

DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

LOCAL OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD (PUBLIC)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2020

Councillors Present: Howard Woollaston (Chairman), Lynne Doherty, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Steve Masters and Martha Vickers

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Matthew Pearce (Head of Public Health and Wellbeing), Andy Sharp (Executive Director (People)), Mandip Bilkhu (Communications and Marketing Officer) and Sean Murphy (Public Protection Manager), Shairoz Claridge (Berkshire West CCG), Meradin Peachey (Deputy Director of Public Health for Berkshire) and James Townsend (Policy Officer (Executive Support))

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Tessa Lindfield

PART I

27 Apologies

Apologies were received from Tessa Lindfield

28 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting dated 25 September 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

29 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

30 Covid-19 Situational Report

Matt Pearce provided an update on the Covid-19 situation in West Berkshire. He stated that all data presented was correct as of Wednesday 21 October 2020. He also noted that the slides being presented were now in line with the rest of Berkshire and would be published on the Berkshire Public Health website.

Situational awareness:

- He noted that the positivity rates per 100,000 had risen across all Berkshire authorities compared to the previous week and now stood at 52.4 in West Berkshire and the positivity rate stood at 3.6% of tests.
- He also outlined a number of criteria set out for authorities to consider when looking to move into tier 2. These included cases per 100,000 for those aged over 60, where West Berkshire stood at 32.3.

Epidemiology of cases:

- There had been a total of 6,727 confirmed cases in Berkshire with 44% of these cases being since the beginning of September. He also noted that Berkshire's weekly rate has continued to increase in this time, although it had remained significantly lower than the national average.
- In the period 6 to 19 October, there were 1,579 cases confirmed for Berkshire residents with 13% of cases confirmed through pillar 1 and 87% through pillar 2. He also noted that 53% were female, 47% male, 58% of these cases were from a

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white background, 25% from BAME community and 17% had no ethnicity information recorded. Lastly, he stated that 45% of cases in Berkshire were in the 18 to 34 age group.

West Berkshire

- He noted that data on confirmed Covid-19 cases are available at a Middle Super Output Area (MSOA), which covers areas with populations between 5,000-15,000. He highlighted the need for caution with this data as it was based on small numbers. He stated that there was no sign of any hotspots.

Councillor Bridgman asked if there was any correlation between the figures and care homes.

Matt Pearce stated that there weren't that many cases in care homes at the time of writing, but that it could certainly be a possibility, but would require further analysis.

Deaths

- He noted that there had been 785 deaths related to Covid-19 in Berkshire across the whole pandemic with 135 of those in West Berkshire. Between 26 September to 9 October there had been 2 deaths in West Berkshire, the first Covid-19 related deaths since August.
- Since March 2020, West Berkshire's all-cause mortality rate was 24% higher than the five year average, leading to 170 additional deaths.

Hospital activity

- He noted that hospital activity for Berkshire was not currently available for the public domain. Therefore, he provided an update on hospital activity for the south east.
- On 19 October, 319 patients were in hospital with Covid-19 in the south east, 18 of which were on mechanical ventilation and the hospital admission rate was continuing to increase although at a slower rate compared with the national average.

Meradin Peachey stated that Royal Berkshire Hospital had reported an increase in Covid-19 admissions and those on ventilators, but that it was nowhere near capacity.

Summary

- West Berkshire remains at the 'medium' alert level.
- We continued to see a rise in outbreaks across schools, care homes, workplace and health settings.
- The weekly rate was at 52.4 per 100,000, which was 9% higher than the week before.

31 Local Incidents

- From the 5th to 19th of October, there had been incidents at the following in West Berkshire:

Setting	Exposures/ incidents	cluster	outbreaks
Care home	4	1	2
Schools	5	0	0
workplaces	2	1	1
NHS/ health	1	0	1

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Matt Pearce noted that every time an incident happens, the Council works very closely with the setting to review and assess the settings to see how they can improve.

32 Local Alert System

Matt Pearce outlined the local alert system:

- Local Covid-19 alert levels set out information for local authorities, residents and workers about what to do and how to manage an outbreak in their area.
- It aligned with the National Contain Framework
- He noted that any change to alert levels were informed by the Joint Biosecurity Council recommendations, DHSC regional contain teams, directors of public health and local leaders
- He stated that a range of criteria was used to inform an escalation of thresholds, such as weekly incidence rates, hospital admissions and positivity rates

He also outlined the position of all Berkshire authorities and their alert level. He noted that:

- Slough would move into tier 2 on the 24th of October
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead were discussing their position with the Government and would continue to monitor their situation.
- Reading had requested to move into tier 2

33 Public Events

Sean Murphy provided an update on a number of upcoming public events. He noted that the Public Protection service had been working with Gold and the public health team on upcoming events. He noted that the Safety Advisory Group was meeting fortnightly, and that a number of events in West Berkshire had been cancelled in recent weeks as there was not a way to make these events Covid-19 secure. He stated that the group's focus was on Remembrance Day, which had been discussed and taken into account Government guidance. He further noted that the group were aware of the public desire to participate in acts of remembrance and were working to ensure that these could be done safely. He noted that the approach for these events was to keep them as small as possible and where social distancing can be performed and that risk assessments were carried out. He noted that the group had met with Newbury and Thatcham town councils and Thames Valley Police around performing much smaller events for Remembrance Day, with the possibility of livestreaming these online.

Councillor Bridgman stated his thanks to the Safety Advisory Group and Public Protection Partnership for covering these events and ensuring that they could be carried out safely.

Meradin Peachey stated that the messaging to residents over the use of the CV19 inbox to report events should be continued.

34 Communications Updates

Mandip Bilkhu provided an update on the work of the communications team around Covid-19. She stated that there had been a number of initiatives, such as the live Q&A with Councillor Doherty and Matt Pearce, work with schools around the importance of wearing a mask, a video on how to get a test and signage across Newbury high-street on how to stay safe with Covid-19. She also noted the team were continuing to release their residents' newsletter on a weekly basis. Coming up, there was messaging to schools on Halloween and how to be Covid-19 secure and Bonfire Night. Furthermore, she noted that communications had been working with community and voluntary groups on Covid-19 messages, Covid-19 and flu communications and that there would be an advert in

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Newbury Weekly News with a business focus. She also noted that she was in the early stages around local contact tracing and working with neighbouring authorities around non-compliance of Covid-19 measures. Lastly, she noted that there would be communications around alert levels and travelling to and from higher areas coming up.

Councillor Doherty stated that she would like to see some specific communications done for early year and pre-school aged children about Covid-19 security.

Councillor Masters asked if there was any data to see the reach and engagement of the communications updates and whether residents were engaging with posts on social media and the YouTube streams.

Councillor Vickers asked about Covid-19 guidance in dwellings with multiple occupants, such as apartment blocks.

Mandip Bilkhu stated she hadn't been asked about that specific advice but that she would be happy to publish guidance on this situation.

35 Agenda for the Next Public Meeting Dated 09 November 2020

Matt Pearce asked for an item on contact tracing.

36 Any Other Business

Councillor Woollaston noted that public meetings of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board would now take place fortnightly on Monday's at 6pm starting on the 9th of November.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 10.57 am)