

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL WEEKLY ROUNDUP – 4 February 2022

Good afternoon,

This week, people across the country are anxiously waiting for more information about big increases in household energy bills that will affect millions of families. The energy regulator Ofgem is set to introduce a new price cap which will increase the maximum amount that suppliers can charge customers for each unit of energy they consume. The increase is linked to the rising wholesale price of gas and, as a result, a typical household is said to be facing an increase of more than £600 on their annual energy bill – this at a time when many families are already struggling due to the rising cost of living and the lingering financial impact of COVID-19.

In response to this surge in energy prices, the Government has announced further financial support for households in form of a new 'Council Tax Energy Rebate'. Once again, local authorities look set to play a critical role in the administration of this process, although we are yet to receive full details. This is welcome news for families but comes at a time when our Finance Team is already working extremely hard to administer Rutland's 'Household Support Fund', plus 'Omicron Hospitality, Leisure Grant' and 'Omicron Additional Restrictions Grant' schemes to support local businesses.

Whether it's support for businesses or families, you all have an important role to play in guiding people to the right information. We also need your help to manage expectations among residents who need this financial assistance. We are already flat-out and must ask for patience as we wait for more information from the Government and then put all the necessary processes in place. We don't yet know how long this will take but we will be working as quickly as possible, as we have done throughout the pandemic. Further information will be published on our website and through this briefing as soon as we have it, so please do pass on what we share and direct people online in the first instance.

Regards,
Mark

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1. COVID-19

a. Latest situation

As of 4.00pm on Thursday 3 February, 17,607,832 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the UK. Of those who have tested positive for coronavirus in the UK, 157,730 people have died across all settings within 28 days of a positive test.

As of 4.00pm on Thursday 3 February, 52,385,688 people in the UK have received their first dose vaccination and 48,494,414 have received their second dose vaccination. The national booster and third dose total is 37,419,104. These figures continue to be published on the government's daily dashboard:

coronavirus.data.gov.uk

Rutland recorded 377 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the period between 24 and 30 January, a decrease of 86 compared to the previous week. This equates to 931 cases per 100,000 people. The average area in England had 1,062.

As of 2 February, 89% of people in Rutland aged 12 and over had been given first doses of COVID vaccinations; 84% had received their second dose; 70% have had a booster or third dose.

A total of 83 coronavirus-related deaths were registered in Rutland up to 21 January.

b. Walk-in clinics for COVID boosters

COVID vaccinations (including the COVID Booster) are available at walk-in sites in Rutland on the following days:

- Saturday 5 February 2022 - Oakham Enterprise Park, 1pm-5.30pm. Age 12+, 1st, 2nd or 3rd dose, and boosters
- Monday 7 February 2022 - Oakham Enterprise Park, 1pm-5.30pm. Age 12+, 1st, 2nd or 3rd dose, and boosters
- Friday 11 February 2022 - Oakham Enterprise Park, 1pm-5.30pm. Age 12+, 1st, 2nd or 3rd dose, and boosters

Details of who is eligible to receive a COVID booster can be found online at:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/coronavirus-booster-vaccine

The latest information about COVID vaccination clinics across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland can be found online at: www.leicestercityccg.nhs.uk/my-health/coronavirus-advice/coronavirus-vaccine

2. WIDER COUNCIL OPERATIONS

a. Council Tax rebate announcement

The Government has announced that households in England which are in Council Tax bands A-D will receive a £150 rebate to help with the cost of increasing bills. The rebate is called a 'Council Tax Energy Rebate' and will be made directly by local authorities from April, rather than be a reduction on the Council Tax bill itself. This is good news for residents.

We have bank details of c70% of households. Whether we can use these details to issue the rebate or need to ask everyone to complete a form will need to be considered. At 2.20pm on Thursday (less than hours after this announcement was made) we had a resident visit the Council Offices to ask when it might be received. We would appreciate it if Elected Members and Parish Councils could encourage everyone to be patient, not contact the Council for information at this early stage and check our website for details. When we know more, we will let everyone know.

