

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, 18 JANUARY 2021

Present: Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Nick Carter, Shairoz Claridge, Lynne Doherty, Steve Masters, Meradin Peachey, Matt Pearce, Andy Sharp, Martha Vickers, James Townsend, Dr Abid Irfan, Mandip Bilkhu and Howard Woollaston

PART I

74 Apologies

There were no apologies received.

75 Minutes of the previous meeting dated 04 January 2021

The minutes of the meeting dated 04 January 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

76 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

77 Vaccination update

Dr Abid Irfan, from Strawberry Hill, Medical Centre, provided an update on the rollout of Covid-19 vaccinations across West Berkshire. He noted that nine West Berkshire GP surgeries had worked together to open a vaccination centre at the racecourse last Thursday. He noted that it had taken a bit of time to establish and thanked the racecourse, GP practice managers and volunteers for their efforts. He stated that the first clinics had been a real success with positive feedback from patients. Clinics were held on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday using one batch of the Pfizer vaccine.

Dr Irfan said that three of the largest care homes in the district had been administered with around 300 doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine. He further noted that it had been a good start and that he was hoping to ramp up the numbers as we get more and more of the vaccine, but it was determinant on the supply of the vaccine. He said the racecourse would probably be running to full capacity in the next week, with clinics on Tuesday and Friday, after which there were housebound patients who would be using community centres.

Councillor Steve Masters asked whether the racecourse could be used seven days a week.

Dr Irfan noted that it was subject to race days. If there was a race day, even if it's behind closed doors, he noted that it was his understanding that the racecourse had said the site could not be used. He further noted that assuming there was no race days the next question was when the supplies were coming in. He stated that if the supply was on a Monday you normally book the next three days. However, if the centre were getting a supply every day, and no race days, then technically it could operate as a seven-day hub, subject to staff and volunteers.

Dr Irfan also stated that the racecourse was chosen following the success of a coronavirus primary care hub established there last April. He noted that the site was chosen because it is a central location, had lots of easy access, parking and a great venue to work with.

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Councillor Howard Woollaston asked why GPs had decided not to vaccinate at the nine surgeries using the racecourse.

Dr Irfan noted that he believed the reasoning was not to disrupt services back at the surgeries. He stated that he knew some surgeries had done that but the view, as a collective group of GPs, was that it was best done off site so that they could maintain those services. He said that surgeries had a number of national priorities such as mental health checks and smear tests. He noted that he felt that to provide a safe and on-going service for all the routine care it was better off site, and all the logistics around the Pfizer vaccine, the infection control, mixing up, it made more sense.

Councillor Boeck noted that a number of his residents were part of surgeries across the border in Hampshire and were concerned they were not getting a fair deal, given Hampshire seemed to be progressing at a greater pace than West Berkshire.

Dr Irfan stated that West Berkshire was one of the latter waves, so it was just a matter of timing and that West Berkshire would catch up and as supplies increased to our hub, then the vaccination centre would be able to ramp up capacity significantly. He noted that there may be a bit of a lag but he would reassure patients and say we are working on it. He noted that the hard work was done now and it was now about just getting the vaccine and then we can ramp up capacity. He stated that West Berkshire would will get through all the cohorts. It may be two or three weeks behind those who started before Christmas but we would get there.

Councillor Lynne Doherty asked about the timescale of vaccinating different age groups.

Dr Irfan stated that because West Berkshire was one of the later waves to start because of the set up time, it probably needed to continue with the over 80s for now. He said that he was quite confident that all care homes would be vaccinated by the weekend. He further added that once those cohorts were out of the way, they would move down the cohorts - extremely clinically vulnerable, over 75s, the 70s – which was all subject to supply of the vaccine. He noted that at the moment you can't go and order the vaccine, it's a push system but he was advised that it was going to change.

He stated that the difficulty with planning at the moment was that the vaccination centre did not know what it was going to get the next week, so it was working within a short few days, so that was why it was not as smooth as it could be. However, once it was on an ordering system it could plan weeks in advance.

Furthermore, he noted that some residents had reported being asked to travel to the NHS vaccination centre in Marlow. He stated that this had caused a bit of confusion but that it was there to provide some choice. He advised that surgeries were working through the list of patients but they would be in touch and then they can have it done locally.

