

E-Newsletter – 5th March 2021

www.bera.co.uk



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1) Information Corner

Renewal Reminder

This is a gentle reminder to re-join if you have not already done so, as together we can make a difference to the community - buying trees and shrubs, Christmas decorations in The Broadway, sponsored coffee mornings, personal and panic alarms, planning representation and free basic advice on property covenants and legal issues.

If you have not renewed your membership but wish to continue to be a member, please complete the form below and return it to me, along with the £10 subscription by the 31st March 2021, as after that time if you have not re-joined your e-newsletters will no longer be distributed. Alternatively, please see our membership, payments page for other ways to pay.

All of the information that BERA provide you with uses a lot of resources and the contributions to the Residents' Association from your membership fee also helps to alleviate any overspend.

The BERA Committee brings together a variety of skills and knowledge, along with the support in planning and legal advice. There is no doubt that the majority of residents still feel the need to be part of an organisation that is dedicated to maintaining our environment and quality of life.

BERA

The Residents' Association

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL JANUARY-DECEMBER 2021

Please make cheques payable for £10 to: "*Burges Estate Residents Association*"

Title (Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Other):

First Name:

Surname:

Address:

..... Post Code:

Telephone:E-mail:

Please return completed form to:

Mike Stafford, Treasurer BERA, 85 Maplin Way, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 3NL

OR

Ron Woodley, Chair BERA, 91 Tyrone Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 3HD

BERA Committee Members 2021

Ron Woodley – Chair
Mike Stafford – Treasurer
Cecily Bonallack
Michael Dyer MBE
David and Margaret Harper
Theo Steel

Freddie Dawkins – Deputy Chair
Sara Foskett – Secretary
Mike Carter
Jane Franks
Blaine Osborne
Ken Swain

Ron Woodley, Chair BERA, 91 Tyrone Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 3HD

Contact details 588662 or e-mail ronwoodley@hotmail.co.uk

BERA's Donated Tree Planting

Everyone who asked for a tree to be planted outside their home is due to be completed by the end of this month. BERA will be walking the whole area to see what trees can be planted next year, either through the council or via BERA's tree donations.

Scam - Loft Insulation

We have been contacted by a member who received a phone call from 01132 136737 and a gentleman said he was calling from the Government and asked her to confirm that she was the homeowner. When she said yes, he said that if she had her loft insulation fitted a long time ago that it could be considered as unsafe and the home could get damp. He then asked if he could come and have a look. Obviously, the homeowner said no!.

Also, a friend of hers had a knock on her door a few months ago and a gentleman said that there is Government Grant for loft insulation, so could he come inside her come to have a look. This lady also said 'no'.

Please be aware and do not let anyone into your home that you do not know and always speak to friends and neighbours in you are worried and need help or advice.

Help Combat Fly Tipping - Report It to ClearWaste

How to Report Fly Tipping

By copy and pasting the link below into your browser, you can report fly tipping (Anonymously if desired) to ClearWaste who will send it directly to the council or registered land owner.

Report Fly Tipping to ClearWaste: <https://clearwaste.com/flytipping/report>

About ClearWaste: <https://clearwaste.com/about>

Southend Pass available to all

The Southend Pass will be offered to residents from outside the Borough as well as local residents following agreement at Full Council on Thursday 25 February.

The Council agreed to extend the Southend Pass to anyone that wishes to buy it, following proposed amendments to the draft 2021/22 budget at cabinet, (16 February). It is hoped expanding the offer to non-residents will help increase visitors to Southend-on-Sea throughout the year and boost the Borough's economy.

The annual pass, which will cost £8.50 per month, will be available for use from 1 April 2021, and enable the holder to park in any council-owned car park or on-street pay and display parking bay in Southend for up to three hours at a time across each of the newly proposed four zones across the Borough, totalling up to 12 hours each day.

At just £8.50 per month, the pass works out at 28p if used daily, 85p if used ten times across a month or £2.12 if used four times a month.

