

News from Buckinghamshire County Council

PR 10993

26 March 2020

APPROVED for Immediate Release

Leader tells residents about changes to council services due to coronavirus outbreak

Councils in Buckinghamshire are telling residents about temporary changes to services because of the coronavirus outbreak – and have also announced that some library buildings will become local support hubs for the vulnerable during the crisis.

Leader of the Shadow Executive, Martin Tett, is also reminding people of how important it is to follow the rules about staying at home, recognising how challenging the situation is for people in many different ways.

A number of changes to council services have been brought in, as the councils in Buckinghamshire, like other organisations, prioritise what is needed the most. The changes have also been introduced to avoid contact between people – all designed to help slow the spread of the virus.

- Country parks and libraries are now closed to the public
- Play parks and sports areas of parks are closed but **parks remain open for exercise** – gatherings however are banned
- All household recycling centres (tips) are closed
- There are some changes to waste collection services – please check the Buckinghamshire Council website for up to date details
- Weddings and other ceremonies will not take place and the registrars service will make contact with anyone who has bookings to make arrangements and organise refunds where necessary
- Other changes are being made in regard to registering births and deaths, please check the Buckinghamshire Council website for the most up to date information

Residents are being asked to regularly check the new Buckinghamshire Council website at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk for up to date information on services.

Martin Tett said: “These last few days have been incredibly challenging as we all make major changes to our daily lives to try to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

We are having to make changes to how our services run but please be assured we are doing everything we can to carry on providing the services our residents rely on through this crisis.

I want to thank everyone for the huge personal sacrifices you are all making to help protect the people in our county in the coming weeks and months.

I also want to emphasise how important it is that people follow the rules about staying at home, as the Prime Minister outlined on the television on Monday night. You and your family **MUST** stay at home apart from essential travel.

We really are all in this together and I know how strong our communities here in Buckinghamshire are – I know we can get through this, supporting each other as we go.”

Eight local support hubs have also been established across the county specifically for the most vulnerable people who don't have friends, family or other support they can rely on. The hubs will be based in library buildings, but the libraries **won't be open to the public and the hubs are not for general public use.**

As announced last week, an online community support hub has also been introduced on the new Buckinghamshire Council website. The community support hub provides information for people who need some help or advice and people who want to volunteer can also register at the site. **The online community support hub is at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus.**

As information is changing so quickly we kindly ask that residents bear with us as we make and announce new changes. The best way to get the most up to date information on services is via the new Buckinghamshire Council website at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

The eight local support hubs will be based at the following locations and will be for use by the most vulnerable members of the community. **They will not be open to the general public or as a 'drop in' facility for the public:**

- Buckingham Library
- Chesham Library
- Princes Risborough Library
- Marlow Library
- Beaconsfield Library
- Wycombe District Council offices
- Chiltern District Council offices
- The Gateway in Aylesbury.

The support hubs are intended for those who have severe medical conditions, and who do not have access to family, friends or local support networks. The following government guidance helps to define who that may include <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

For further information please contact: Claire Perry, on 01296 382444 or out of hours on 07825430978

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