

One Slough

Our response to Covid-19



Complete our Covid-19 survey at
www.slough.gov.uk/consultations

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Slough
Borough Council

Message from the council leader and chief executive

We write this as plans are being made for further easing of lockdown restrictions and the world is beginning to seem a little more normal.

But the past months have been a fundamental shift in everything we thought of as normal; for our residents, our town and our council.

Unlike many councils, we managed to keep 100 percent of our critical services running including services which we know matter most; your weekly bin collections, care for our most vulnerable and the elderly, maintaining our parks and ensuring those who needed financial assistance could get it.

We led the way in working with others to create a volunteer force which was second to none - delivering more than 15,000 hot meals and more than 9,000 food parcels to those in need.

Our benefits teams worked around the clock processing thousands of new claims and changes in circumstances and when our face to face customer services centre closed, the staff stepped up, retrained within days and were on the phones to answer the main calls.

For the first time in our history we have been running a completely remote call centre with staff at home, but no drop in service; managing to keep call answering times very low and with call backs within minutes.

Where services like our libraries were forced to close after government instruction, staff were redeployed to our critical functions or the volunteer centre; helping those who needed it most.

It has been a mammoth effort from all at the council - from those leading our strategic response to those on the ground; visiting older people, touching base with tenants of our homes, parents of children at our children's centres and much more.

Now as shops and restaurants are opening again so are our face to face customer services, The Curve and some of our other buildings.

Our parking enforcement team is fully operational again, keeping roads and pavements free of obstructions and our planning teams are undertaking visits again. Housing repairs are being done and our play areas are open again - but please follow the instructions on the signs to keep safe.

Though we are all enjoying a bit of freedom it is clear that Covid-19 has not gone away and is still circulating in the Slough community.

We are keeping a very close eye on the data from across the borough and will not hesitate to take action if there is a local outbreak or significant rise in cases and a risk to the town overall.

We and our health partners have a new local outbreak management plan (more details on page 3) - created as the responsibility for prevention and management of Covid-19 moved from government to local areas.

We all hope we never have to activate it but we cannot be complacent and we call on everyone to continue to be careful, keep your distance from others not in your household when out and



about and, at the first sign off of covid symptoms, self isolate and get a test.

This magazine brings you the latest information on our actions so far, the incredible volunteering response, how you can get a test and the steps we can all take to keep ourselves safe.

If we all work together, we can find normal again sooner rather than later.

Councillor James Swindlehurst and Chief Executive Josie Wragg

Tell us what you think

As we move from immediate response to the crisis to thinking about how our town moves on we want to hear your views.

On our website is a short survey which should take less than 10 minutes to complete so please take the time to fill it in at www.slough.gov.uk/consultations

It covers everything from how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected you and your family, financially, economically and personally, also what you think should be our most important considerations during the recovery period.

Your views and experiences matter to us - and the survey is anonymous so you can be as honest as you wish - so log on to www.slough.gov.uk/consultations and we hope to hear from you soon.

Local outbreak management plan

On 30 June, we published our Local Outbreak Management Plan for Covid-19.

The plan summarises how we, and our partners, work to protect residents and communities from further spread or recurrence of Covid-19 across Slough.

We know Covid-19 is still circulating in the community and it is likely to be with us for a while yet.

Therefore it is important we all play our part in following national and local guidance to keep us, our families and our communities safe.

The plan details roles and responsibilities in prevention and management of Covid-19 as well as how we would recognise and respond to outbreaks.

It includes communications, actions by Public Health England and local public health teams and specific venues we are focusing on.

A summary document and the full plan is available on our website at www.slough.gov.uk/coronavirus

Get your covid test in Slough



MP Tan Dhesi and leader of the council, James Swindlehurst get tested at the new testing centre

Slough has the first hybrid - walk in and drive in - Covid-19 testing centre in the country.

