

OCTOBER 2020

COUNTY MATTERS

Covid 19 - It is clear from media reports that infections rates are rising across the country. We have seen a three fold rise in weekly rates in Exeter but elsewhere in Devon the rates remain low. Whilst most of the Exeter increase is related to the University and among the younger members of the community, there are a small number of infections elsewhere in East Devon and therefore there is a need to remain vigilant and follow the guidelines. The University has very robust measures in place both for testing and maintaining social distancing. There is a slow but steady increase in infection rates in care homes which will impact on visits. There are plans in place to combat outbreaks in care homes.

PPE - No problems with supply but DCC holds a back up stock in case issues develop. Some questions about the extra cost of PPE for domiciliary care. Care facilities are ordering through their normal supplier and any additional costs associated with Covid are being met by Government.

Schools - The return to schools across the County has gone well. All schools reopened but six schools had to close on Public Health England advice. At the time of writing here is around 90% attendance but we expect all schools to reopen during October. School transport has been difficult. The County has put on 70 extra school buses to achieve social distancing, maintain bubbles and stagger times.

Active Travel - The initial funding available to DCC was £338K which was used to create temporary walking and cycling corridors in urban areas. We are still waiting for the outcome of the second tranche bid of £1.3M which will be aimed at more permanent features.

Exeter Airport - The Flybe academy purchase is progressing but not yet finalised. Positive news on the development of the engineering arm of the airport with the arrival of Dublin Aerospace.

Broadband - Still on target to award the new contract by the end of the year.

Ray Bloxham
County Councillor