



# Buckinghamshire's response to Coronavirus

Leader, Martin Tett

July 2020



# Fighting coronavirus as one

- Collectively sprung into action to respond to the pandemic working as one before launching the new council
- The great preparation work for unitary meant we were in a strong position and already working together
- We have led a coordinated local response in collaboration with the local NHS, businesses, VCS and other partners
- Operated a 7 day response and established service area cells to manage the crisis response on key areas
- Cells led by a member of the corporate management team with an aligned cabinet member
- Many of these cells are now stepping down as we start moving into the new normal of business as usual – with a focus on recovery and planning for the future



# The critical role of local gov

- Local gov role has been crucial in responding to, and carrying out government directives.
- Our focus, supporting residents and businesses to be safe and reduce the spread
  - closing services
  - setting up support hubs
  - recruiting volunteers
  - working with partners to provide for our vulnerable adults and children.
- Reprioritised staff and resources to where we needed them most – with a focus on our vulnerable and those shielding.
- Proud of how staff, members and partners have come together to support the communities and businesses of Buckinghamshire.

This is John

John is **staying at home**

John is saving lives

**#StayHomeSaveLives**



# NHS & Adult Social Care

## Angela Macpherson

- Increasing health and social care system capacity by setting up a 240-bed care and reablement facility at Olympic Lodge.
- Keeping in contact with our 1,200 most vulnerable clients – making over 18,000 personal calls to ensure they are managing and to help with social isolation.
- Coordinating the supply and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to care and support workers, including those in independent care homes.
- Supporting 131 care homes and other care providers – developing an ‘enhanced offer’ with partner organisations, providing PPE, training, infection control advice and contingencies for staffing shortages.
- Developing Infection Control Plans for care homes.
- Developed a rapid Discharge to Assess model that enabled 216 people to be swiftly discharged from hospital over the emergency period.



# Volunteering

## Gareth Williams



- Developed a strong two way relationship with the voluntary sector to provide support and galvanise budding volunteers.
- Developed toolkits to help community groups managing volunteers.
- Established a strategic group of charity leaders to help deliver a coordinated response.
- Worked with Community Impact Bucks and The Clare Foundation to establish and manage a volunteer bank.
- Worked closely with local members to identify and troubleshoot local issues.
- Put 14 coronavirus area coordinators in place to link with voluntary groups to help solve local issues and make vital cross partner connections.
- Set up a Coronavirus Councillor Crisis fund of £250k, with an additional £50k from Rothschild, to support local initiatives.

# Local Support Hubs

## Gareth Williams

- Set up 8 local support hubs – coordinating food deliveries, picking up prescriptions and other essential daily check ins.
- 132 staff working in the hubs at their peak.
- Providing support for over 6,000 residents with no friends/family local support networks.
- 763 food parcels in total delivered helping c.650 families/households.
- Donations from local supermarkets and businesses.
- Amazing support from local voluntary groups and organisations working with the hubs including town and parish councils, community initiatives and BORG.
- Working closely with the network of foodbank the local support hub teams, customer services, local emergency support.
- Online community hub - 370 community groups registered , 56,800 visits.



## Support *your local* Food Bank

- ✓ Look out for collection boxes at your local supermarket or drop off points
- ✓ Become a volunteer



[buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus)



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# Business & Suppliers

## Nick Naylor



- Worked closely with Bucks Business First and the LEP to provide support for businesses.
- Supported over 6,200 business with business rates grants totalling over £81m.
  - This included support to town and parishes through grants of £10,000 to village halls, local youth clubs and local sports clubs.
- One of the first local authorities to launch the discretionary grants and had over 600 applications.
- Developed dedicated online hub for businesses and suppliers with a direct link to the BBF support hub.
- Supporting town centres planning for safe reopening of retail – contact was made with 35 towns/high streets across Buckinghamshire to discuss their social distancing requirements, and this engagement will continue throughout the summer with future lockdown easing measures).
- Buckinghamshire Council designed and ordered materials for signage and pavement stickers and offered this to communities who need them. More than 700 social distancing signs and hundreds of pavement stickers were provided to communities by Buckinghamshire Council, in addition to the ones that businesses and communities may have produced themselves.
- Working to support businesses ahead of hospitality businesses opening on 4 July.
- Supporting our suppliers by continuing to pay or partially pay during lockdown.