The site is in Montem car park, Montem Lane. Anyone with symptoms - and for the first time people who are not symptomatic but concerned they may have been in contact with a Covid-19 positive person - are able visit for a test either by foot or in a car.

The centre will be open for those who wish to make an appointment and those who just want to drop-in, though the council is warning drop-ins may have a slightly longer wait and appointments are encouraged.

Appointments can be made on the NHS website at www.nhs.uk/ask-for-a-coronavirus-test or by calling 119.

If coming by car:

- Up to four people can come together in the same vehicle
- All ages can attend
- Tests will be administered by visitors under the guidance of trained testing staff on site
- There is no geographical limit on where people can visit from
- Actual testing should take between 15 and 30 minutes

If walking:

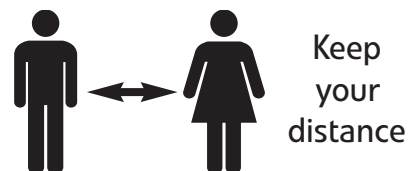
- All attendees over the age of three are required to wear face coverings or they will not be able to take part
- Children three and under are not required to wear masks
- Special area for testing for those who do not wish to remove face coverings in public
- Parents are welcome to bring children
- Actual testing should take between 15 and 30 minutes

Assistance is available on site throughout the process and in languages other than English.

Councillor Natasa Pantelic, lead member for health, said: "I took a Covid-19 test to see for myself what the process is like and I was surprised at how easy it was. Altogether it took two minutes of my time to book a test online and 20 minutes to take the test at the Slough Montem Leisure testing site.

"The test involves you taking a swab of the back of your throat and up one of your nostrils. It's a bit uncomfortable but has to be done and the staff are very friendly and help you through the whole thing.

"If you have symptoms or worried you may have the virus, please get tested."



Keep your distance



Wash your hands regularly



Wear a face covering where required

Our covid response

“We had a phone call this week asking if we were OK, were we coping with the situation and did we need anything. I was impressed that our housing officer took the trouble to make sure we were alright.”

Our emergency response focused on three main priorities:

- Helping the most vulnerable
- Maintaining critical services
- Public health

We immediately launched an operations centre and a command system with our most senior officers meeting daily for updates and to direct operations.

All councillors received weekly briefings, with lead members in direct contact with senior officers about their areas of responsibility.

So much work has been done it is impossible to detail it all, but here is a snapshot of our actions so far.



“I walk past a beautiful tulip display when I finish my shift at Upton Hospital - it's just what I need - thanks a million!”



A volunteer force to be reckoned with

As soon as it became apparent a lockdown was going to happen and some of Slough's most vulnerable residents might not be able to get their hands on food and medicine the One Slough volunteering force was born.

A joint arrangement led by the council and Slough Council for Voluntary Service, a call went out for volunteers to help out and Slough responded fantastically!

A special online registration form and telephone helpline was created for those in need and within days essential food items, hot food parcels and medicines were being collected and delivered across the town.

Some council staff were redeployed into the service and more and more local organisations, charities and businesses joined the effort and by the middle of June the team had delivered a massive:

- 14,955 hot meals
- 9,909 food parcels
- 5,621 prescriptions

And more since.

We want to thank everyone involved for doing such a great job.



The council and SCVS receive laptops from Heathrow



Thank you!

Our thanks to Slough's local community groups and businesses who have supported us with funding, volunteering and donations to One Slough - a partnership between the council and Slough Council for Voluntary Services; helping the most vulnerable in our community.

