**Agenda Item 8.1**

**Report to Town Council 19th July 2021 – Addendum**

**Fireworks Display and Christmas Events 2021**

The Welsh Government published the review of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No 5) (Wales) Regulations on 14th July 2021.

Cases of coronavirus are rising in the community largely as a result of the Delta variant but the high vaccination rates mean that hospital admissions remain low. Alert level one changes will therefore be implemented from 17th July 2021 including the removal of the limits on the number of people who can gather outdoors. Outdoor premises and events will also have more flexibility around physical distancing.

An updated Coronavirus Control Plan has been published setting out the move from alert level one to a set of baseline restrictions.

At the next review on the 7th August 2021 consideration will be given to moving to a new alert level zero.

At alert level zero:

* Legal limits and caps on the number of people who can meet, including in private homes, public places, or at events will be removed.
* Covid risks assessments will remain a legal requirement for businesses, employers and event organisers.
* Reasonable measures will legally be required to manage the risk of coronavirus but they will be for each organisation to determine based on the outcome of their risk assessment, including in relation to physical distancing.
* All businesses and premises can open, including nightclubs.
* Businesses, employers and other organisations will still be required to take reasonable measures to manage the risk of coronavirus at their premises.
* People should continue to work from home wherever possible.
* Face coverings will remain a legal requirement in all indoor public places, such as on public transport, in shops and healthcare settings, with the exception of education settings and hospitality. The use of face coverings in the workplace should also be considered by businesses and employers as part of their coronavirus risk assessment.

Considerations

1 In relation to events the most significant difference between alert level one and alert level zero is the lifting of the cap on numbers (indoors and outdoors). Progression to alert level zero on 7th August or a later date is not critical to the decision on whether to proceed with the Town Council events planning. A risk assessment and mitigation measures are already a requirement.

2 Due to the nature of the Town Council events it is difficult to see what mitigation measures could be employed to manage the risk of coronavirus. Due to open access numbers attending cannot be controlled and physical distancing would be a matter for individuals. No checks will be possible whether individuals attending are vaccinated or have had a negative test. There will be no means to collect details for track and trace. There are a number of pinch points during the fireworks display which are difficult in terms of crowd control in normal times. The Twyn community centre has limits on the numbers of people allowed in the building. There will be separate responsibilities to inform those acting as stewards as to the measures to protect them from coronavirus risks. In view of all these issues it may be difficult to provide a satisfactory risk assessment to the CCBC Events Safety Advisory Group (ESAG).

3 The Welsh Government alert level framework will be retained for the foreseeable future given the uncertainty over the transmission of the virus and possible new mutants. The alert level could be increased again, and control measures reimposed later in the year.

4 If the event planning goes ahead this will lead to expenditure being incurred and some payments to suppliers may be necessary upfront. If circumstances change leading to cancellation at short notice this may result in abortive costs.

5 As a statutory body it is necessary to consider the wider public interest. CCBC has decided to postpone the Bryn Meadows / CCBC 10k event planned for September until May 2022 in the interest of public safety given the increasing case rate of coronavirus. The Town Council similarly must think of the additional risks to the public as a result of people mixing at close quarters when attending the events. The events increase the chance of an infected person attending and infecting others.

6 A decision on the events cannot be deferred to a later date. There has been no advance planning to date and lead in times are now very short when compared to previous years.

7 The easing of restrictions at this point would suggest that the events in November could in principle go ahead, but the legal requirements, the practical issues, uncertainty of the coronavirus risk in November, risk to public money, risk to public health and the inability to satisfactorily mitigate the risks would all lead to the view that the most prudent decision is not to proceed with the events in 2021.

Phil Davy

Town Clerk

**Extract from Coronavirus Control Plan: Alert Level Zero**

**Coronavirus Risk Assessments and Reasonable Measures**

“We will retain the legal requirement for a coronavirus specific risk assessment to be carried out by businesses and other organisations. Despite other regulations being relaxed, workplaces and public spaces will still need to put in place mitigations to minimise risks. There is already a requirement for employers to ensure the safety of staff and the requirement for an additional coronavirus risk assessment should continue to complement this duty. The requirement to consult staff on the risk assessment will also be retained.

The coronavirus risk assessment – as now- will need to consider what reasonable measures can be put in place to manage the risks of exposure to coronavirus. Although reasonable measures will still be required to be taken the Regulations will provide greater flexibility for businesses in determining what is required to manage risks.

Most significantly the Regulations will no longer give particular prominence to 2 metre physical distancing as there may now be alternative ways of minimising risk. In addition, they will not set out specific requirements for licensed premises, such as table service. Nor will they specify what needs to be in place for retail premises, such as making announcements. Each business or organisation will need to consider what measures are reasonable to put in place, which should include a combination of measures.

Businesses and other organisations will continue to need to provide information about the risks and measures taken on premises. In addition, there is now a specific obligation on employers to inform their employees of the risks identified in risk assessments and or other reasonable measures taken to minimise them.”