

COUNCIL: 21 OCTOBER 2021

STATEMENT OF THE LEADER

Covid-19 Update

Covid-19 cases in Cardiff have continued to rise in recent weeks; however, these infections have still not led to the significant levels of hospitalisations seen in previous waves due to the widespread protection provided by the mass vaccination programme. As of 13 October 2021, the rate of new cases in Cardiff currently stands at 698.3 per 100,000 population over the 7-day period to 9 October 2021, which is well above the Welsh average of 531.9 per 100,000, after having been below the Welsh below the national average last month.

Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (UHB) has seen a small increase in average daily Covid-19 hospital admissions; however, in absolute terms, the rate remains low and the UHB will continue to monitor this rate carefully as we await further conclusive data. Consequently, we are not yet out of this crisis and, as councillors and community leaders, we must continue to emphasise the need for citizens to behave responsibly and abide by social distancing rules over the coming weeks.

Monday 11 October 2021 marked the entry into force of the Welsh Government's new requirement to present an NHS Covid Pass – proving either fully vaccinated status or a recent negative Lateral Flow Device test – to attend nightclubs, indoor non-seated events where over 500 people are mixing closely for prolonged periods, outdoor non-seated events where over 4,000 people are mixing closely for prolonged periods and any event of more than 10,000 people. Despite the high levels of the virus in Wales, the First Minister confirmed on 8 October 2021, following the latest Welsh Government review, that Wales will stay at Alert Level 0 for the next three weeks. The First Minister has further stated that, in the most probable scenario, Wales should be able to get through the autumn and winter with a similar level of restrictions as is currently in place.

Mass Vaccination Programme

The rollout of the mass vaccination programme has continued to progress at pace. As of 13 October 2021, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board has administered 746,241 vaccinations – 374,080 first doses and 372,161 second doses. Good progress continues to be made in vaccinating young people, with nearly 70% of people aged 18-29 now fully vaccinated and 73% of 16 to 17 year olds having received their first dose.

Looking ahead, a booster vaccination programme for over 50s and those in 'priority groups', aligned to the flu vaccination, will be rolled out later in the year to provide the critical protection needed to get our city through what could be a particularly difficult winter. In an updated Welsh Government Covid-19 vaccination strategy that was published on 12 October 2021, Health Minister Eluned Morgan MS confirmed that the majority of eligible people will be offered their booster vaccination by 31 December 2021. Furthermore, by 1 November 2021, care home residents and health & care staff will be offered a booster vaccination and all 12 to 15 year olds will be offered one dose. Those individuals eligible for a booster vaccine will receive an invitation and I would strongly encourage them to attend their allocated appointment. As has happened throughout the pandemic, we are working in close partnership with our UHB colleagues to ensure that all those who require vaccination will receive their dose in a safe and timely manner.

Western Gateway

The Western Gateway partnership has recently appointed its first Director, Jo Dally, in August 2021, who will support the Chair and the Partnership Board, which includes representatives from local government, city-regions and business across the partnership area. This vehicle will provide a platform for tackling the common issues that we have with our neighbours across the Severn Estuary, notably connectivity between our cities and to London. It also provides an opportunity to take a collective look at the potential for tidal energy, a resource that by itself could potentially harness enough energy to support all of Wales. Given the scale and complexity of any tidal energy project, as well as the potential impact on either side of the Severn Estuary, this is a critical project for Cardiff and Wales, with the ability to provide clean, sustainable and secure energy. Such projects will need to be given real consideration given the climate crisis and the fuel poverty crisis that we are facing. To that end, it is proposed that the Western Gateway establishes a commission that will see partners on either side of the Severn Estuary explore options for tidal energy.

Good Food Cardiff Summit

On 22 October 2021, I look forward to welcoming attendees to the Good Food Cardiff summit, which will celebrate Cardiff achieving Silver Sustainable Food Places status and the launch of Cardiff's city-wide, partnership-based Good Food Strategy. The strategy has been developed with the support of over 2,500 people and organisations in the city, identifying five Good Food Goals to prioritise over the coming years and helping to improve the way individuals and businesses grow, buy, cook and eat across Cardiff. The Council's own Food Strategy feeds into this wider partnership strategy and our organisation is both a founding member and steering group member of Food Cardiff, the local food partnership that has coordinated this work. The summit forms part of the [Good Food Cardiff Autumn Festival](#), which runs from World Food Day on 16 October until 24 October 2021. Local artist, Nathan Wyburn, will be creating a large-scale image using locally grown fruit and veg, which will then be cooked by groups throughout the festival. There will also be a range of other activities provided by partner organisations across the city, including food quizzes, a virtual grow along and pumpkin carving sessions.

Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
14 October 2021