On top of this discount, discretionary funding of £144 million will also be provided to support vulnerable people and individuals on low incomes who do not pay Council Tax, or who pay Council Tax for properties in Bands E-H. Our share is unclear but will require us to create a policy and develop an application process. Again – to manage expectations and with the £150 payments taking priority – it is very unlikely that any payments under the latter discretionary scheme will be made before May.

b. Household Support Fund

Rutland County Council has been allocated £157k funding for the Household Support Fund. The fund aims to support vulnerable households in most need of support this winter with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting) water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials.

The Council has committed c£100k of this fund but those on low incomes can still apply via the link below. If you know anyone who has not applied but may need support then please let them know: www.rutland.gov.uk/householdsupportfund.

c. Annual budget consultation

Public consultation around Rutland County Council's latest draft budget will draw to a close next week.

The draft budget explains how much money is needed to run local services, where this funding will come from and what financial pressures the Council is facing.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to read the information that has been published alongside the Draft Budget and share their feedback before the closing date of Wednesday 9 February 2022. Full details can be found online at: www.rutland.gov.uk/budget.

d. Post 16 information event

A successful event targeted at Year10 and Year11 students with special educational needs was held at the Community Hub in Oakham last week. The event was attended by 15 young people along with their parents. The aim was to provide young people with the information they need to make an informed choice about Post 16 education and to set them on course for achieving their future aspirations.

This event was supported by Stamford and Brooksby Melton Colleges, where students can study a variety of more practical subjects in a supportive environment. Rutland Special Education Needs Co-ordinators (SENCoS) also attended, along with Council staff from Early Help, SEND, Youth Education and Transport to make sure families could gather all the information they needed.

One young person commented: *“I’m so glad I came as I didn’t know how many different courses there are at Stamford and Brooksby, and it was nice to meet the people, so I won’t be so anxious about going along to an open day now.”*

e. MOD Reducing Parent Conflict Training

Serving Military personnel attached to Unit Welfare Services and civilian personnel working in related Army federation and welfare services were welcomed to our ‘Reducing Parenting Conflict’ digital offer training in January.

One attendee commented: *“The training was excellent, and I don’t think anything needs to be changed or improved upon.”*

Following the session, the group facilitators were joined by the consultant from Amity Solutions, who will be developing a bespoke support package to the Ministry of Defence – recognising their unique risks of parental conflict and family stresses impacting on military life. This included an open forum session enabling us to learn more about the complexities of commitment to family and army alike and how this can contribute to parental conflict. Themes arising from the session included: cycles of deployments, training and promotion commitments, isolation from extended family networks, ‘first loyalties’ to family / the Army, stigma associated with ‘welfare’ for those requiring additional support, impact of overseas posting as well as practical considerations such as army accommodation locations, childcare availability and specialist support for children with disabilities and Special Educational Needs. Amity Solutions will use these themes to help underpin a bespoke response for families.

f. Anxiety parenting group – pilot launch

In January, Early Help will be trialling a three-session course for parents whose children experience anxiety. The course is designed to promote awareness around anxiety, understand its maintenance factors and the ways we can help children and young people manage anxiety through strategies which can be used within the family.

This course is built on the evidence-based practice and interventions of the IAPT service and aims to promote early intervention where children and young people are

beginning to demonstrate difficulties. Following a trial period this group will be available to Rutland parents. We are also pleased to be able to share this programme with well-being teams across LLR who are interested in offering evidence-based parent support groups.

g. NHS mental health support

Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) is developing promotional materials to let people know how to access support for their mental health.

The first element that has been shared is a 'Traffic Light Poster', which has been developed by partners in the system. It is designed to help people to understand the range of mental health support that is available to them in Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland.

We have been asked to share this poster throughout our local networks and encourage people to display it wherever possible. A digital PDF copy of the poster comes attached with this briefing.

h. Change to RF1 and RF2 bus services

Due to the local impact of national bus driver shortages, Centrebus have announced that they will be introducing a temporary reduced timetable for local RF1 and RF2 Saturday bus journeys. Weekday services are not affected by this and will remain unchanged.

