

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 MONDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2020

Present: Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Nick Carter, Shairoz Claridge, Lynne Doherty, Steve Masters, Matt Pearce, Andy Sharp, Martha Vickers and Howard Woollaston

Also Present: Mandip Bilkhu (Communications and Marketing Officer), Catherine Greaves, Rachel Johnson (Senior Programme Officer) and Sean Murphy (Public Protection Manager), James Townsend (Policy Officer- Executive Support)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Tessa Lindfield

PART I

37 Apologies

Apologies were received from Tessa Lindfield.

38 Minutes of the previous meeting dated 23 October 2020

The minutes of the meeting dated 23 October 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

39 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

40 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 Sunday November 8 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.

New National Restrictions from Thursday November 5th:

- All Berkshire local authorities are following the new national restrictions from Thursday 5th November.
- This had replaced the local three-tier coronavirus alert system (Tiers 1, 2 and 3).

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 104.8 per 100,000 population, which is higher than the week before and higher than the week before that.
- The positivity rate was 6.3%
- The number of new cases in the last 7 days was 166

Epidemiology of cases:

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- There has been a total of 8,912 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Berkshire. 47% (4,186) of these cases have occurred since the beginning of October. Berkshire's weekly rate has continued to increase over this time, although it has remained significantly lower than the national rate.
- He noted that the number of cases was beginning to plateau and level out, which would hopefully lead to a reduction in time.

Over the 14 days (20th October to 2nd November) there were 1,830 cases confirmed for Berkshire residents:

- 10% of cases were confirmed through Pillar 1 testing and 90% through Pillar 2 testing
- 50% were female and 49% male (8 cases were unknown)
- 53% were from a White background, 30% from a BAME group and 17% had no ethnicity information recorded

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, but he was constantly keeping a close eye on the data to flag up any potential problems.

Deaths

- There have been 137 COVID-19 related deaths in West Berkshire during the pandemic.
- 2 deaths were recorded for the last 2 weeks (10th – 23rd Oct).
- Since March 2020, West Berkshire's all-cause mortality rate has been 24% higher than the previous 5 year average, which equates to 176 additional deaths.

Hospital activity

- Hospital activity information was not available for Berkshire hospitals or residents in a format that can be shared publicly. The information on this page therefore shows the latest data for the NHS South East Region.
- On 3rd November, 676 patients were in hospital with COVID-19 in the South East. 41 of these were on mechanical ventilation. The hospital admission rate continues to increase, although at a slower pace than the national picture.

Test and Trace:

- Cases complete by the NTAT and contacts advised to isolate.
- Cumulative data up to 9th November 2020:

LAs	Percentage of confirmed cases completed	Percentage of contacts completed
Reading	80%	70%
West Berkshire	82%	71%

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Wokingham

83%

69%

Summary

- West Berkshire has had 1,239 confirmed cases of COVID-19 so far and 166 of these have been over the last 7 days (27th – 3rd Nov).
- The weekly rate is currently at 104.8 per 100,000 population.
- 2 deaths were recorded for the last 2 weeks (10th – 23rd Oct).
- Since March 2020, West Berkshire's all-cause mortality rate has been 24% higher than the previous 5 year average, which equates to 176 additional deaths.
- We continue to see a number of outbreaks across schools, care homes, workplaces and health settings.
- We will have to wait a couple of weeks to see what impact the national restrictions will have on infection rates

Councillor Vickers asked if the data on cases in over 60's was correct at the last meeting as it had shot up.

Matt Pearce stated that it was correct, but it had increased unfortunately.

41 Local incidents

- An outbreak is defined by PHE as two or more cases with highly probable or confirmed epidemiological links. For care home settings one case counts as an outbreak.
- Number of new outbreaks in West Berkshire by setting (1st - 8th November):

Setting	Exposures/Cluster/Outbreaks
Schools (inc early years, primary, secondary and HE)	11
Care Homes	5
Workplaces	2
NHS/Health	0
Other	3

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. He also stated that an outbreak was classified as 2 or more cases with highly probable or confirmed epidemiological links. In addition to these outbreaks, there were a number of ongoing outbreaks identified at an earlier stage.

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Councillor Masters asked how the care home incidents were broken down in terms of council staff, such as agency.

Matt Pearce stated that he did not have the relevant data to hand but stated that the infection controls in care homes were robust. He noted that any cases that were picked up were dealt with quickly.

Andy Sharp noted that there had been additional resources and capacity invested to ensure care homes were Covid-19 secure. He noted that care homes in West Berkshire were in a strong position to deal with care homes.

42 **Contact tracing**

Sean Murphy provided an update on the new local contact tracing system. He noted that the new local contact tracing service began on the 5th of November and that PHE rated West Berkshire highly in its ability to deliver the service. He stated that it did not replace national scheme, complements it and that the service would look at cases that had not been traced by the national scheme in the first 24 hours. He stated that the service had been set up by the public health team and was managed by the Public Protection team. He noted that 30 officers had been trained to manage the service, which would operate on a rota.

Phase 1- currently in

- Phone calls to contacts, including voicemails
- Follow up email if welfare support needed
- Operating between the hours of 9am- 4:30/5pm, 7 days per week.

How does the service work?

- Case details securely downloaded from national test and trace system
- Team leader allocates cases/ households to a call handler
- Call handler calls the resident and advises the importance of self-isolation and then completes contact tracing.
- Call handler offers signposts to welfare support
- Information then uploaded to national test and trace system

Benefits from LCT

- Calls from a local number
- Able to signpost individuals to welfare support

Action: Sean Murphy to provide a further update on contact tracing in a few weeks.

Councillor Vickers asked if the 30 staff managing contact tracing were Council staff.

Sean Murphy stated they were existing staff from different departments of the Council who worked on a rota.

Councillor Doherty asked how the phone calls would identify themselves.

Sean Murphy stated that the 01635 number showed when being called and that those contacted were also sent a confirmation email.

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Councillor Masters asked if the national system provided any reasoning behind those who did not comply.

Sean Murphy stated that some people were not contactable, which may be a reluctance to answer unknown numbers. He also said that some people have shown a desire not to be contacted or share contact information. He stated that there were no numbers locally on non-compliance.

43 **Communications update**

Mandip Bilkhu provided an overview of the work of the communications team in relation to Covid-19:

- She noted that the new national restrictions had changed the focus
- Updated social media posts, hub bulletin, website, answering queries and newsletters in line with the new guidelines
- Business grant support press release outlining how they can access help
- Covid-19 residents' newsletter sent out on 09 November. She also encouraged residents to sign up to the newsletter.
- Local contact tracing information launch via press release, social media, newsletters and the website
- Social media posts about the new Berkshire Public Health dashboard
- Messaging on the importance of getting flu jabs
- Website on the new contact tracing in West Berkshire
- Leaflet out to households on the 23rd of November
- Service update to the website on the Covid-19 page, helping residents to understand what had changed
- Radio messaging on the new restrictions was being arranged
- Facebook live Q&A with the Leader to answer any Covid-19 questions

Councillor Vickers noted that she would like to see targeted messaging for the elderly population and whether this could be done and for communal areas in accommodation.

Councillor Doherty stated that the leaflet being sent to residents had a number of contact lines for residents, both email and phone to ask any Covid-19 related questions.

Mandip Bilkhu noted that those living on the borders of West Berkshire would also receive contact details of neighbouring authorities.

Councillor Vickers asked if there had been any feedback from previous leaflets.

Councillor Doherty stated that the resident's survey had outlined a positive response to the previous leaflet.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.57 pm)