

## SOMERSET COUNTY COUNCILOR

### BRIEFING SHEET FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

JANUARY 2021

**Covid-19 Restrictions:** Revised Government regulations mean that Somerset entered Tier 4 restrictions on from December 31<sup>st</sup>. The main requirements of this Tier are:

- No household mixing, aside from support bubbles and two people meeting in public outdoors spaces.
- Hospitality closed, except sales by takeaway, drive-through or delivery.
- Essential shops can open. Non-essential retail must close.
- Everyone must work from home unless they are unable to do so.
- Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open during term time. Registered childcare and childcare bubbles permitted.
- Indoor leisure, accommodation and personal care – closed.
- You must not stay overnight away from home.
- Indoor entertainment closed. Some outdoor attractions may remain open.
- Places of worship open for private prayer and communal worship.
- You must stay at home and only travel for work, education or other legally permitted reasons. You must not leave a Tier 4 area or stay overnight away from home.

**Coronavirus infection rates:** As at 31<sup>st</sup> December the number of confirmed Covid cases in Somerset was 9355 (up from 5,110 on 1<sup>st</sup> Dec) and the number of Covid-attributed deaths 335 (228). The rate per 100,000 currently stands at 248.3 for Somerset with Mendip at 211.1, Sedgemoor at 332.9, South Somerset 193.1 and SW&T at 268.8. The current number of total deaths across the County is currently 3% above the 5-year average and the latest R-value for Somerset is between 1.0 and 1.2. ***It is vitally important to remember at all times the Hands-Face-Space message.***

**Somerset Coronavirus Support Helpline:** A single phone number is available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus-related support. **0300 790 6275**, is open seven days a week from 8am to 6pm, offering a range of support – from help accessing food or medicines, to emotional and financial support, and employment, housing and business advice.

**Vaccination programme roll-out:** Somerset residents who have been identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) as the highest priority are being invited for Covid-19 vaccinations first, including people aged over 80 and health and care staff. Residents should not contact their local NHS services for vaccination, they will be contacted when it's their turn and given the

information that they need for their appointment. For more information visit: [www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/health/local-services/health-services-during-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccinations-in-somerset](http://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk/health/local-services/health-services-during-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccinations-in-somerset)

**SCC Support:** More than 700 County Council staff are being redeployed to support the NHS challenge of rolling out the county's biggest ever vaccination programme. The first community GP-led sites have begun vaccinations and follow the launch of the programme in hospital hubs. Further plans are being drawn up to ensure vaccination in other locations across the county. Operating seven days a week which will require a considerable staffing resource and whilst every effort is being made to avoid disruption to SCC services some impact will undoubtedly be felt in areas outside of vulnerable people services.

**High Speed Broadband:** Three companies have been selected to rollout the next phase of full fibre network on behalf of the Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) programme, backed by Government funding. Airband, Truespeed and Wessex Internet will be installing full fibre broadband across Devon and Somerset to more than 56,000 rural homes and businesses over the next 4 years.

**One Somerset Pledges:** Somerset County Council has set out ten clear One Somerset pledges in the proposed move to a single Unitary authority:

1. No disruption to local services as we change, and a promise to keep you fully informed.
2. We will protect those front-line staff working with vulnerable people across the county.
3. Council tax will not increase because of moving to a single unitary council.
4. Physical, face-to-face council contact points across the county.
5. One telephone number and one website to access ALL council services.
6. Improved services for our vulnerable residents including housing, adults' & children's services.
7. Improved services for our children and young people, including education, training, jobs and transport.
8. More local decision making by our town and parish councils and new local community networks.
9. Closer relationships with partners including the NHS, police, education, and the voluntary sector to deliver better services.
10. We will not split Somerset in half, divide communities, lose our proud identity, or weaken our standing on a local, regional and national level.

**2021 Primary School Places:** Applications for Primary School places in 2021 need to be made through [www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/admissions) The deadline for submissions is Friday, 15 January 2021.