- AJ Café
- Al Miftah Institute
- Colnbrook Cares
- Guru Maneyo Granth Gurdwara
- Herbies Pizza
- Sewa Day - West London (Slough) Group
- Slough Foodbank
- Slough Islamic Trust
- Slough King's Reach Support Group
- Slough Outreach
- Pakistan Welfare Association
- Veggie Master
- Z&Q Essential food packs
- Langley College Community Kitchen
- Al-Jannah Mosque, Stoke Road
- Clark Group Fabrications Ltd
- Haymill Support Group
- Rite Price Greengrocers
- Sainsburys
- Sakoon Through Cancer (Sakoon in the community)
- Slough Community Transport
- Slough Modest Sisters
- Slough North Action Project
- Walk and Talk Upton
- Your Friends in Need
- Autism Berkshire
- Berkshire Vision
- Hestia
- Home-Start, Slough
- SANAS
- Slough Immigration Aid Unit
- Slough Refugee Support
- Slough Young Carers
- Turning Point
- New Langley Community Association
- Shelter/ Slough Advice Centre
- Apna Virsa
- Living in Harmony
- Future Foundation
- Rise and Shine
- Sewak/ Sewak Befriending
- Sport in Mind
- Slough Senior Citizens
- Meet and Mingle
- Asian Carers Group
- Cippenham Carers Group

Working with the NHS

Working with our Slough NHS partners through the Frimley Integrated Care System has ensured that health and care providers, including GP practices in the borough, have worked together to have good supplies of PPE, access to advice and guidance on clinical care and infection control, enabling access to Covid-19 testing for key workers and supported discharges from hospital for patients.

The council continues to work closely with care home providers to ensure residents are receiving the best support during the pandemic.

GPs

All 16 general practices in Slough have provided services throughout the lockdown; over the telephone, by video link, using photos where appropriate and online. There have also been medical cars visiting patients at home.

If you are concerned you may be developing symptoms of any illness, GPs want to hear from you - by phone or online (using e-consults or email) and



Dr Sharma working from home during Covid-19



Lead member for health, Councillor Natasa Pantelic liaises with NHS services on behalf of the council

will come back to you the same day or within 24 hours at the latest.

Keeping your children's immunisations up to date is also very important and GPs are still running these clinics face-to-face. And as autumn approaches having the flu vaccination has never been more important.

Residents have all continued to use the NHS services responsibly right across Slough and the GP community thanks everyone for their consideration and co-operation.

Mental health

The council's mental health team has maintained a daily duty response and offered telephone triage and immediate risk management for new referrals and patients awaiting assessment.

They have also coordinated support for vulnerable residents and those who were on the shielded lists, for contact and video or telephone support during

the lock down and increased day care for people via personal assistants to help reduce stress for families that haven't been able to access day care services because of the pandemic. The mental health team has also increased welfare calls and care packages.

If you are suffering from anxiety, depression or stress and need support, please contact Talking Therapies support services on 0300 365 2000 or online <https://talkingtherapies.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk/>

Local project

A new grassroots project is aiming to increase awareness among Slough's Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, as well as the wider community, of Covid-19 symptoms and how they can stay safe.

The #OneSlough project will engage with voluntary organisations and faith leaders within communities to share the latest NHS advice so they can pass on the best possible information.

This partnership project is a consortium of Slough Borough Council, the Slough Council for Voluntary Service (Slough CVS), NHS East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group working on behalf of the Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System (ICS), Berkshire Shared Public Health team, Primary and Secondary care partners, and Apna Virsa.

There is lots of information and top tips online to help you protect yourself from Covid-19, including really useful daily routine suggestions. For more information log on to:

www.publichealthslough.co.uk/campaigns/reducing-your-risk-coronavirus/



Looking to the future

It may seem like everything is about Covid-19 at the moment but at the council, we have also continued planning for the future.

TVU site

The former site of Thames Valley University on the corner of the Bath Road and Stoke Road is owned by the council and is now subject to a £650 million regeneration scheme which will create 1,300 new homes alongside cultural, retail and entertainment space along with a new higher education presence. This project has employment and training opportunities for our residents at its heart; 800 jobs will be created during the construction phase alongside 170 apprenticeships to give our young people and those seeking new employment skills to last a lifetime.

Once completed the regeneration of the TVU site will support more than 2,800 new permanent jobs. We also want to ensure existing Slough businesses benefit from the site's regeneration with at least 15 percent (£60 million) of the £400 million construction cost to be spent with local suppliers and businesses.

