

# 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, 23 NOVEMBER 2020

**Present:** Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Nick Carter, Shairoz Claridge, Lynne Doherty, Steve Masters, Meradin Peachey, Matt Pearce and Howard Woollaston

**Also Present:** Mandip Bilkhu (Communications and Marketing Officer), Catherine Greaves, James Townsend and Sally Moore

#### PART I

#### 44 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Martha Vickers and Andy Sharp.

#### 45 Minutes of the previous meeting dated 09 November 2020

The minutes of the meeting dated 09 November 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

#### 46 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### 47 Update from Trinity school

Dr Charlotte Wilson, head of the Newbury Academy Trust, which includes Trinity, Fir Tree and Speenhamland schools, provided an update to the board on the measures they had taken in the response to Covid-19. She outlined a number of measures that had been taken:

Primary schools (Fir Tree and Speenhamland)

- Have been able to bubble in their classes, staggered start and ends to the day, staggered break times. There has also been a focus on increased hand-washing and increased rules and regulation, whilst also limiting visitors to the schools. Lastly, it is mandatory for staff and pupils to wear masks when moving around the school.
- Bubbled after-school clubs

Trinity School:

- Year-group bubbles (200+)
- Year 7 and 8 in tutor groups, staying in the same room
- Years 9-13- designated rooms for lessons
- Hand-washing, limited visitors. Face-masks being worn around the school

She noted that the biggest challenge has been keeping the schools connected, the pupils, staff and communities. She also noted that the potential damage to learning was

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constantly being reviewed and dealt with. These challenges have been met through a number of solutions, such as:

- Virtual staff meetings
- Re-assuring staff, parents and pupils about covid-19 safety if they were concerned about their return to school
- Weekly staff briefing video
- Initiatives ran online in lockdown, which has also continued
- Assemblies done online
- Music events now done online
- Tried to stay connected with pupils, staff and parents as much as possible through online platforms
- She noted that the pupils had adapted admirably
- Curriculum changes, such as less enrichment activities in primary schools
- Not as many practical lessons in secondary schools, especially in the younger years, as they are restricted in the rooms they can enter

Councillor Doherty asked how the bubbling of classes and year groups had worked and how it had dealt with any possible isolations.

Dr Charlotte Wilson stated that luckily there had not been many cases of isolation. However, since half-term there had been an increase in the number of children required to self-isolate, such as recently sending home 58 pupils from Trinity School as they may have come into contact with a case. She noted that the schools had addressed gaps for those who have fallen behind by keeping those who may be struggling in one group, providing them with extra learning such as extra literature and numeracy lessons.

Councillor Masters asked about the support for families and children who were nervous about going back to school and asked if this a large number of pupils.

Dr Charlotte Wilson noted that once the school had spoken with these parents, it had tended to relieve any stresses and there had not been any follow up issues. She noted that attendances were just slightly lower compared to usual, but it was very minimal.

### **48 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 22 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 111.1 per 100,000 population, which is higher than the week before and higher than the week before that.
- The positivity rate was 6%
- The number of new cases in the last 7 days was 176
- West Berkshire had now had 1,568 cases of Covid-19

#### **Epidemiology of cases:**

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- There has been a total of 11,796 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Berkshire. 60% 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 (3<sup>rd</sup> to 16th November) there were 2,790 cases confirmed for Berkshire residents:

- 10% of cases were confirmed through Pillar 1 testing and 90% through Pillar 2 testing
- 54% were female and 46% male
- 54% were from a White background, 30% from a BAME group and 16% had no ethnicity information recorded

### Deaths

- There have been 139 COVID-19 related deaths in West Berkshire during the pandemic.
- 0 deaths were recorded for the last 2 weeks (31<sup>st</sup> October to 6<sup>th</sup> November).
- Since March 2020, West Berkshire's all-cause mortality rate has been 21% higher than the previous 5 year average, which equates to 169 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 17th November, 1,071 patients were in hospital with COVID-19 in the South East. The hospital admission rate was beginning to decrease.

