



Wilton Town Council

High Consequence Infectious Diseases

A policy to deal with the consequence of infectious diseases.



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Legal context

Wilton Town Council has adopted this policy in accordance with its General Power of Competence as set out in The Localism Act 2011, qualified by SI 2012/965 - Town Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012.

The purpose of this policy

This policy sets out the general principles and approach that Wilton Town Council will follow in respect of an High Consequence Infectious Diseases (HCID) outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Town.

16 March, 2020

1. Introduction

1.1. Wilton Town Council actively seeks to protect the local community, councillors, volunteers and staff working for and on behalf of the council. As such, and following any Public Health England (PHE) and government guidelines, the following policy applies to any High Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) as defined by PHE

1.2. This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Town Council will follow in respect of an HCID outbreak in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in the Town.

2. Scope of the policy

2.1. The main areas of concern for Wilton Town council with respect to HClDs are:

- Remaining an effective council in times of emergency
- Health and safety of councillors, contractors, staff, volunteers and members of public
- Protecting the wellbeing of residents.

3. Activation of the policy

3.1. This policy is considered to be activated, when

- There is an active outbreak of a HCID in the United Kingdom with an imminent threat of infection in Wilton; *and*
- The Council so resolves or, if the Council is unable to meet, the Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and the Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee, has decided that it should be activated; or
- The government of the United Kingdom suspends all public meetings or gatherings.

4. Deactivation of the policy

4.1. This policy is considered to be deactivated, when

- When the imminent threat of infection in the Town has passed; *and*
- The government of the United Kingdom has reinstated all public meetings.

5. Definition of High Consequence Infectious Disease

5.1. A HCID is defined as

- acute infectious disease
- typically has a high case-fatality rate
- may not have effective 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

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

Contact HCID	Airborne HCID
Argentine hemorrhagic fever (Junin virus)	Andes virus infection (hantavirus)
Bolivian hemorrhagic fever (Machupo virus)	Avian influenza A H7N9 and H5N1
Crimean Congo hemorrhagic 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 thrombocytopenia syndrome (SFTS)	Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)* Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

5.3. 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.

6. Matters relating to staff

6.1. Wilton Town Council has offices at Kingsbury Square. The public may visit the staff without appointment between the hours of 9.30am and 1.00pm. In order to protect staff and to maintain business continuity, during any active outbreak of a HCID, and following any advice from the PHE, no personal appointments will be permitted and the public will be requested to use telephone, email or social media to contact staff.

6.2. 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:

6.2.1. Employees who are sick or unfit for work need to focus on their recovery.

6.2.2. As set out in Part 2, Para 10.9, of the 'Green Book', if an employee is fit for work but decides, or is instructed, to self-isolate, their absence should not be recorded as sickness absence. Options for home or remote working will offered to employees in accordance with the Council's flexible working policy. 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.

6.2.3. In circumstances where an employee decides to self-isolate without instruction from the authorities it is not unreasonable for the employer to use their discretion when trying to establish the facts behind the employee's decision to self-isolate

- 6.2.4. If an employee is caring for someone who has or may have been infected with HCID, this period of absence should also be regarded as self-isolation. Given the employee may then have been in direct contact with the virus we would expect only working from home arrangements to be then considered for the duration of the incubation period. Employers should keep in touch to support employees.
- 6.2.5. 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 dependents or taking time off, whether this is special leave, annual leave or flexible working.

7. Public Meetings

- 7.1. 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.
- 7.2. Councillors and other Volunteers can choose to not attend public meetings. As an officer of the council, the Clerk cannot choose to not attend meetings.
- 7.3. Due to the nature of local government and considering the Councillors and Members of Public whom attend meetings, there is high percentage of attendees whom would be considered “high risk” with respect to all of the HCIDs listed in Section 5.2. As such, to protect the health of all attendees, public meetings are suspended during the active period of this policy.

8. Delegated Authority

- 8.1. To enable the council to operate effectively during an HCID outbreak, the following items shall be delegated to the Clerk while this policy is in force and where decisions may not be deferred:
 - 8.1.1. Planning applications: after notifying all councillors of his/her proposed response and providing there are no objections raised, the Clerk shall submit the response to Wiltshire Council on behalf of Wilton Town Council.
 - 8.1.2. The monthly schedule of payments shall be authorised by the RFO (subject to usual counter signature by two members of the Council). A schedule of payments so authorised will be submitted to the Council for scrutiny once the HCID period has ended.
 - 8.1.3. 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 councillors. Provided no objections are raised, they will be signed by the RFO, Clerk and Chairman as acceptable for submission to the external and internal auditors. The accounts will be accepted by resolution at the next full council meeting.
 - 8.1.4. Responses to other urgent communications. The Clerk will circulate urgent correspondence received together with his/her proposed reply and providing there are no objections raised, the Clerk shall reply on behalf of the Council.
 - 8.1.5. Emergency action. The Clerk shall authorise such emergency actions that may be requested by the Government, PHE and/or the Director of Public Health at Wiltshire Council and follow such guidelines that may be established for such assistance. This shall include the release resources and assets if so requested. At all times, councillors shall be kept informed of such actions and notifications.

9. Review of the policy

- 9.1. This policy was approved by the Town Council at its meeting on ?? March 2020 and will be reviewed annually