Essex was raised to High Tier 2.

The decision was taken by Government at the request of Essex County Council and MPs and followed extensive discussions with Essex and Leaders of councils in Essex. I took part in those discussions and supported the action based on the information presented to us.

Details of the presentation made to us has been circulated to all Councillors and if you were not able to attend the briefing on Friday afternoon to all Essex councillors the link containing a recording of the briefing has also been shared with you.

(Just to remind you:

Essex continues to see an increase in cases with cases doubling every one to two weeks which the County's Director of Public Health and Wellbeing, Dr Mike Gogarty advised would continue to accelerate unless urgent action was taken. Essex has a better chance of flattening the rate of infection and therefore protecting lives, jobs, businesses and the NHS if the move was made sooner rather than later. Without action now, the restrictions that Essex residents would have to face would be even more severe, last longer and do more damage to the Essex economy.)

The decision we made as Essex County and District Leaders to ask for this was not taken lightly. We know this will impact on lives and livelihoods but are confident this swift action now to flatten the rate of infection will ultimately help protect our residents, businesses and the NHS in the coming weeks and months.

In my message to residents issued on Friday I encouraged residents to familiarise themselves with the new restrictions.

- Residents should reduce social contact and remain within family groups and/or support bubble only.
- Only travel when necessary.
- Continue to regularly wash hands,
- keep your face covered and remain 2m apart.)

Later in the meeting we will consider the arrangements for the Test and Trace Support payment scheme for those on low income who are unable to work from home and are required to self-isolate.

Members will also be aware that the Government recently announced funding for councils to assist with covid compliance activities.

In making the request to Government to move to Tier 2 all were agreed that regulations should be strictly enforced.

Castle Point Council is responsible under the regulations to ensure businesses comply with covid regulations.

Castle Point Council has received just under £40k to be spent within the next 4 months and this will be used to employ Covid Compliance officers to work mainly within Environmental Health to provide Covid advice and undertake compliance checking activities at local businesses.

By acting now together, we can hope to stem this increase, limiting the time that we are in these enhanced restrictions and – above all – avoiding further escalation into ‘Very High’.