The pass will be available using the MOBON app on your phone. Once parked, activate your parking session on the app. Once your three hours have expired, if you wish to stay longer in that zone, you can top up your parking session with the app to extend your stay for the relevant additional charge.

For those who do not have access to a smart phone or the MOBON app, there are other ways to pay for the Southend Pass. Please contact the parking team on 01702 215003 for more information.

Cllr Ron Woodley, deputy leader and cabinet member for transport, capital and inward investment said: “The Southend Pass is a great parking offer and will be a benefit to both Southend residents and people who visit and work in our great Borough regularly.

“I am delighted that we are be able to offer the Pass to people who live outside of the Borough too, which will encourage more use of local shops, cafes and restaurants and our many attractions. The more people who have the chance to buy the Southend Pass means more potential visitors to boost the local economy.

“Even if someone uses the pass once a week, they will still see incredible benefits, with parking costing the equivalent of £2.12 for three hours in each zone, which is cheaper than the current £2.70 two-hour rate. The Pass will be ideal for people who live across south Essex and want to visit all our Borough has to offer, or for those who want to spend a few hours in the town centre shopping, and then a trip to Leigh or Shoeburyness.

“If you want to stay longer than three hours in any of the zones, you will be able to top up at the end of your parking session on the go by using the app, or on a parking machine.

“The Southend Pass will help encourage residents and visitors to explore the town, visiting different shops, restaurants, parks and open spaces across the Borough, increasing the spend in local shops and boosting the local economy.

“It is also worth highlighting that as part of our fees and charges, visitors staying overnight in our hotels or guest houses will also still be able to access a 50% reduction off of the daily charge where the hotel is situated through the MOBON app.”

Anyone interested are asked to sign up to receive updates via email at www.southend.gov.uk/SouthendPassSignUp You will then receive notifications without any commitment to buy, closer to the time the pass launches. More information is available on our website: www.southend.gov.uk/southendpass

FCA WARNING—Bitcoin investors should ‘be prepared to lose all their money’ Bitcoin has recently seen record highs, the FCA has issued a warning to all would-be investors in cryptocurrencies to ‘be prepared to lose it all’. Cryptocurrencies are not covered by investment regulation, so there will be little protection if the investment goes wrong.

It is expected that fraud criminals will seek to maximise on the sudden interest in Bitcoin and cryptocurrencies by flooding the market with crypto investment scams. It is believed that fraudsters are likely to begin setting up fake cryptocurrency firms in order to lure people into investing in what they believe to be a genuine product. Residents should be wary of investment offers that come out of the blue, where they are pressured to invest quickly, or are promised returns that seem too good to be true.

For further advice visit www.fca.org.uk or search FCA Cryptoassets in your search engine

A briefing on the 2021 Budget is below, which outlines key developments

2021 Budget

Chancellor Rishi Sunak, announced his second Budget on 3 March, setting out plans for the public and personal finances. In a year shaped by coronavirus, the UK economy has felt the impact of the pandemic, shrinking by 9.9% while unemployment rose to 5.1% late last year.

The OBR expects the economy to return to pre-covid levels by the middle of 2022 - six months earlier than previously thought. In five years' time, our economy will be 3% smaller than it would have been.

The OBR forecast our economy to grow this year by 4%, by 7.3% in 2022, then 1.7%, 1.6% and 1.7% in the last three years of the forecast.

Key measures included:

Coronavirus -

- An additional £65bn in measures this year and next to support the economy in response to coronavirus. Total COVID-19 support package, this year and next, is £352bn.

Infrastructure –

- A new National Infrastructure Bank will have headquarters in Leeds and will provide financing support to the private sector and local authority infrastructure projects. It will be able to deploy £12bn of equity and debt capital and be able to issue up to £10bn of guarantees.
- The £5.2bn flood and coastal defence programme announced in the Budget 2020 will start in April.

