

## Cllr Kim Forward weekly vlog 08.01.2020

Hi, it's Kim here leader of Hastings Borough Council. It is very sad that 2021 has started in much the same way that 2020 finished with very high virus infection rates in our town. Our thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones.

We are now in a second national lockdown until at least the middle of February, with a clear message to stay at home and only go out where there is an essential, valid reason to do so. Now more than ever if we do leave our homes, we must keep our distance from others, wear a face covering and wash our hands regularly. This is how we can keep ourselves and our family and friends as safe as possible and how we protect those who can't work from home. We all rely on our key workers for vital services and we need to help them to stay well.

The Sussex Resilience Forum (of which the council is a member) has declared a major incident in relation to the growing concerns around capacity to manage our collective response to the pandemic as the situation evolves.

Schools and colleges are closed to all but our vulnerable children and those of key workers. Well done to all the parents and carers who are once again doing their best to educate their children at home through online learning and to the teachers and other school staff who are working hard to enable this. Please contact your child's school if you are having difficulty with online learning because you don't have the equipment or access to the internet that you need.

The new year at the council means budget and corporate plan consultation time, and although this work has been also been impacted by the pandemic, our proposals will be published on our website on Monday [www.hastings.gov.uk](http://www.hastings.gov.uk) where you can comment on our proposals.

Last year the council agreed its corporate plan until 2024 and then Covid-19 arrived with unprecedented impacts for us all. We have updated the key activities in the plan for 2021/22 to reflect our significant new commitments as well as our continued intention to provide key services that local people need. Our vision and priorities in the corporate plan remain the same even though we face an ever more challenging and uncertain financial position.

It is true that the council has received significant additional funding from central government because of Covid but we have paid out very large sums too; for example, in emergency food support, staffing the community hub and providing temporary accommodation for the most vulnerable.

Our income has been greatly reduced as well for example in lower car parking income and far fewer cliff railway passengers.

We had been facing the most challenging financial period before the pandemic and now we have even higher levels of financial uncertainty, which is why the budget-setting process is more important than ever.

Towards the end of January, we will also be consulting on our new local plan which guides how and where development can take place within the town. The details will be on our website.

Although we are in lockdown the Active Hastings team are doing their best to help keep us fit by running a variety of online classes throughout the week and details are on our website or their social media pages.

As we start the year facing more challenges our community hub is still here for you. Please call 01424 451019 if you need urgent support, or you can fill out the form on our website.

Let's all try to support each other to get through and continue to be kind and considerate. I wish you all a brighter new year, thanks for listening.