Richmond Council statement on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

16 March 2020

Richmond Council's Interim Director of Public Health, Shannon Katiyo, said:

"Over the past few days we have all seen that the situation with COVID-19 has developed quickly. It is in this challenging situation that we are working extremely hard to make sure plans are in place so that essential services can still be delivered.

"We are working with the Government, the NHS and Public Health England and other partners to do all that we can to keep families and communities in Richmond upon Thames safe. We urge everyone to keep up to date on the latest information which outlines what you should do now.

"While I understand that you will be worried. It is important to remember that each of us can make a difference and play our part.

"Following yesterday's update (16 March) we are stepping up our business continuity plans, with a focus on ensuring we can deliver the most essential services to residents most in need, while at the same time working to support the wellbeing of our staff so that we have enough resources to be able to do this.

"Today we are considering arrangements for staff who provide front-line services and we are continuing to review our contingency plans to ensure they are robust so that council decision-making processes can continue. We also continue to work with care homes and care providers across the borough to keep the most vulnerable residents as safe as possible.

"What we ask of you now is that you follow the updated Government guidance. If you are showing symptoms – please stay home for seven days. If you live with someone, please stay home for fourteen days. Do not take unnecessary risks and take note of new advice on social distancing.

"As the Leader referenced in his latest video update, we are working with local voluntary sector organisations to understand what support they need to help our most vulnerable residents. We will need your help, and we will let you know the best way to provide it.

"I know that this is a stressful and worrying time and it is really important that we also look after our mental health. Continuous coverage of Covid-19 news could cause

some people to feel anxious or distressed. There are some steps you can take including:

- Avoid watching, reading or listening to news that causes you to feel anxious or distressed

- Seek information mainly to take practical steps to prepare your plans and protect yourself and loved ones or seek information updates at specific times during the day

- Find opportunities to amplify the voices, positive stories and positive images of local people who have experienced the new coronavirus (COVID-19) and have recovered or who have supported a loved one through recovery

- Honour health and care staff who are working hard to support people affected with COVID-19 in your community

We are all in this together! Please keep an eye on the Government's guidance which is regularly updated and covers a range of topics. You can also sign up to the Council's e-newsletter or follow the Council on social media (@LBRUT) for regular update on any impact on local services.

It goes without saying, we should all only use the NHS when we really need to. And please go online rather than ringing NHS 111.