Health –

- £1.65bn to continue the vaccine rollout and improve our future preparedness.
- An investment of £5m on top of the £9m funding to create a 'library' of mRNA vaccines for Covid-19, £28m to boost UK vaccine testing capacity and £22m for new and expanded vaccine studies.
- A further £165m toward getting adults vaccinated against COVID by July.
- £15bn further to be provided for NHS Test and Trace on top of this year's £22bn.
- An initial down payment of ~£40m, and lifetime commitment for Thalidomide scandal survivors.
- £10m to support veterans with mental health needs.

Education/Research/Training –

- The Lifetime Skills Guarantee gives adults opportunity for a fully-funded L3 qualification.
- Doubling apprentice incentive payments for businesses to £3,000 per hire.
- An extra £126m was promised for apprenticeships.
- The Restart programme is supporting over 1m long term unemployed people.
- The Kickstart scheme is funding jobs for over 0.25m young people.

Housing –

- Stamp duty nil rate band to remain until 30 June 2021 for <£500k purchases. The nil rate will become £250k until September, then £125k in October.
- Guaranteed mortgages for people with 5% deposits on homes up to £600,000. Available up to 31 December 2022.

Business –

- Business rate holidays will be extended to the end of June. Then, for the remaining part of the year, business rates will still be discounted by 66%.
- A £6bn tax cut for business.
- Furlough scheme and self-employed grants to be extended to September 2021. Businesses to contribute as the scheme ends.
- £3bn for a new Restart Programme, to tackle unemployment.
- £5bn for high street restart grants to reopen hospitality, shops and salons. Up to 6k for retail, up to 18k for hospitality
- £700m to support arts, culture and sporting institutions as they reopen.
- Extending £500m film and TV production restart scheme.
- New Recovery Loan Scheme to replace Bounce Back Loan and CBIL programmes. Businesses can apply for loans from £25,000 to £10m, with a govt guarantee of 80%.
- The VAT holiday on tourism at hospitality will remain cut to 5% until September, then will sit at 12.5% until March next year.
- 'Help to Grow: Management' will help businesses get management training, with government contributing 90% of the cost.
- 'Help to Grow: Digital' to help businesses develop digital skills with free training and discounted software.

Environment –

- A £150m fund, to help communities take ownership of pubs, theatres, shops, or local sports clubs at risk of loss.
- Opened the Levelling Up Fund worth £4.8bn to support local areas to invest in infrastructure that improves everyday life (e.g. town centre and high street regeneration, local transport upgrades, improving community assets).

Transport –

- 135m to begin construction of the A66 Trans-Pennine upgrade to 2024.
- £59m to be invested in railway construction in the West Midlands. £40m to reinstate passenger services on the Okehampton-Exeter line.

Finance -

- Income tax, national insurance, and VAT are not being raised.
- Personal tax thresholds to freeze until next year. Including income, the inheritance tax thresholds, The pensions lifetime allowance, and the annual exempt amount in capital gains tax.

- In 2023, the rate of corporation tax, paid on company profits, will increase to 25%. Businesses with profits of £50,000 or less maintain the current rate of 19%.
- £20 a week universal credit uplift to continue for a further six months
- Working Tax Credit claimants to receive equivalent support with a one-off payment of £500.
- National Living Wage increased to £8.91 from April – an annual pay rise of almost £350 for someone working full time on the National Living Wage.
- £100m to set up a new HMRC tax fraud taskforce.
- Freeports with simple planning, infrastructure funding and cheaper customs in eight locations: East Midlands Airport, Felixstowe and Harwich, Humber, Liverpool City

