Coronavirus (COVID-19) update from Cllr Gareth Roberts 19 March 2020

Cllr Gareth Roberts: Good Evening. We have just watched the Prime Ministers broadcast from 10 Downing Street in which we were hoping to get more clarity regarding the closure of schools tomorrow. Yesterday the Prime Minister announced that schools would close from close of business on Friday (tomorrow), apart from for vulnerable children and children whose parents work in key industries. Unfortunately, we are still lacking the clarity as to what counts as a key worker. This is vital. It is vital information that schools need so that they can plan properly so they can open for those children on Monday. As soon as we get that information, we will give it to you through our website and via our social media feeds.

As a Council we recognise that we also need to be doing more in order to help during this Covid-19 Coronavirus pandemic. And for that reason, we are taking the difficult reason to ask those workers in the Council who can work from home to work from home. By doing this we can make sure we cut down on journeys on our road network and on our public transport system. However, this does mean that we will have fewer staff on site, in the Civic Centre. So, if you have a need to come into the Civic Centre, please can we ask that it is for emergencies only. And certainly, don't come to the Civic Centre if you have any symptoms of Coronavirus Covid19 or you are self-isolating. If you do need to get in touch with the Council, you can do so through the website. It has so much information that you will need, and it can answer so many questions through the website. If you do need to phone, then the phone lines will stay open however, if I can stress, please only call if it is an urgent matter.

 I would like to say thank you to all those who have been contacting me over the recent days to ask how you can help. It has been heart-warming to see how many people in Richmond are so keen to help their fellow resident. The best way you can do it is by going to the Richmond Council for Voluntary Services, again details on the Council website, so you can find out how you can best volunteer in your local area. Thank you. It is so heart-warming to know that so many people in Richmond want to help. As I say, it is only by working together that we will get through this. So please, stay healthy and thank you.