

Leader's Video Transcript

Across the world nations are experiencing this unprecedented health crisis.

Here in our Borough of Ashford our residents and businesses face a huge challenge from this Coronavirus, but by working together and all strictly abiding by the advice and direction being given by the Government and Public Health England (PHE) we can get through this.

Thank you all for observing the Government's instruction to self-isolate and observing social distancing. By staying indoors and minimising contact with others, we are all playing our part in slowing the spread of this virus and helping our under pressure NHS to cope. Anyone who is not abiding by these rules are putting other people's lives at risk.

We note that this is impacting all of us, especially the most vulnerable, our elderly, those with health issues, people who have lost their income and families that are having to cope in these worrying times.

The Council rose swiftly to this challenge to safeguard important services and to support our communities across the Borough. At the start of this outbreak, Ashford's Critical Emergency Resilience Committee (ACER), our equivalent of COBR, met quickly and we introduced emergency plans to co-ordinate our collective responses to this Coronavirus outbreak.

This emergency support group includes the Ashford Volunteer Centre and is bringing together individuals and groups who can provide help and support to all our communities.

We know that the Parishes and Community Councils are themselves using their local knowledge and have many volunteers greatly assisting those in their area. We will also be assisting and supporting their efforts wherever we possibly can.

The Ashford Response Depot is also being set up at Council-owned premises and this will act as a food distribution centre.

Food stuffs will arrive at the depot from suppliers before being shipped to individual food hubs around the Borough. This is expected to be opening within the next few days.

Our biggest priority is to support vulnerable users of our services to ensure continuity of service and that no-one is left isolated.

We also need to support hard hit businesses and to those ends Ashford is working closely with all our partner authorities and other agencies to - co-ordinate our response to this unprecedented situation.

Those of our staff who are able to work from home are doing so and other staff have been redeployed into areas where they can support the delivery of front line services.

For more information on our service, please visit our website – www.ashford.gov.uk. This is being updated daily with advice and links for further information.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has come together to respond in such a positive way in the face of this national crisis. These are challenging times and will have an impact on all our lives and it is vital to stay in touch with each other, by telephone or by using electronic means to keep in touch with family, friends, neighbours, who themselves may be alone or self-isolating.

Ashford has a strong heartbeat and this is the time for us all to work together in the face of these challenges.

We will come through this, we will reconnect with family and friends, we will once again enjoy our social interaction, we will rebuild our economy and yes, we will be a thriving community once again.