

Support for Local Councils

Statement by Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick MP

Please see the press release below regarding a call to 300 council leaders in England from the Local Government Secretary Robert Jenrick MP. I draw your attention to the last four points in particular but please note, it is just a press release about what is being considered and **no legislation has been passed**. I felt it is useful for councils to be aware that matters facing local councils are being discussed and reviewed.

JENRICK REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR COUNCILS IN THEIR CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

- Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has today addressed over 300 council leaders in England
- Jenrick reaffirmed Government's commitment to giving councils the support they need to contribute to the national effort
- He also confirmed a series of practical measures which will give councils greater flexibility to respond to coronavirus

The Government stands ready to do whatever is necessary to support councils in their response to coronavirus, the Local Government Secretary confirmed to council leaders today.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP addressed over 300 council leaders and sector bodies in a call on the Government's response to coronavirus.

He reaffirmed the Government's commitment to supporting councils to focus their efforts on the priority area of social care, providing vital support for vulnerable people and supporting their local economies.

He also confirmed additional military personnel will now work with Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) on their coronavirus response plans, following the initial announcement of 38 planners supporting the forums in England.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

"As part of the national effort to keep the public safe and deliver essential public services, this Government stands with local councils at this difficult time.

"My absolute priority is to ensure they are well placed to respond to coronavirus and protect vital services, including social care.

"Everyone needs to play their part to help the most vulnerable in society and support their local economy, and the Government will do whatever is necessary to support these efforts."

During the call, he also reiterated the practical measures introduced by Government which will give councils greater flexibility and allow them to further focus their resources on the response to coronavirus.

In addition to measures previously brought forward by the Government, including the relaxation of restrictions on supermarket deliveries and the postponement of local, mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner elections until May next year, the Government has now confirmed:

- Routine Care Quality Commission inspections will be temporarily suspended for the duration of the COVID19 outbreak
- Ofsted will look very favourably on any requests to defer inspections because of coronavirus
- Councils will be able to use their discretion on deadlines for Freedom Of Information requests
- The deadline for local government financial audits will be extended to 30 September 2020
- It will consider bringing forward legislation to remove the requirement for Annual Council meetings to take place in person
- It will consider bringing forward legislation to allow Council committee meetings to be held virtually for a temporary period

For the latest health advice visit: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)