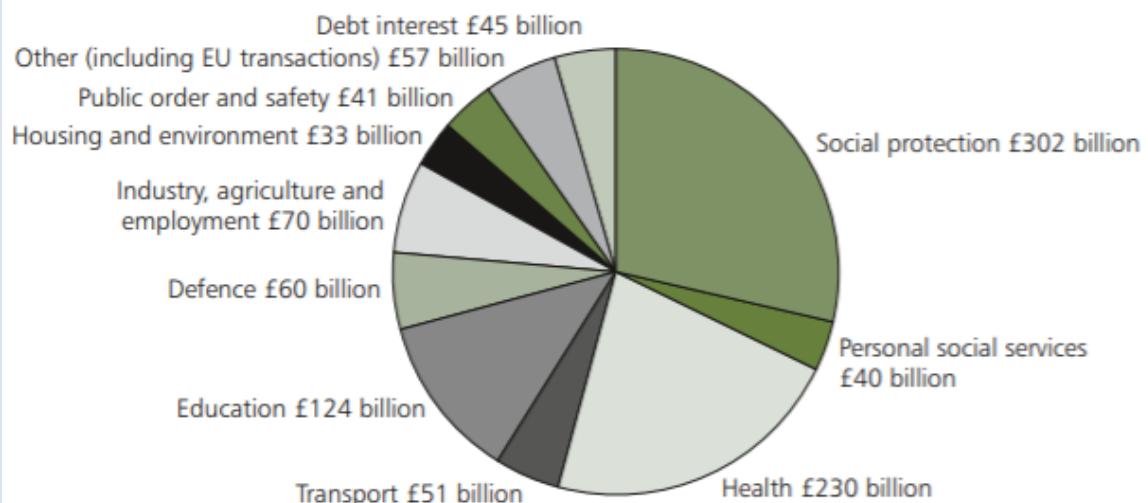
Crime -

- An extra £19m, on top of the £125m announced at the Spending Review – for domestic violence programmes, and to pilot 'Respite Rooms' for vulnerable women Region, Plymouth, Solent, Thames, and Teesside.

Other –

- Planned increase in fuel duty is also cancelled.
- All alcohol duties frozen for the second year in a row.
- Contactless card payment limits will increase for payments up to £100.
- £300m for continued support to major spectator sports.

Chart 1: Public sector spending 2021-22



Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Illustrative allocations to functions are based on HMT analysis including capital consumption figures from the Office for National Statistics.

Source: Office for Budget Responsibility and HM Treasury calculations.

- Modernisation of the immigration system to streamline the attraction and retention of the most highly skilled global talent, with a specific interest in academia, science, research and technology.

The chart below summarises government 2021-22 public spending by main function:

[Source: Office for Budget Responsibility and HM Treasury Calculations](#)

Essex Police Fraud Action System

Thefts from a doorstep are when a parcel that has been delivered to your home or business address is stolen from where it was left by the delivery driver. This is a growing trend across the country, as thieves take advantage of the opportunity to steal unattended parcels.

Consider reducing the risk of becoming a victim of doorstep theft by installing a video doorbell; this can be connected to your mobile so you are notified immediately of any delivery, and is easier to install than a full CCTV system.

For more advice on steps you can take to help secure your belongings, protect yourself and prevent becoming a victim of crime visit www.essex.police.uk/cp

For Crimes and suspicious activity NOW phone	999
For other non-urgent contact and reporting a crime that has already happened	101
Alternatively you can report non-urgent incidents or suspicious activity and crimes online at https://www.essex.police.uk/ and click on the appropriate button	
Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime where you should report fraud if you have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cyber-crime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. If you have been defrauded i.e. lost money phone or report online at https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime If someone has tried to defraud you but you have <u>not</u> lost money, phone or report online at https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing	0300 123 2040
CRIMESTOPPERS To give information anonymously phone or report it online at www.crimestoppers-uk.org	0800 555 111
<i>The information you provide is very important to us, so please make sure that we can use it effectively, by reporting it correctly through the proper channels. Thank you.</i>	

Return to school and testing

Southend's Director of Public Health is encouraging parents and carers to get their children tested to support the safe return of all school pupils from Monday 8 March 2021.

Krishna Ramkhelawon has urged all school aged pupils and their family to use the Borough's rapid testing sites ahead of the classrooms returning. This is to keep schools safe and protect the wider community from asymptomatic people, those without symptoms, from unknowingly spreading the virus.