### Outbreaks:

- 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 (16 – 22nd November:

Setting	Exposures/Cluster/Outbreaks
Schools (inc early years, primary, secondary and HE)	9
Care Homes	2
Workplaces	5
NHS/Health	0
Other	0

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### **Measures to prevent Covid-19**

- The most effective method of stopping transmission of Covid-19 is to wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds, to use a face mask in shops and enclosed public spaces and to keep 2 metres apart from others.

### **Tier system**

- Matt Pearce also outlined the differences between the new tiers post-lockdown, which were as follows:

## Key differences in England tier system

### TIER 1: MEDIUM

Follow the rule of six if meeting indoors or outdoors

Pubs and restaurants to shut at 11pm

People encouraged to minimise travel and work from home where possible

Spectators allowed at sports events and live performances (limited numbers)

Personal care including hairdressing allowed

### TIER 2: HIGH

No household mixing indoors

Rule of six will apply outdoors

Pubs and restaurants to shut at 11pm

Alcohol only served as part of substantial meal

Spectators allowed at sports events and live performances (limited numbers)

Personal care including hairdressing allowed

### TIER 3: VERY HIGH

No household mixing indoors or outdoors in hospitality venues or private gardens

Rule of six applies in outdoor public spaces like parks

Pubs/restaurants closed except for delivery and takeaway

Indoor entertainment venues closed

Guidance against travelling in and out of the area

Personal care including hairdressing allowed

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### **49 CCG Update**

Sally Moore provided an update on behalf of the clinical commissioning group. She noted that the work around communications and engagement of the group centred on making people aware that GP's were still open for business. She stated that the group had done lots of collaborative work with the Council and local voluntary groups reminding people to go and see their GP if they were concerned. Furthermore, she stated there had been a big push on messaging around getting flu vaccinations. She also noted that there had been some filming done with Berkshire Cancer Centre reminding people to carry on as normal with treatment and if they had any cancer concerns, this work was also being converted into a radio advert on BBC Berkshire.

Shairoz Claridge noted that there was on-going work on recovery and moving back to pre-Covid levels, she stated that these were almost back to normal. Furthermore, she stated that long-covid assessment clinics for patients suffering with post-Covid symptoms to assist them in their recovery.

Councillor Masters asked what initiatives had been taken to address issues for those disproportionately affected by Covid-19, such as BAME communities.

Sally Moore stated that lots of work had been done digitally and by leaflets, such as producing informative videos in different languages including details of flu vaccinations. She noted that the group had also been working with local voluntary groups to address the issue.

### **50 Public Protection Partnership**

Sean Murphy provided an update on the Public Protection Partnership.

#### **West Berkshire contact tracing service:**

- Referred 44 cases, successful in contacting 22 individuals. These were 22 that the national system would have missed.

Councillor Macro asked why the service did not run into the evening.

Sean Murphy stated that this would start soon and was currently running 7 days per week.

Councillor Doherty noted that those who were contacted had already been informed of their positive case so should be at home isolating.

Sean Murphy stated that compliance visits to businesses to make sure they were complying with the restrictions were on-going. He noted that the next stage was to continue with the contact tracing service and to continue to work with businesses around the changes post-lockdown.

Councillor Doherty asked what the route was if residents were concerned about compliance.

Sean Murphy stated that the best way was to phone or contact via the West Berkshire Council Public Protection Partnership website.

### **51 Communications update**

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

- Covid-19 newsletter was going out weekly
- Hub bulletin was sent out every 2 weeks
- Messaging on flu/ covid-19 vaccines was on-going and was being developed as we learn more about the vaccine
- Contact tracing messaging had been sent out
- The covid-19 leaflet had been sent out to residents, including in 4 different languages
- She noted that the communications team were working on some campaigns such as shopping locally when the lockdown had finished
- Additional restriction grants information had been sent out to local businesses
- She noted that there had been a big increase in views to the Berkshire public health website after LOEB meetings and social media messaging
- Mass testing and mass vaccination messages were being devised

Councillor Bridgman noted that updated care-home visitation guidance had been published on the Council website.

Councillor Doherty shared her thanks to Mandip and the communications team on their work with the leaflet that had been sent to residents.

### **52 Future agenda items**

Councillor Doherty asked for an update on messaging to residents about Christmas and staying safe. She noted that it would be useful to be included on the agenda for the next public meeting

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