# Mutual Aid Bill Chapple



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- Managed the sharing of internal and external resources, skills, knowledge and expertise to help support critical service areas
- Making best use of our staff and coordinating offers of support from businesses
- Repurposed 172 members of staff into roles to support Local Support Hubs, food distribution, calls to the vulnerable, out of hours support, Community Impact Bucks, Crematoria and temporary places of rest
- Managed a bank of over 250 staff (excluding Children's Services and Adult Social Care)
- Coordinated 239 offers of support from local businesses
- Matched 47% of offers to 'asks' across the council and our partners
- Provided support to critical areas including (but not limited to) PPE, property, accommodation, care providers, hubs and the food cell

# Children's Social Care & Education

## Mark Shaw and Anita Cranmer

- Working closely with schools, setting up regular forums for headteacher colleagues and school leaders to encourage a consistent approach to implementing government guidance, keep in touch and share ideas.
- Extensive support to over 200 schools and education settings to ensure they remain open to care for vulnerable children and children of key workers, where possible.
- Supporting the phased reopening of schools, making sure school transport is available and schools can reopen safely.
- Working remotely with partners to ensure that children and young people are safe, finding innovative ways to safeguard and support children and families virtually.
- Working to ensure that children's homes are able to stay open and operate safely.
- Providing additional support for our care leavers to ensure they are safe and managing well.
- Supporting families with no recourse to public funds to receive essential food vouchers and funds.



# Housing & Temp Accommodation

## Isobel Darby

- Housed over 100 clients rough sleeping/at risk of rough sleeping
- We have helped to provide food and supported local needs
- Working with partner charities, church groups and project groups on rough sleeper initiative to support clients with everyday essentials, including drug and alcohol support, warm meals and benefit support
- Seen an increase in housing related debt, providing access to funding to prevent financial crisis
- Preparing for expected increase in domestic violence
- Working closely with housing provider partners to find the best solutions for some of most at risk clients
- Looking to the future, working with gov to apply for funds to provide more supported accommodation to rough sleepers



# Death Management Process

## Mark Shaw



- Worked closely with BHT, LRF and funeral directors to make sure there was additional capacity in temporary places of rest available if required.
- Managing guidance for funeral process.
- Supporting partners and sourcing resources.
- Worked with Muslim community, RAF High Wycombe and local funeral director to make specific provision for the washing of bodies for the Muslim funeral process.
- Trained staff to support crematoria.

# Resources

## Katrina Wood

- Huge focus on staff with responsive HR and OD support covering health and wellbeing, specialist webinars and keeping on top of staff availability and sickness.
- IT support to enable 3500 staff working at home, 100s of laptops built, screens provided and roll out of MS Teams.
- Co-ordinated mobile testing sites and developed a vulnerable client tracking system
- Centralised procurement of PPE, filtering out fraudulent suppliers and internal online ordering system, delivering PPE to schools and care sites.
- Fully functioning customer service centre working from home within 24hs, offering 24/7 support for COVID-19 related enquiries.
- Launched webchat on new website.
- Virtual Child Protection, Fostering and Adoption and School education appeals established.
- Administered the business grants scheme with a 5 day turnaround of applications met through working 7 days a week and provision of support for tenants including granting rental holidays.



# Communications

## Martin Tett

- Working collaboratively across the integrated care partnership to ensure consistent messaging.
- Dedicated Coronavirus hub online to provide information, service updates and news.
- New and existing channels to keep residents informed and reassured:
  - Twice weekly resident newsletter from the Leader to 220,000 residents, average 135,000 readers and positive feedback
  - Daily vlogs which moved to include guests to showcase the local response across the county
  - New social media channels for council established with a huge increase in engagement
  - Local media – radio, print and online news outlets.
- Keeping staff and members up to date:
  - Daily 'need to knows' newsletter, and daily vlog from the Chief Executive
  - Members Briefing from the Leader, and weekly members service update
  - Health and wellbeing tips and campaigns with dedicated online information
- Keeping our partners and key stakeholders up to date – MPs, GPs, Town and Parish Councils, Businesses.
- Public health information campaigns – following gov guidance, service disruptions and reopening.
- Proud of Bucks campaign - over 100 local stories showing Buckinghamshire coming together.

# #ProudofBucks

# Stay safe, protect Bucks

- Overwhelming amount of work carried out over the last few months to keep our vulnerable and shielded residents safe and respond to the pandemic.
- Want to thank our
  - Councillors
  - Staff
  - Schools, early years settings, nurseries and childminders
  - Businesses and suppliers
  - Voluntary and community organisations
  - Town and parish councils
  - Partners – Health, Police and Fire services
  - And our residents and communities ....

... for the tremendous community spirit and coming together to look after one another and do our best to keep each other healthy and safe
- Whilst lockdown is easing and we begin to reopen we must continue to play our part and do everything we can to stop potential outbreaks across the county #StaySafeProtectBucks.