Dr Irfan said that surgeries had been asked not to share local vaccination figures because they are sent and compiled nationally and then need to be validated to make sure they are accurate.

78 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 the 13 January 2021. 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.

Restrictions:

- The whole of Berkshire remained in a national lockdown

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- Further information could be found via:
<https://www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk/covid-19-dashboard>

Situational awareness (data correct for the week 13 January 2021):

- He noted that the positivity rates per 100,000 had decreased across all Berkshire authorities compared to the previous week and now stood at 313 per 100,000 in West Berkshire, which was the lowest rate in Berkshire. Slough continued to see rates in excess of 1000 per 100,000.
- The positivity rate was 10.2% in West Berkshire
- Cases per 100,000 for the 60+ age group stood at 226.2
- West Berkshire had now had 4,716 cases of Covid-19
- The number of new confirmed cases in West Berkshire over the previous 7 days was 496
- He noted that the new variant of Covid-19 was playing a big part in the continual high level of cases

Epidemiology of cases:

- There had been 38,880 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Berkshire. 62% of these had occurred since the beginning of December.

Deaths

- There had been 169 COVID-19 related deaths in West Berkshire during the pandemic.
- 10 deaths were recorded for the last week (26th December to 1 January).
- Since March 2020, West Berkshire's all-cause mortality rate has been 20% higher than the previous 5 year average, which equates to 198 additional deaths.

Hospital activity

- The information on this page shows the latest data for the Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust
- On 5 January 2021, 194 patients were in hospital with COVID-19 in the Royal Berkshire Hospital. 20 of these were on mechanical ventilation. The hospital admission rate was increasing.

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.
- Over the previous 14 days, PHE had informed of 19 new incidents in Berkshire
- Number of new outbreaks in West Berkshire by setting (11 to 18 January):

Setting	Exposures/Cluster/Outbreaks
Schools (inc early years, primary, secondary and HE)	6
Care Homes	5

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Workplaces	2
NHS/Health	1
Other	5

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.

Councillor Doherty stated that it appeared that the current restrictions were doing their job, however she was aware that the situation could change rapidly. She asked if Matt Pearce had any key messages he wanted to re-iterate to residents.

Matt Pearce noted that it was vital to continue with social distancing and sticking to the guidelines despite the vaccination programme getting under-way. He said the best thing would be to act as if you had the virus and that new variants across the world meant this was now more vital than ever. He thanked the public for all the sacrifices they had made.

Councillor Vickers noted she had received concerns about younger people congregating. She asked if youth services could be utilised to engage with young people to continue to get the messages across. She also asked about the likelihood of passing on the virus even if an individual had been vaccinated.

Matt Pearce noted that he had been in contact with Thames Valley police recently and had not received any significant concerns over non-compliance. In terms of vaccine transmission, he noted that we simply did not have evidence to date as of yet. He stated that it is best to carry on with the measures imposed.

Councillor Masters asked if there had been an increase in mortuary capacity in Berkshire.

Meradin Peachey noted that there had not been as it was not needed, given that excess deaths compared to other years was not vastly different. In relation to Councillor Vickers' point about transmissibility after receiving a vaccine, she noted that individuals could still pass the virus on as the vaccine only helped to fight the virus, it did not stop individuals actually catching it.

79 Communications update

Mandip Bilkhu provided an update on the work of the communications team during Covid-19. She noted that:

- Much of the communications work had been focused on messaging around the national restrictions
- Local contact tracing issues with individuals not providing workplace details had been addressed

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- Working with the Public Protection Partnership to develop communications for business to ensure they were following the guidelines
- Paid for social media adverts aimed at 16-29 year olds, with 24,000 people reached
- Information on support for vaccinations that would be included on the website, keeping residents engaged with the vaccination rollout
- Information pack on what to do if required to self-isolate was due to be released on the website
- The team were continuing to signpost residents to mental health services during the lockdown

Councillor Vickers asked if communications around transmissibility of the virus after receiving a vaccination could be put in place.

Mandip Bilkhu noted that work on this was in the pipeline.

80 Future agenda items

Councillor Woollaston noted that it would be useful to have more local healthcare professionals attend the next meeting to give an update on their experiences with dealing with Covid-19.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.45 pm)