

HOPESAY PARISH COUNCIL

HIGH CONSEQUENCE INFECTIOUS DISEASE (HCID) POLICY

Adopted at the Council meeting held on 26th May 2020

1. Introduction

This policy is designed to operate in the event of any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) as defined by Public Health England, and sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of any HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of or actual infection in South West Shropshire. As such, the policy once adopted by Council, also requires an appropriate activation (which can be immediate or subsequent), and an appropriate subsequent de-activation.

2. Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

A HCID is defined by the following

- acute infectious disease
- typically having a high case-fatality rate
- may not have effective prophylaxis or treatment
- often difficult to recognise and detect rapidly
- ability to spread in the community and within healthcare settings
- requires an enhanced individual, population and system response to ensure it is managed effectively, efficiently and safely

The current list of HClDs as defined on www.gov.uk (11/03/2020)

Contact HCID	Airborne HCID
Argentine haemorrhagic fever (Junin virus)	Andes virus infection (hantavirus)
Bolivian haemorrhagic fever (Machupo virus)	Avian influenza A H7N9 and H5N1
Crimean Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF)	Avian influenza A H5N6 and H7N7
Ebola virus disease (EVD)	Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)
Lassa fever	Monkeypox
Lujo virus disease	Nipah virus infection
Marburg virus disease (MVD)	Pneumonic plague (<i>Yersinia pestis</i>)
Severe fever with thrombocytopaenia syndrome (SFTS)	Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)*
	Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

At any such time as a new disease is classified as a HCID, it shall be treated as if it were in the list above and this policy shall apply.

3. Scope of the policy

The main areas of concern for Hopesay Parish Council with respect to HClDs are:

- Remaining an effective council
- Safety & Health of Councillors, Contractors, Staff, Volunteers and Members of Public.

4. Activation of the policy

This policy is considered to be **activated**, when there is an active outbreak of an HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the area of South West Shropshire, **AND**

- At least 3 councillors have requested its **activation** to the Chairman, and subsequently notified the Clerk, or the Chairman plus 2 councillors have requested its **activation** to the Clerk,

OR

- Its **activation** is resolved in a meeting of Hopesay Parish Council - Where this policy is **activated** *during* a meeting of the council, EITHER the meeting will be then adjourned (using the delegated authority, the Clerk will endeavour to close out the business on the remaining agenda, the results of which will be reported to councillors by email and formally reported to the council after the adjournment when the rest of the agenda is formally considered); OR the policy will come into force at the close of the meeting at which it has been **activated**.

OR

- The Government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings, AND there is no legal alternative form of meeting which has been legislated for.

5. Deactivation of the policy

This policy is considered to be **deactivated**, when

- the imminent threat of infection in South West Shropshire has passed **and**
- A minimum of 3 councillors have requested public meetings recommence **OR**
- The Government of the United Kingdom has reinstated all public meetings (if suspension of all public meetings had been so ordered) **OR**
- The Government of the United Kingdom has enacted legislation (temporary or otherwise) to allow local councils to meet remotely.

6. Public Meetings

It is a requirement of the Local Government Act 1972, that council business shall be conducted at public meetings of the council and any committees.

Councillors and other Volunteers can choose not to attend public meetings. As an officer of the council, the Clerk cannot choose not to attend meetings.

Due to the nature of local government and considering the Councillors, Clerk, and Members of Public who attend meetings, there is high percentage of attendees who would be considered "high risk" with respect to HCIDs.

As such, to protect the health of all attendees, **public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy.**

7. Delegated Authority

To allow the council to operate on a minimum requirement basis, the following items are delegated to the Clerk for the duration of the activation of this policy.

Planning applications: after consultation with a minimum of 3 councillors, a summary response will be circulated to all councillors for comment prior to submission to Shropshire Council by the Clerk.

Finance: all standard recurring payments listed as line items on the budget will be paid by the RFO at the appropriate time to prevent any late charges, such as salaries, printing costs, regular contractor charges, licences and IT services etc. Non-recurring payments, such as one-off costs or expenses, to be authorised by a minimum of 2 councillors by e-mail prior to payment. All payments will be formally retrospectively authorised by the full council at the next full council meeting.

Where this policy is activated over the end of the financial year, the RFO will prepare the end of year accounts in accordance with normal procedures and circulate to all of the councillors. On the acceptance of a minimum of 3 councillors, they will be signed by the RFO / Clerk and Chairman as applicable for submission to the internal and external auditors. The accounts will be formally accepted by resolution at the next full council meeting.

Responses to other communications: The Clerk will circulate at the earliest opportunity, any communication from any 3rd Parties which would normally be presented at a meeting for consideration by the council. The clerk will circulate the summary response to all councillors prior to responding to the 3rd Party.

The Clerk will use their professional judgement in obtaining SALC and SLCC guidance when necessary, and in fully liaising with the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and councillors.

8. Matters relating to staff – The Clerk

Hopesay Parish Council currently has one part time employee, the Parish Clerk and Proper Officer (also has the role of Responsible Financial Officer), who works from home apart from attending meetings, posting notices in the parish, and banking etc.

In the event of a HCID outbreak the National Joint Council for local government services (NJC) will issue guidance for employers which the council will follow. A summary of the most recent guidance during the COVID-19 outbreak of 2020 is detailed below, and should apply even if this policy has not yet been **activated**.

- Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.
- As per Part 2 Para 10.9 of the 'Green Book', if an employee is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, this period should not be recorded as sickness absence. As they are 'well' at this stage they should stay on normal full pay for the duration of the self-isolation period until such time as they are confirmed to have contracted any such HCID, at which point they transfer to sickness absence leave and the usual provisions of the sickness scheme will apply.
- If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have coronavirus, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given that the employee may then have been in direct contact with the virus, only working from home arrangements should then considered for the duration of the incubation period. Employers should keep in touch to support employees.
- Following any school closures, employers should be fully supportive of employees with childcare responsibilities and consider flexible working arrangements, including adapting working patterns to care for children or dependants or taking time off, whether this is special leave, annual leave or flexible working.

9. Review of the policy

This policy will be reviewed annually.