Southend is one of the only authorities in the country to have set up a school-only LFD testing site to support schools, which is located at Southend Leisure and Tennis Centre in Eastern Avenue. There are also public community LFD testing sites at

University Square, Southend, St Aiden's Church in Leigh-on-Sea and Shoebury Youth Centre in Shoeburyness.

If your child travels into a Southend-on-Sea school but your family lives out of Borough, please check the website of your local authority for community testing sites near to your home before the return to school next week.

Once the schools have reopened to all pupils, schools will be running their own programmes, but the council is supporting them. As part of this, St John Ambulance have kindly agreed to provide four mobile testing sites to use at three secondary schools, to support the school testing programme and keep them Covid-safe.

Community testing staff will run the units, alongside staff from Southend United Community and Educational Trust who will be going to each mobile testing unit, Monday to Friday to marshal and support the children and school.

There will be a number of ways that children can access tests depending whether they are in secondary or further education and based on which school they attend.

Krishna Ramkhelawon, director of public health, said: "This is important for the safety of the children, the staff, every family and the wider community. Over the last few months we have increased capacity at our asymptomatic testing sites, for people who are continuing to work in the community but are not displaying any of the Covid-19 symptoms, such as a temperature, new continuous cough and loss of taste or smell. As education settings reopen, it is important we try and protect as many people in our community as possible."

Parents are encouraged to check the website of their child's education setting for more details.

We are encouraging all school-aged children to take an asymptomatic test at one of the following sites which are open seven days a week and accessible to all. You can book a test at www.southend.gov.uk/gettested or simply turn up.

For trusted information about Coronavirus, please visit:
www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus

This is the letter from Krishna Ramkhelawon, director of public health for Southend-on-Sea, NOT in full:

Dear Parents/Carers,

Returning to school and Covid-19 testing for pupils

I am writing to you as your local Director of Public Health to let you know about the increase in Covid-19 testing in the Borough, to support the safe return of all schools from Monday 8 March 2021.

We have been carrying out a programme of community asymptomatic testing (for people not experiencing any symptoms) for many weeks now, which is helping to

reduce the risk of people without symptoms, unknowingly spreading the virus to others in the community.

To keep schools safe and protect the wider community, I am encouraging pupils of all ages to get a rapid LFD test before they return to school from next week. I also strongly encourage anyone they live with to also get a test to make sure that anyone who may be infectious does not come to school with the virus and potentially start an outbreak.

If your child attends an education setting in Southend-on-Sea but your family lives outside of the Borough, please visit your relevant local authority website to find out more about their own community testing programme.

2) Temporary Road Closures

Friars Street, Southend-On-Sea – 4th March 2021 for 1 week - Emergency Water Repairs

To facilitate emergency water repairs; they have imposed a PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC in FRIARS STREET SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

Whilst this notice is in operation, all vehicles will be prohibited from:

ENTERING & EXITING FRIARS STREET AT IT JUNCTION WITH WAKERING AVENUE

These prohibitions or restrictions came into effect on **4th March 2021**. It is anticipated that the works will last **for 1 week**.

Whilst this section of Friars Street is closed, an alternative route for traffic will be marked on site and resident's access will be maintained where possible.

CityFibre Schedule of Works

Please find below the list of roads where CityFibre will be working in next week.

CF Permit Reference	Road Name	Scheduled start	Scheduled End Date
KG027SE-FTTH-PN071-07	Burges Road	16/02/2021	13/04/2021
KG027SE-FTTH-PN005-02	Marcus Chase	24/02/2021	09/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH-PN06-08	Eastern Esplanade	24/02/2021	09/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH-PN006-BL3	Kensington Road	05/03/2021	09/03/2021

KG027SE-FTTH- PN081-BL2	Chelsworth Crescent	08/03/2021	10/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH- PN081-BL4	Thurlow Drive	09/03/2021	11/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH- PN071-BL2	Lynton Road	10/03/2021	12/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH- PN080-11	Greenways	11/03/2021	15/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH- PN006-BL4	Shaftesbury Avenue	11/03/2021	15/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH- PN06-11	Chelsea Avenue	11/03/2021	15/03/2021
KG027SE-FTTH- PN081-BL3	Wyatts Drive	11/03/2021	15/03/2021

3) A127 Major Works (A127 & the Bell Junction)

A127 The Bell Junction Improvement - Rochford Road weekend road closure from 19 March 2021

Deep drainage works are required to be undertaken to connect with the existing drainage system in Rochford Road. This requires the section of Rochford Road near the A127 junction to be closed in both directions, and also requires A127 Southend bound lane one to be closed at the junction.

