**An update on the alert level in Surrey**

**Thursday 17t December 2020**

It has been announced today that from the 19th December, the majority of Surrey will be placed into tier 3, the **Very** **High Covid Alert Level**.  Waverley is to remain in tier 2. Due to rapidly rising rates of Coronavirus across most of Surrey the Government has taken the decision to implement tier 3 restrictions in all other Districts and Boroughs.

The Very High alert level is for areas with a very high or very rapidly rising level of infections, where tighter restrictions are required. The decision to move an area into a higher tier is based on a number of indicators, including the overall infection rate, the rate in the over 60s, and the pressure on the NHS.

 This means that, with the exception of Waverley, if you live in Surrey:

* You can only mix households (in groups of up to 6) in outdoor spaces, such as parks and the countryside, **not** in private gardens
* All hospitality venues such as bars, pubs and cafés must shut. They can open for takeaway only
* Indoor entertainment venues, such as theatres and cinemas, must close
* Accommodation, such as hotels and B&Bs, must close

This is **in addition to existing** guidelines that state you must not mix with anyone you don’t live with (or who aren’t in your support bubble) in any indoor setting.

Residents in Waverley should continue to follow tier 2 rules.

**Residents in tier 3** should avoid travelling outside their area  including for overnight stays, other than where necessary, such as for work, education or medical treatment. They should also continue to follow tier 3 rules if they travel to an area in a lower tier and must not stay with anyone they do not live with elsewhere in the UK, or visit their home (unless they share a support bubble)

Everyone in Surrey should continue to follow guidance on wearing face coverings, social distancing, and working from home when possible. If you can’t work from home you should walk or cycle where possible, or try to avoid busy times on public transport.

Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council said:

“The Government has taken the decision to put most of the county under further restrictions because of their much higher rates of infection. I know this will be very disappointing news for residents and businesses in our tier 3 areas, after an exceptionally difficult year.

“But we need to take swift action to save lives and stop our crucial NHS services from being put under even more pressure. We all need to be extremely vigilant, including residents in Waverley, as the situation can change quickly and we want to prevent them going into tier 3 in the new year.

“With the Christmas bubbles coming up on the 23rd December, please make sure you understand and follow the guidance, to protect your loved ones and prevent even higher infection rates in the new year.

“There is hope on the horizon with the rollout of the vaccine across the county, starting with the over-80s. But it will take time and we cannot let our guard down. The coming weeks will be a challenge to us all, but it is crucial that we reduce the spread of this virus and get through the winter as safely as possible.”

- ENDS -

**FURTHER INFORMATION:**

A daily update of Coronavirus data in Surrey is published here: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus/alert-levels-and-local-outbreak-plan/figures-and-statistics/daily-data>

A more in-depth analysis of Surrey’s Coronavirus data is published twice-weekly here: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/coronavirus/alert-levels-and-local-outbreak-plan/figures-and-statistics/bi-weekly-coronavirus-summary-for-surrey>

Between 23rd-27th December people in Surrey will be able to make a Christmas bubble with friends and family: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>

Tier 3 areas will return to tier 3 restrictions on the 28th December, Waverley will return to tier 2. The tiers are due to be reviewed again on the 30th January.

For full details of what you can and cannot do in Tier 3, very high alert: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae#very-high-alert>

For full details of what you can and cannot do in Tier 2, high alert:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae#high-alert>