

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, 31 JULY 2020

Councillors Present: Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Lynne Doherty, Martha Vickers and Howard Woollaston

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

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Nick Carter and Tessa Lindfield

Councillor(s) Absent: Councillor Steve Masters

PART I

1 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Howard Woollaston be elected Chairman of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Graham Bridgman be elected Vice-Chairman of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board for the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

3 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies received from Nick Carter and Tessa Lindfield.

4 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Martha Vickers declared an interest in that she was a member of Healthwatch, but reported that, as her interest was a personal interest, not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate.

5 Terms of Reference

Councillor Howard Woollaston outlined the Terms of Reference for the Local Outbreak Engagement Board. He stated that the board was in place to reassure the public that measures were in place to deal with any future Covid-19 spike(s) and were in a position to act swiftly to contain. He stated that key points to consider were to keep the public informed, endorse and oversee the Local Outbreak Control Plan and to take political ownership of the local response. He further noted that the board would oversee communications with the public in the event of a local spike and that it would work with neighbouring authorities in the event of a cross-border spike in cases of Covid-19. He stated that the board would act in an advisory capacity and would report to the Council's Gold command structure whilst also working closely with the Health and Wellbeing Board. He stated that the board would meet monthly which would be supplemented by private meetings to discuss sensitive information. He further noted that since the board

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was an advisory group, it would not be taking public questions, which would instead be answered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, Executive or Council.

Councillor Graham Bridgman made a number of comments about the terms of reference. In relation to membership of the board, he stated that the 'current Health and Wellbeing Board' should be changed to 'Health and Wellbeing Board'. He also noted that the wording for 'Shadow Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care' and 'Minority Group Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care' be changed to 'Opposition member of the Health and Wellbeing Board' and 'Minority Group Member of the Health and Wellbeing Board.' He stated that point 6 should be changed to 'or their substitutes on the HWBB if they are unable to attend'. He noted that point 7 should be changed from 'specifically' to 'for example'. He also stated that the reference to Zoom meetings and Webinars should be taken out as this may not be needed in the future. He further stated that Meradin Peachey should be listed as a committee member and not a substitute.

Councillor Martha Vickers asked why the board needed meetings in private.

Councillor Howard Woollaston stated that this was because sensitive information may need to be discussed.

Matt Pearce stated that the private meetings would allow for sensitive data and information to be shared with members.

Action: the Terms of Reference were accepted as amended by Councillor Graham Bridgman.

6 COVID-19 Status Report (Verbal Report)

Matt Pearce introduced a report that sought to outline the latest position of Covid-19 in West Berkshire. He stated that the report included the most up to date information on Covid-19 in West Berkshire. He noted that the report would be broken down into a number of sections:

- **Data flow:** He stated that there had been a vast improvement in the amount of data now available in West Berkshire. He stated that West Berkshire Council (WBC) was now receiving exceedance reports, where Public Health England (PHE) looked at a range of measures and informed the Council if the number of cases in West Berkshire exceeded what would be expected. He also noted that PHE publish a number of weekly reports, including postcode-level data and contact tracing. On a regional level, WBC received weekly reports from PHE South East on potential clusters and outbreaks. He further stated that WBC have access to NHS 111 information which acts as a further indicator to any potential outbreaks. Finally, he stated that local intelligence partners were crucial as they could potentially help spot outbreaks before they reached the system
- **National data:** He stated that as of 30 July 2020 there had now been over 300,000 lab confirmed cases of Covid-19. He stated that there had also been 45,961 deaths related to Covid-19 across the UK as of 30 July 2020.
- **Regional data:** He stated that death Covid-19 was having a bigger impact on older generations and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, and he stated that

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WBC was looking at how it could support and engage with these groups through prevention and response to any potential outbreak in the Local Outbreak Plan. He further noted that the highest number of deaths in hospitals were in London, the North West and the midlands.