This work is being undertaken over the weekend from 8pm Friday 19 March to 6:30 Monday 22 March to minimise disruption to drivers. Residents and businesses directly affected by the closure will be provided access to their properties.

This closure is for the safety of drivers and the workforce and are subject to weather, progress on site and Covid-19 restrictions.

A diversion route will be in place and drivers will be advised of the works via variable message signs, local traffic management signs, twitter and bettersouthend website.

Local residents, businesses and stakeholders will be informed shortly via letter drop.

4) List of Applications Registered Week Ending 5th March 2021

Application Number: 21/00267/ADV

Ward: Southchurch

Officer: Robert Lilburn

Erect a 1.8m two sided advertisement board (Retrospective)

New Wick Farm Wakering Road Southend-On-Sea

Application Number: 21/00272/FULH
Officer: Kara Elliott
Extend existing vehicle crossover onto Barnstaple Close
11 Barnstaple Close Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Southchurch

Application Number: 21/00275/FULH
Officer: Oliver Hart
Erect first floor side extension (amended proposal)
33 Willingale Way Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Southchurch

Application Number: 21/00328/FULH
Officer: Oliver Hart
Erect first floor rear extension, install dormers to front, sides and rear to form habitable accommodation in the roofspace
1 Burlescoombe Road Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Southchurch

Application Number: 21/00331/FULH
Officer: Kara Elliott
Erect single storey side and rear extension
27 Branscombe Square Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Southchurch

Application Number: 21/00342/FULH
Officer: Kara Elliott
Erect single storey rear extension and porch to front, convert garage into habitable accommodation and render all external elevations (amended proposal)
120 Barnstaple Road Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Southchurch

Application Number: 21/00348/FULH
Officer: Oliver Hart
Erect single storey side and rear extension, layout raised patio to rear and alter front elevation
8 Burlescoombe Road Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Southchurch

Application Number: 21/00332/FULH
Officer: Kara Elliott
Demolish rear part of garage and form new pitched roof over, erect single storey rear extension
35 Parkanaur Avenue Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Thorpe

Application Number: 21/00355/FULH
Officer: Kara Elliott
Erect single storey side and rear extension (amended proposal)
11 Woodgrange Close Thorpe Bay Essex

Ward: Thorpe

Application Number: 21/00354/FULH
Officer: Kara Elliott
Erect single storey front extension and alter elevations (Amended Proposal)
8 Fitzwarren Shoeburyness Southend-On-Sea

Ward: West Shoebury

5) List of Decisions Issued **Week Ending 28th February 2021**

APPLN. NO: 20/01889/FULH

Ward. Thorpe

Officer: Oliver Hart

CONVERT LOFT TO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION, INCREASE HEIGHT OF EXISTING GARAGE AND EXTEND TO FRONT AND ALTER ELEVATIONS

532 WOODGRANGE DRIVE SOUTHEND-ON-SEA ESSEX

Decision: Grant Conditional Permission

APPLN. NO: 20/02197/FULH

Ward. Thorpe

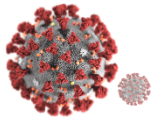
Officer: Oliver Hart

ERECT PART SINGLE/PART TWO STOREY EXTENSION TO FRONT, ERECT PART SINGLE/PART TWO STOREY EXTENSION TO SIDES/REAR, INSTALL ROOF LANTERN TO REAR AND ALTER ELEVATIONS

14 ELM GROVE THORPE BAY ESSEX

Decision: Grant Conditional Permission

6) Coronavirus Information



Officials hunt Brazil variant case in England

Health officials in England are trying to trace one of six UK patients who has been infected with a contagious COVID-19 variant first found in Brazil. Three cases of the P1 variant were identified in Scotland and three in England earlier this month, but one case in England remains unidentified. Anyone without a result from a test on 12 or 13 February is asked to come forward.

