

SODC ward councillor's report

– Shiplake – 11th May 2020

Covid-19

The special arrangements under the “Local Resilience Forum” structure continues.

The number of residents on the shielded list is growing.

SODC is being asked to make structured telephone calls to each person to ensure well-being and to identify any needs for support.

SODC and its outsource provider have processed and paid most special Covid business grants and are busy addressing cases with issues or apparent errors as well as cases under newer schemes from government (for example for those who don't pay rates directly but who do so through their landlord).

A great deal of normal other work is on pause. Staffing is stretched.

Normal committees and councillor processes are largely suspended.

Scope now exists for remote meetings.

The government have as yet failed to make any changes to the planning system. This is putting pressure on SODC and other LPAs to work through remote planning committee meetings and to deal with the backlog. Developers could seek to benefit from non-determination by the deadlines. The pressure is on and SODC are going to have to decide how to solve this problem.

Council Finances

UK Gov has provided some funds but these don't cover the total extra costs and losses of income incurred. Having stated that local government will get support and “whatever it takes” the Secretary of State has now suggested that losses of income may not be covered; (even though they arise from UK Gov decisions). Thus there is great uncertainty and there are very many unknowns.

Leigh Rawlins

District Councillor