

County Councillor's Report, December 2020

Health situation

I have received regular reports about the Covid situation. It is quite clear that it was getting worse until the new lockdown, and that infections remain at a much higher level than they were in the summer, even if they are lower than most of the country. The Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee on 12th November was told clearly that pressure on beds in Devon hospitals was a crucial issue, and this has now been given as a reason for Devon going into Tier 2.

In the circumstances I don't think there is an alternative. We should have learnt now that only when the health crisis is under control can we have a normal economy, but it seems many Tory MPs are incapable of understanding this. I strongly urge everyone to minimise contact indoors even over Christmas, since there is a danger of a third wave if we are not very cautious.

At the committee, a report (for which I had asked at the previous meeting) was presented on restoring elective surgery and cancer services. Progress was being made, although more slowly than expected, in September and October, although the number of people waiting over 1 year had risen to 4,500. Sadly we were told that non-Covid services were already being hit by the second Covid wave, and the November figures would show a new deterioration in the situation. This underlines the high price being paid by many people for the failure to keep Covid under control.

Seaton Area Health Matters

I attended the Committee meeting on 12th November, where it was decided not to accept the rental proposals made by NHS Property Services, owners of Seaton Hospital, and to hand over work with local voluntary groups to the new Re:Store community organisation.

Christmas support for families

I have continued to work with Re:Store over Christmas provisions for families whose children receive free school meals. I'm pleased to say that their scheme will now be covering Beer, Colyford, Colyton, Farway, Seaton and Uplyme.

Levelling Up fund

The Government have established a £4 billion fund to which I understand councils can apply, with support from local MPs, for projects which will benefit the local area. I am looking into whether there is any way we can get funding for the Seaton Seafront Enhancement Scheme and have been in touch with district councillors about this.

Seaton road issues

I'm pleased to see that the Castle Hill resurfacing, which I had been pressing for, has been completed. I have been in touch with residents of Elmfield Road about repairs there, which are due in this financial year. I have also been supporting residents dealing with South West Water over damage to Clapps Lane/Manor Gardens.

Stop Line Way cycle/walking route

I have pressed officers twice this month to get a decision on the way forward for the missing section in the Wetlands, for which there is money in this year's and next year's DCC budgets. I have now been told that a conclusion will be reached by mid-January. I will keep pressing.

Colyford 'Devon bank'

With Cllrs Jones and Hay, I examined the situation near the White Hart. I've sent photos of the sandbags, designed to create a Devon bank, to the engineering team at DCC who were responsible for the scheme completed two or three years ago, and they are going to look into what can be done to improve the appearance.

Public Rights of Way Committee

I attended the November 26th meeting of the committee which considered several East Devon issues (but not in our area).

Midweek Herald column

I am now writing every 4 weeks in the paper, along with a monthly column in Seaton Nub News.