Extra £1.6bn for COVID-19 vaccine rollout

The UK's vaccination rollout is to receive an additional £1.65 billion in the Budget to help it reach its target of offering a first dose to every adult by 31 July. The Chancellor will also announce £22 million will be used in a trial to see if mixing different vaccine doses works.

Over-40s vaccines rollout on track to begin this month

People aged over 40 will start being called for COVID-19 jabs this month, it is understood. Health officials are about to send out the final batch of invitations to those over the age of 60 and next week the programme will then move to offer jabs to around five million people in their 50s.

Summary of Covid-19 related Government announcements 26th February – 1st March 2021

The Health Secretary led today's COVID-19 press conference. Key points include:

New research on vaccine effectiveness, and how the it is saving lives:

- New cases falling, rate of decline slowed.
- Hospitalisations falling fast – especially in older age groups.
- Death numbers are falling faster than in first peak, especially on over-80s.
- Vaccine gap emerging between older and younger groups.
- First dose of Oxford-Az or Pfizer reduced hospitalisations by 80%+ in the over 70s.
- 94% of those eligible have accepted the vaccine.
- UK health officials are trying to trace one individual infected with the Brazil P1 variant.

Government Equalities Office has published:

New report on the second quarter to the PM and Health Secretary on progress to understand and tackle disparities experienced by individuals from an ethnic minority background.

DHSC has published:

- Updated Advice for pregnant employees on risk assessments in the workplace and occupational health. Updated the link to RCOG and RCM guidance on infection and pregnancy. Under 'Background', added that the government has published the 'COVID-19 response – Spring 2021' setting out the roadmap out of the current lockdown for England, and that from 8 March some of the rules on what you can and cannot do will be changing.
- New information on who is eligible for twice-weekly testing and how to get tested if you do not have symptoms. This guidance is for people without symptoms.
- New advice that whole families and households with primary school, secondary school and college age children, including childcare and support bubbles, will be able to test themselves twice every week from home as schools return from 8 March. Tests can easily be ordered and collected from local sites, or administered through workplace testing programmes.

Cabinet Office has published:

New guidance that individual activists will be able to campaign outdoors in a COVID-secure way from 8 March, ahead of the English local elections in May.

Home Office has published:

Updated advice for visa customers and applicants in the UK, visa customers outside of the UK and British nationals overseas who need to apply for a passport affected by travel restrictions associated with coronavirus. Amended 'If you're in the UK'

section, updating exceptional assurance visa or leave expiry dates to between 1 March 2021 and 31 March 2021.

Summary of Covid-19 related Government announcements 2nd March 2021

PHE

In an announcement yesterday, PHE submitted a pre-print report that shows that both the Pfizer and Ox-Az vaccines are highly effective in reducing COVID-19 infections among people aged 70+.

DoHSC

- In a press release, responsibility for the Vaccine Taskforce is to move jointly to the DHSC and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- Guidance for care home providers is published on limiting staff movement between settings in all but exceptional circumstances. The guidance sets out what's expected of providers on the routine movement of staff.
- Additional surge testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to a targeted area within Merton (Wimbledon Park) and Barnet (East Finchley).

MHCLG

A summary is published of data (round 9) collected from councils on the financial impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

Department for Environment, Food, Rural Affairs

A letter is published to industries registered in England about free coronavirus tests for staff who cannot work from home.

