

**Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)**  
**Briefing for Breckland Council elected members (7 July 2021)**

**Purpose of the note: To ensure members are aware of the plans that are being put in place to ensure that Breckland is prepared, as far as possible, to respond to the impact of coronavirus.**

**Contents**

<b>1. Recent Government advice/action .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Supporting businesses and employees .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Community Support .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. Breckland service updates .....</b>	<b>5</b>

**1. Recent Government advice/action**

**New: Prime Minister sets out plan to ease restrictions at step 4**

COVID restrictions are set to end in England from [step 4 of the Roadmap](#) after the Prime Minister set out how life will soon return close to normal.

**New: Most vulnerable could be offered booster COVID-19 vaccines from September**

[Booster vaccines](#) will be offered with the aim of ensuring protection from COVID-19 is maintained ahead of winter and against new variants.

**New: JCVI issues interim advice on COVID-19 booster vaccination**

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has been asked to consider the options for a [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) booster programme](#).

**New: Final Covid loans data reveals a £80 billion in government support through the pandemic.**

Businesses were supported through the pandemic with [nearly £80 billion of emergency government-backed loans](#), final figures published by HM Treasury reveal.

**New: Celebrities get back to the ‘Rhythm of Life’ in new film supporting COVID-19 vaccination programme**

Celebrities, including David Walliams, Jim Broadbent, Russel Tovey, Nicola Roberts and Asa Butterfield, have come together [in a new film](#) to encourage people to get COVID-19 vaccines.

**New: UK exceeds 600,000 COVID-19 tests genomically sequenced**

Genomic sequencing has made a crucial contribution to the fight against the virus by rapidly [identifying variants of concern](#), understanding transmission and slowing their spread.

**New: Health Secretary writes Mail on Sunday article**

The Health and Social Care Secretary has written an opinion piece in the [Mail on Sunday](#) about the current state of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

**New: Weekly national flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports published**

[Latest weekly national figures](#) for influenza and COVID-19 have been released, monitoring coronavirus (COVID-19) activity, seasonal flu, and other seasonal respiratory illnesses.

## 2. Supporting businesses and employees

### **Reminder** – if you know a business that needs support:

Please ask them to engage via <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/businesssupport> or [regeneration@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@breckland.gov.uk)

We have now issued almost £50m in financial support since the start of the pandemic, and whilst many Covid-related grant schemes are coming to a close, we still want to find support for any Breckland business in need. So please do flag any known issues to us.

### **Restart Grants**

We have been able to pay businesses who meet the national eligibility for “Restart” Grants and have issued over £6.5m of grant monies, and believe all eligible businesses have now relieved support.

The application closing date for the Restart Grant was end of June 2021.

Businesses who have not previously received support will also be able to engage via our single web form, and we will match against eligibility via: <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/article/16267/Covid-19-Business-Grant>

### **Additional Restrictions Grants – Breckland’s discretionary policy.**

We have now completed our allocation, ahead of the Government’s deadline for spend. Awards from Breckland total almost £4m, supporting almost 1,000 businesses.

We are anticipating a further allocation of discretionary monies in July, which will initially be used to continue our Spring Back programme (below) and are reviewing what additional support which might be delivered to support the wider recovery.

### **Updated: Spring Back Business Support Programme**

Our “Spring Back” Programme is fully operational to support Breckland businesses who may now access a further £2m of support, our grants schemes are proving popular:

- **Shop Front Improvement Scheme** – investing in the biggest ever “Spring Clean” across the district. Any businesses based in Breckland’s primary shopping areas, or any customer facing business, will be able to get financial support for improvements and enhancements to their shop frontage – from a lick of paint through to a replacement frontage.

To date grants have been approved to 25 businesses totalling £51,000 with further applications progressing forward.

- **Covid Safe and Adaptions Grants** – helping businesses shoulder the burden of trading in a Covid-safe way and meet the challenges of serving under restrictions. Grants of up to £5k will be available to invest in safety; or change business practices. From extra PPE and screens, through to a new marquee or outdoor seating.

To date grants have been paid to 35 businesses totalling just over £106,000 with further applications progressing forward.

- **Digital Breckland** – building on the highly successful scheme – Breckland Digital High Streets enabling any Breckland-based business to get support for their digital offer, with grants towards making key digital changes from a new payment system, through to search engine optimisation.

To date grants have been paid to 99 businesses totalling just over £239,000 with further applications progressing forward.

- **Expanded enterprise and start-up scheme** – having already created 14 new businesses since Christmas, we are looking to grow the pipeline of new innovative businesses further. With finance and advice for new entrepreneurs looking to start-up locally. To date grants have been paid to 21 businesses totalling just over £109,000 with a further £113,000 allocated to applications progressing forward. In addition, this week 3 new business consultations have taken place. Also, we have assisted with 7 business support queries regarding premises required, funding availability, or assistance with identifying local trader which can do work required for a new business unit or grounds works.
- The **Spring back grant program** is currently unable to release awards while we await further government funding. These schemes remain open to new applications, and we continue to process them in anticipation of further funding becoming available from government.

