

Dear colleague,

This past week will certainly be a week I will remember for a long time!

The resilience, professionalism and tenacity of this Council, and myself personally, has certainly been tested and stretched to the limit over the last few weeks, but as always “Team Caerphilly” continues to shine brightly through.

The events of the past few days have really brought this collective dedication into sharp focus. As you know, the restrictions that were imposed on the county borough at 6pm on Tuesday evening were in response to an alarming ‘spike’ in the number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the community. It was alarming to see how quickly the virus was spreading across the county borough and it was clear that strict interventions were needed quickly, in order to combat the spread any further.

Our residents - and no doubt all of you too - are understandably very concerned and anxious about these ongoing developments, so we are working hard with our partners in Public Health Wales, Welsh Government and the Health Board to offer advice, clarity and reassurance about the current position. The approach that we are taking with our partners is to engage, educate and enforce. It is so important to ensure that these requirements are complied with.

It’s still early days in terms of the restrictions, but it’s good to see that compliance within the community seems to be high and this is obviously very encouraging. The number of cases is being monitored daily, but it is important to note that it will take a few weeks for the restrictions to take effect, so we expect our numbers to increase before they begin to level off.

The two coronavirus testing centres have been experiencing very high demand over recent days and I can confirm that plans are in place to establish a third site in the northern part of the county borough shortly. This testing regime is an important aspect in the ongoing efforts to track and trace the virus in order to stop the spread. However, it is expected that these local testing stations will be with us only for a short time and the testing stations within the locality will serve our residents thereafter.

New Wales-wide restrictions have been announced by Welsh Government today (the ‘rule of six’), but it is important to note that **these new guidelines do not apply to our county borough** as we already have our own stricter restrictions in place.

It is clear that we need to redouble our efforts if we are to emerge from these new restrictions in the shortest time possible, but this will only happen if we all do our bit to tackle this deadly virus.

Next Monday I will be setting out what these restrictions mean to us in the work environment. It is important that you recognise in advance that what I will be setting out in my letter to you will be a requirement, as we too must adhere to the regulations.

It is important that we lead by example and I appeal to you all to act as ambassadors and ensure we all follow the new guidelines to the letter. We all have an individual and a collective responsibility to protect our people and our place and I know I can count on you to lead by example.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly.

I know we are experiencing uncertain times and some of you may be anxious and concerned. If you have any questions or concerns, please do contact your line manager or colleagues within HR. We are all here to help one another. So, please try not to worry and please stay safe.

Don't forget, you truly are amazing and I'm confident we can kick this awful virus into touch together.

Take care

Christina