Slough Innovation Space

The council's cabinet has secured £1.6 million from the final tranche of European Union funding to create a new innovation and jobs hub on the fifth floor of our council headquarters at Observatory House. The hub will focus on helping tech firms and small businesses specialising in innovation get up and going before transitioning into permanent locations within the town centre. During the first three years of the project Slough will benefit from the creation of more than 180 new jobs and £8 million of spending in our local economy.

Berkshire Jobs Portal

We have worked collaboratively with colleagues from across Berkshire to develop the Berkshire jobs portal - which is a single gateway to explore a range of new job and apprentice opportunities alongside online courses and qualifications across Berkshire -

www.berkshireopportunities.co.uk/.

We have recently had government funding provisionally approved for a physical support centre within the innovation space to help residents acquire skills and access training.

The town centre

The owners of the Queensmere Observatory shopping centre with their development manager, British Land, are preparing a planning application for 'Slough Central' - their name for the redevelopment of the entire site. They've just completed the first stage of their consultation on their proposals where residents made clear they want better public transport links into the new town centre and the cultural diversity of Slough to be reflected within the regeneration, alongside new retail, leisure and entertainment offers. The scheme will see the north of the High Street redesigned to link the train station to the town centre and a new business district created. The project will create around 1,000 jobs in the construction phase alone. Their website will be regularly updated - check it out at www.sloughcentral.com

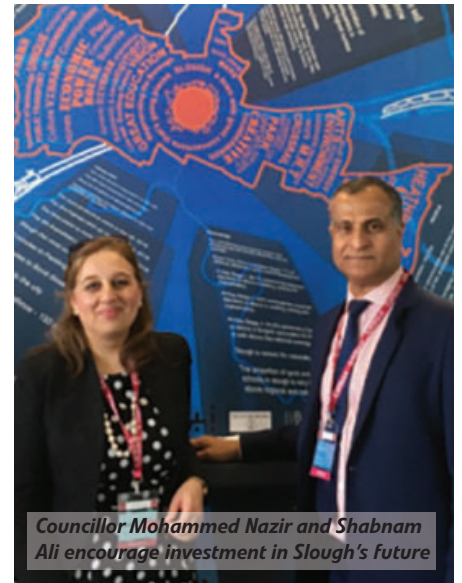
Akzo Nobel R&D site

Panattoni, the new owners of the former ICI Paints research site have submitted exciting plans for a 1,000 new homes, include a significant proportion of affordable housing, and a new logistics and distribution centre.

In the region of 350 jobs will be created during construction, with many additional permanent jobs once the logistics facility opens.

A4 bus and cycle route

Prior to Covid-19 restrictions Slough had five Air Quality Management Areas (areas where air pollution breaches legal limits), all of which were around Slough's major road junctions. Since the lockdown we have seen vastly reduced traffic on our roads and a massive drop in air pollution - up to 41 percent in poisonous nitrogen oxides - meaning our 150,000 residents are breathing cleaner air for the first time in years. The



Councillor Mohammed Nazir and Shabnam Ali encourage investment in Slough's future

council is working hard to capture as much of this improvement as possible and officers and cabinet members on the council do not want air quality to simply return to the dangerous levels it was before.

We are trialling a temporary bus and cycle lane along the A4 to support the return of bus services and enable social distancing to work for pedestrians on the pavement with cyclists now able to use this lane.

This is likely to be in place until the end of December and its operation is being reviewed every three months.

We, of course, understand many of the concerns people have expressed about giving up road space, even temporarily, and there is a balance to be struck between protecting the health of our population, supporting the 25 percent of households who do not own a car to move throughout Slough in a safe and socially distanced way, supporting those who journey by car and lessening the congestion which has blighted our roads for so long.

This is a temporary experimental scheme and we are inviting residents to feed in their views to the discussion on how we strike this balance through emailing tfs@slough.gov.uk