#### **Updated: Growth Programme**

**Town Delivery Plans – the ‘Future Breckland’ Project** - This year-long-project is designed to be a significant undertaking, helping Breckland bounce back from the challenges of Covid-19 and build a strong and sustainable economy for the future. To shape these plans, the team will be holding engagement sessions with key stakeholders across the district, public online workshops, and activities in each town to invite residents to highlight the best of their town and areas of focus. The team will be focusing on developing a plan for Dereham over the next few months, with work to follow for the remaining four market towns. Each engagement period for each town will last for around 6 weeks

The Dereham intervention workshop has been held and was attended by over 40 people on the 17th June. After a programme of engagement, detailed in this report, the first draft of the Dereham Town Delivery Plan is due to be submitted and published for public feedback at the end of July.

The next phases of the project have now been decided and will be as follows:

- Phase 2 (July – Nov): Watton and Swaffham
- Phase 3 (Nov – March): Thetford and Attleborough

Online surveys for Watton and Swaffham are now live on dedicated web pages for each town at <https://www.breckland.gov.uk/Future-Breckland>

Further details on the project are available on the [website](#).

Any questions can be addressed to the Project Team on [tdps@breckland.gov.uk](mailto:tdps@breckland.gov.uk)

### **Snetterton Growth**

- We are working with UKPN on their recent quotation to reach an agreed construction cost and programme.
- In conjunction with Greater Southeast Energy Hub (Govt. funded advisors) we are exploring the possibilities of existing businesses installing solar panels on their roofs to supplement the existing power network.

### **Housing Development**

- **Thetford HIF** - We have received Balfour Beatty's commercial offer for the new primary substation and are undertaking a detailed review which will take several weeks to conclude.
- **Rural Exception sites** - Currently enabling 6 rural exception sites and work started on focussed project on targeting parishes for a scheme.
- **Extra Care** - Working with Norfolk County Council to enable the delivery of extra care scheme in Thetford and Dereham (affordable rent and shared ownership).
- **Retrofitting** - Working with Registered Providers we have requested £520k from Energy Hub to retrofit homes for Flagship, Broadland, Orbit and Clarion. Allocated pot of £447k.
- **Community led housing** – holding initial talks with community groups interested in developing own and local housing solutions

## **3. Community Support**

### **Reminder: Residents urged to come forward for their vaccination**

People in Breckland – and beyond – are being reminded that it is not too late to receive their vaccination. Vaccinations are available for these eligible groups:

- Those aged **18+** and the **Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)**
- **Carers** aged 16+ (paid and unpaid) and **health and social care workers**
- People aged 16+ who **share a household with someone who has severe**

**immunosuppression.**

You can book a vaccination appointment via the [NHS national booking service](#) online or by calling 119 (free), between 7am and 11pm seven days a week.

In addition, a number of walk in vaccination clinics are available across Norfolk and Waveney without appointment. The sites are regularly updated – you can check the latest list on the [Norfolk and Waveney CCG website](#).

You do **NOT** need to show identification (ID) to receive a COVID-19 vaccination and you do not need to give your full name or address. It does not matter whether you are a UK citizen or what your immigration status is, how long you have been here or how long you expect to stay.

If you don't have an NHS number or are not registered with a GP / local doctor, you can still get vaccinated. If you **DO** have an NHS number please take it with you – this will help the vaccination team book you in quickly. You can look up your [NHS number online](#).

#### 4. Breckland service updates

##### **New:** Crackdown on flytipping continues

Breckland continues to tackle flytipping across the district. Recently, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) was issued for littering in Garveston after a passenger discarded litter from a car. Two FPNs were issued to one person totalling £600 for conducting 2 fly-tips and they were required to send apology letter. A further 30 cases are currently being investigated.

##### **Reminder:** Play area remains closed

The play area on Sandy Lane in Dereham is currently closed while defective play equipment is investigated.

##### **NEW:** Covid-safe activity continues

- We now have 147 business premises with Covid Safe Scheme accreditation, with numbers growing rapidly.
- Covid Support Officers helped patrol the Watton Antique & Collectors Fair on July 4. Good feedback from stall holders and event organisers was received and compliance was good.
- With the ongoing football success, copies of Euro Guidance has been sent to relevant licensed premises. The team has been working with pubs etc to ensure steps are taken to keep customers safe (Eg. seating groups separately outside)
- Covid Night Patrols and visits to close contact services has been stepped up

**Breckland Council**  
**07.07.21**