DfT

In a news story, the Global Travel Taskforce met to map out safe return to international travel. The taskforce will provide a report on 12 April to help determine when and how to resume safe international travel no earlier than 17 May. The decision on when international travel can resume will be dependent on:

- the global and domestic epidemiological picture
- the prevalence and location of any 'variants of concern'
- the progress of vaccine rollouts here and abroad
- what more the government has learned about the efficacy of vaccines on variants, and the impact on transmission, hospitalisation and deaths

DfE

- Is seeking views on draft guidance to generate the evidence used to determine grades this summer. Heads of centre, heads of department and teachers have until 23:45 on 11 March to respond to the consultation.

- Examples of good practice are published where FE providers have delivered remote and blended learning.

Guidance is updated on safe working in education, childcare, and children's social care to align with guidance for schools, specialist settings, early years, further education and higher education. Updates include:

- advice on the use and disposal of face coverings in settings
- advice on the areas in which cleaning should be enhanced
- advice on how to consider minimising contact and maintaining social distancing wherever possible
- guidance on ventilation
- guidance on asymptomatic testing
- advice on organising transport for children

A webinar is being hosted at 12pm on 5 March to provide secondary schools and colleges with an update on rapid testing and the move to testing at home. Students will still need to do 3 tests on-site, before moving to home-testing. Sign-up: <http://bit.ly/RapidTestingWebinar>.

Summary of Covid-19 related Government announcements 3rd March 2021

HM Revenue and Customs

- Updated guidance: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme extended until 30 September 2021. From 1 July, the level of grant will be reduced each month and employers will be asked to contribute towards the cost of furloughed staff.
- Announced new one off £500 payment for working households receiving tax credit.
- Updated guidance on Self Employment income support scheme fourth grant between February 2021 – April 2021.
- Updated guidance on tax changes for when a person is no longer eligible for Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Payments.
- Published policy paper on Income Tax and COVID support scheme for working households receiving tax credits.

HM Treasury

Budget announcement: The Chancellor delivered his Budget to Parliament:

- Total fiscal support £407bn included confirming the extension of the furlough scheme and support for self-employed until September 2021, business grants, loans and VAT cuts.
- £4.8bn for Levelling Up Fund, creation of new Freeports in England.
- Support for businesses: Business rates relief, VAT reductions for tourism and hospitality, VAT deferral scheme, new Business Loan scheme, Restart grants and £435m discretionary business grant funding for councils to contribute.

- Further detailed summary will be shared by Policy Team
- Announced Recovery Loan Scheme of up to £10m to support access to finance for businesses after existing COVID loan scheme closes.

DoHSC

In an oral statement to Parliament, Health Secretary spoke about the impact of vaccine roll out and efforts to contain new variant

MHCLG:

- Announced additional £220m to UK Community Renewal Fund to help prepare for the launch of UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2020.
- Deadline for 2021 Windrush Day Grant Scheme will be until 10 March 2021.

DfE

- Published workforce planning tool to support the number of staff required for on-site testing and indicates the level of funding schools will be entitled to.
- Published local authority survey findings on vulnerable children and young people impact wave 1 to 19.

DfT

Published guidance for taxis and PHVs safety screens to protect themselves, workers and passengers

BEIS

Published privacy notice for people who deal with BEIS in connection with financial production provided under COVID-19 loan Scheme

Webinar

Vaccine communications and international coronavirus webinar hosted by the Local Government Association (LGA) at 10.30am 11 March 2021. The webinar will focus on how councils and public sector partners can increase vaccine take-up.

Summary of Covid-19 related Government announcements 4th March 2021

A £100m fund has been announced to help those living with obesity to lose weight:

- Of which £70m will be invested into weight management services – made available through the NHS and councils including access to digital apps, weight management groups, individual coaches and specialist clinical support.

DfE is asking schools to share information on safe journeys to school and includes:

- Active travel, avoiding car shares, plan ahead for public transport use and when to wear face coverings.

Materials to support the campaign are available

Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI have published the latest results from their infections study:

- Infections fell by two-thirds from the January report, with 1 in 204 people infected.
- The report shows a halving time of 31 days and an R number of 0.86.
- While there has been another fall in the number of cases in England, the speed of this decline is slowing.

- END -