

ERF weekly briefing note

wc 23 March 2020

The Essex Resilience Forum Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) was put into action to provide coordination and alignment for member services in Essex.

The SCG is chaired by Chief Constable BJ Harrington, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Rick Hylton and the Chief Executive of Essex County Council, Gavin Jones. The three Chairs rotate responsibility each week to provide resilience.

Current SCG Chair – Rick Hylton, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

The purpose of the SCG is to:

- Minimise the risk to the public by assisting Public Health to contain the spread of the virus and to support the contact tracing
- Maximise, where practicable, the safety of our staff and partners by providing advice and appropriate PPE where necessary
- Ensure business continuity plans are in place to enable the provision of key services and continued delivery of essential services to the public
- To reassure the public by supporting Public Health guidance and Public Health messages
- To ensure that community tension and intelligence/information is being effectively managed through the strategic co-ordinating group and existing structures
- To support Local Resilience Forum partner agencies and local communities to mitigate the impacts of the virus
- To ensure a coordinated approach to any arrivals to UK (By Air or Sea) of persons who pose a Public Health risk arising from Covid-19
- To promote a return to business as usual and restoration of disrupted services at the earliest opportunity

To support the work of the SCG and provide consistency of messaging a Multi Agency Information Cell has been formed which provides daily updates from all of the Services on who COVID-19 is impacting in Essex. The report covers a UK Update, Health, East of England Ambulance Service, Essex Police – Including Community Tensions, Essex Fire and Rescue Service, Ports, Southend Borough Council, Essex Council (Covering all 12 districts) and Thurrock Council.

We have an established joined up multi-agency approach in place, that is delivering against the expectations of the government. Our SCG is meeting twice-weekly, and coordinating the plans and response for Essex. This means we are working together, keeping everyone across Essex as safe as we can, and providing the most up-to-date information as possible.

SCG work streams/tactical groups

- **Excess Death Planning** - end to end and inclusive excess death plan group established
- **Education** – consistent approach by the Directors of Children’s Services across Essex
- **Shielding the vulnerable** - following the announcement of the 1.5million people in the UK (approx. 28,000 in Essex), Gavin Jones (ECC Chief Exec) is leading on this piece of work for Essex
- **Care Provision – Adults & Children** – coordinated approach between heads of adult social care across Essex.
- **PPE** - PPE is in stock and being delivered to high risk areas – as a pan Essex approach. This remains an issue for whole of system
- **Licensing**
- **MOD Support Officer** x 3 military officers are now supporting and testing the plans of the forum.

Partner updates

Essex County Council

Essex County Council has today announced a further £18.6m of funding to increase residential care capacity during the COVID-19 emergency
Increasing the number of residential beds available will help free up urgently needed space within the NHS and local hospitals.

The global outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) is affecting the UK. The number of cases has grown significantly since early March and the frail and elderly are the most vulnerable. The health and care sectors are significantly affected and face high demand and pressures on workforce due to COVID-19 related absences.

The council is taking steps to ensure maximum flexibility to procure care home beds as well as exploring other facilities to support this drive.

Essex Police

Following the announcement from the Prime Minister (23 March), the government has confirmed that Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers, **with police support if appropriate**, will work together to issue prohibition notices challenging unsafe behaviours where businesses do not follow these restrictions.

Environmental Health and Trading Standards officers will monitor compliance, and businesses who fail to comply can also receive fines. Continued non-compliance could then lead to the loss of alcohol licenses.

Essex Police's primary role during this difficult time will be to save lives, respond to emergency calls and provide reassurance to the community.

Essex Police's four key principles are protecting **Victims** and the **Vulnerable**, dealing with **Violent** offenders and providing a **Visible**, reassuring presence within the community. We will:

- Take primacy where we believe there is an identified risk. For example, public order offences are occurring or likely to occur.
- Forward any information regarding any breaches to the relevant Local Authority to enforce.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

- There is currently **NO CHANGE** to the way we respond to operational incidents.
- Keeping people who live, work and travel in Essex safe is our priority. We will continue to be there for them in an emergency.
- We know a huge challenge lies ahead of us, which is why we are already looking at using **operational staff who are not currently on frontline duty to provide resilience if needed**.
- As you know, we're **reducing non-essential public interaction** and more of us are remote working than ever.
- **We're making sacrifices, but not at the expense of upholding our emergency service.**
- We are providing home safety advice over the phone apart from where there is considered a life risk.
- We know that with more people staying at home, there is a chance of an increase in accidental house fires. We are already increasing our safety messaging on this as well as our home safety phone number **0300 303 0088**

Southend Council

- Our new Business Continuity planning is now in operation with only an essential skeleton team working at the Civic Centre from today (Monday 23 March) to maintain business critical work whilst enforcing social distancing, including proximity of seating and infection control around cleaning work spaces. The majority of staff are now working from home.
- Working with the NHS to further develop our local modelling for acute hospital services and workforce planning. We will also be looking at how we support safe hospital discharge planning.
- The dedicated public facing link at www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus is being regularly updated and added to by the Communications Team. Please check this regularly and use to update local residents.
- Our external communications also include ongoing direct engagement with schools, the hospital and CCG, and local businesses for example. We are working closely with the hospital through our adult social care and hospital social work teams.
- The supply and distribution of personal protective equipment is being reviewed.
- Health Visiting service to support new births and safeguarding is now agreed across Greater Essex.

Thurrock Council

Thurrock Council priority is the health, safety and well-being of their residents, businesses and staff.

We will follow guidance provided by the government and Public Health England while working to continue providing public services. Some services will be affected, however, especially in places where residents usually gather together.

- Health Visiting service to support new births and safeguarding is now agreed across Greater Essex
- National communication messages are being shared via all Thurrock Council channels – Members can follow Public Health England (@PHE_uk) and the council (@thurrockcouncil) on Twitter and Facebook, and share social media messages. Specific council service changes are included in the Daily Briefing and press releases.
- Stronger Together Partnership – a plan is being developed by the end of the week as to how they assist elderly and those most

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/coronavirus>

www.southend.gov.uk/coronavirus

[https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About Us/Coronavirus/](https://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/About_Us/Coronavirus/)

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/government-and-health-information>