- **Local cases:** He stated that from the 2nd of July, the data would include pillar 1 and pillar 2. Pillar 1 data included tests that have taken place in hospitals, whereas pillar 2 data included local community tests, which were taking place at Newbury Showground for West Berkshire. As of 30 July 2020, there were 492 residents in West Berkshire who had test positive. Across Berkshire as a whole there had been 3,372, where Reading had reported the most cases, although he did note that the demographics of the boroughs were different. He also highlighted that a number of people would be asymptomatic which would lead to an under-estimation of the true number of cases. He further noted that detection rates in West Berkshire were low and in the two weeks prior to 30 July 2020 there had been 14 confirmed new cases. Since the beginning of the outbreak, the total COVID19 cases detected in West Berkshire stands at 310 cases per 100,000 people. This number was lower than the national and regional average. He also touched on the weekly rate change in West Berkshire, he stated that whilst West Berkshire has seen an increase in the weekly rate of cases per 100,000, the numbers were relatively small which can reflect large percentage changes.
- **Death rates:** He stated that COVID-19 related deaths in comparison to Bracknell, Windsor & Maidenhead, West Berkshire reported a similar rate (84 per 100,000 persons) Maidenhead and Wokingham (between 1st March and 31st May). He also noted that there had been no deaths in recent weeks. Furthermore, he noted that the lowest COVID-19 Death Rate in the country was in North Lincolnshire - 19 per 100,000 and the highest COVID-19 Death Rate in the country was in Brent at 211 per 100,000. He further noted that the excess deaths in West Berkshire over the Covid-19 period stood at 116, but that this had now come down to a normal level. He also stated that The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (which serves all residents across Berkshire including those in West Berkshire) had reported 187 deaths related to COVID-19 as of 29 July 2020. In addition, The Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust (RBHFT) and neighbouring trust (Frimley) both had lower rates of COVID-19 deaths compared to the worst-affected Trusts in England.
- **Summary:** He stated that there had been 493 total cases in West Berkshire to date and that the cumulative rate of cases is 310 per 100,000 which was lower than South East and England average. He further noted that there had been 14 new cases over the last 14-days in West Berkshire and that the current weekly rate in West Berkshire of new cases was 5.7 per 100,000 compared to 3.2 the previous week. Furthermore, 131 Covid-19 deaths and 569 deaths from all causes, which appeared to be significantly higher compared to the 5-year average. He also stated that almost 50% of deaths from COVID-19 occurred in a care home, but that the overall number of COVID-19 deaths was falling and there had been no detectable excess mortality since mid-May.

Councillor Martha Vickers asked what had been done around communications and engagement with younger generations.

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Matt Pearce stated that nationally some transmission had been due to asymptomatic younger generations passing the virus on, but that the issue of communicating with these groups would be dealt with in the communications update.

7 Local Incident Report (Verbal Report)

Matt Pearce stated that there had been no major incidents to report, apart from a few cases in a care home that had been dealt with.

8 Communications Update (Verbal Report)

Mandip Bilkhu provided an update on the work of the communications team in response to Covid-19 and how they were engaging with the public. She stated that the communications plan had been drafted and was split into three phases. Phase one involved communication of preventative and national messages. Phase 2 involved local messaging and informing residents of local data and information on Covid-19. Phase 3 involved communication in the event of an outbreak what would be done. She further noted that there was now a dedicated page on the Council's website on the local outbreak plan, which was constantly being updated with new information. She also stated that the communications team were working with high risk settings to understand their processes and how their message can be communicated. She noted that the online parish conference had taken place, where town and parish councils were updated on the outbreak plan. Communications were also continuing to put national messages out into the public domain around face coverings and social distancing, whilst also working with businesses around signage and getting their message out. She stated that a leaflet had been designed that would be sent to residents (translated into Hindi, Polish, Portuguese and Urdu) with the aim to get the leaflet out the week commencing August 10. She noted that a pre-delivery publicity piece would be launched on the leaflet. She noted that a social media campaign on Facebook had been launched to encourage residents to look at the local outbreak plan and newsletter so they can get weekly updates. She stated that they had been working with Community Support Hub to reach their contacts. Lastly, she stated that there was a national campaign being launched on testing and tracing.

Councillor Lynne Doherty thanked the communications team for their hard work and getting the messages both national and local on Covid-19. She asked if the communications team used any other platforms than Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Mandip Bilkhu stated that the team also used YouTube and LinkedIn.

Matt Pearce stated that he and Tessa Lindfield were writing to workplaces to provide information on what do to if they had suspected or confirmed Covid-19 cases and to ensure they were Covid-19 secure.

Councillor Martha Vickers stated it would be wise to ensure that leaders of youth groups were communicating with the younger generations and providing a clear message. She further noted that the communications were internet heavy and asked what could be done for younger individuals who do not have access to the internet.

Mandip Bilkhu stated that the communications had been focusing on other communication streams than online, such as being able to phone the Council for advice. She noted that a larger leaflet for the visually impaired would also be sent out. She also noted that she would add communication with youth group leaders into the communications plan.

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Councillor Lynne Doherty stated the need to avoid information overload in the leaflet and that the leaflet is key to providing contact details. She noted that there were a number of phone numbers that dealt with the communications being too internet heavy. With regards to youth groups, she stated that the Hub had been working closely with these groups throughout Covid-19.

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 10.53 am)