Changes will come into effect from Saturday 5 February 2022 until further notice although it is hoped that they need only be in place until Easter at the latest. Further details can be found on the operator's website: www.centrebus.info/bus-services.

i. Notice of Election – Ryhall and Casterton

A Notice of Election has been published for the Office of Rutland County Councillor for the Ryhall and Casterton Ward.

Following receipt of a request from two local government electors, an election will be held to fill this vacancy on Thursday 10 March 2022. Further details can be found in the full Notice of Election, published online at: www.rutland.gov.uk/countyvacancies.

Nomination packs for candidates who would like to stand in this election are available from the Council's Elections Office. Anyone who would like to request a pack must first contact the Elections Office by phone, by calling: 01572 758 385 or 01572 720 907.

Nomination papers must be completed and delivered by hand to the Returning Officer at Rutland County Council, Catmose, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 6HP. Returns must be made between the hours of 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday following the date of the publication of the notice of election, but no later than 4pm on the Friday 11 February 2022.

3. GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING

a. This week

The following public meetings took place this week (w/c Monday 31 January).

- [Audit and Risk Committee, Tuesday 1 February](#)

b. Look ahead

The following meetings will take place next week (w/c Monday 7 February):

- [Employment and Appeals Committee, Tuesday 8 February](#)
- [Parish Clerk Liaison Meeting, Wednesday 9 February](#)
- [Growth, Infrastructure and Resources Scrutiny, Thursday 10 February](#)

The latest version of the [RCC Forward Plan](#) can be viewed online.

c. Weekly planning list

RCC's weekly planning list for w/c 31 January can now be viewed online:

- [Weekly List \(rutland.gov.uk\)](#)

d. Purdah guidance

Following publication of the Notice of Election for the Ryhall and Casterton County by-election, we need to make sure we observe the rules of Purdah, or the Pre-Election Period between the Notice of Election and the election itself (from 3 February to 10 March 2022). This will coincide with ongoing public consultation, particularly concerning the Budget and Council Tax.

More detailed guidance is available online through the Local Government Association's website: www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period

We have also summarised the key points that need to be considered below. However, the most important point to remember is that the normal business of the Council will continue during this period – meetings will be held, and decisions will be made.

Can do during Purdah

- Business as usual publicity with quotes from appropriate officers, not councillors
- Reactive publicity can include Councillors holding key political or civic positions if commenting in an emergency or a major news event outside the Council's control
- Councillors can create their own publicity
- Councillors can attend events arranged by other organisations, but the same restrictions apply about quoting them in any council publicity

- Decision-making will continue as usual, and the decisions will be publicised, subject to the restrictions about quotes

Proceed with caution during Purdah

- Councillors not involved in the election may be quoted only if no political favour to them
- The Council should avoid proactively scheduling events attracting public and media interest. Events that are unavoidable should not publicise individual councillors or their parties

Can't do during Purdah

- Councillors involved in the election will not be quoted in proactive news releases issued. Nor should they attend events organised by the Council that attract significant numbers of members of the public, or media interest
- No political posters or leaflets must be displayed on Council premises (including street furniture and the like) or vehicles

If you would like to discuss a specific event or issue, please contact the Monitoring Officer at: monitoringofficer@rutland.gov.uk.

4. STAFF NEWS

a. Leavers

We said goodbye to the following colleague this week:

- Samantha Digva, Assistant Care Manager - Prevention & Safeguarding
- Andrew Welbourn, Community Support Worker - Day Opportunities
- David Krupp, School Transport Driver

5. RCC IN THE NEWS

a. Press releases issued this week

- [Council issues Call for Sites as part of Rutland Local Plan process](#)
- [Changes to RF1 and RF2 Saturday bus services](#)
- [Notice of Election published for Ryhall and Casterton Ward](#)

ENDS