

LOCAL OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD (PUBLIC)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 21 JUNE 2021

Councillors Present: Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman (Chairman), Lynne Doherty, Alan Macro (Substitute) (In place of Martha Vickers), Steve Masters and Joanne Stewart (Vice-Chairman)

Also Present: Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Martin Dunscombe (Communications Manager), Sean Murphy (Public Protection Manager), Matthew Pearce (Service Director-Communities & Wellbeing, Public Health and Wellbeing) and Andy Sharp (Executive Director (People)), Gordon Oliver (Principal Policy Officer) and Jo Reeves (CCG Locality Manager)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Martha Vickers

PART I

164 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting dated 7 June 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

165 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

166 Covid-19 situational report

The Board considered a presentation from Matthew Pearce (Agenda Item 4) on the Covid-19 Situational Report. Key points were as follows:

- Data for the period to 15 June 2021 showed that there were 76 confirmed cases, equivalent to 48 cases per 100,000 population in West Berkshire.
- This was slightly higher than the regional average, but lower than the national average.
- The latest data just released by Public Health England showed the rate had increased to 56 cases per 100,000.
- In terms of age groups, the highest rates were in people aged 20-24 (100 per 100k) and 15-19 (85 per 100k).
- Cases were higher in the eastern parts of the district.
- Most outbreaks have been in schools, particularly around the fringes of Reading.
- There had been 50 confirmed cases of the Delta variant so far, but the actual number would be higher due to the time taken to sequence the tests. There had been 239 cases in Reading and 229 in Wokingham.
- Hospitalisations remained low. On 21st June there were two patients in Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust hospitals; one of these was in the HDU/ITU.
- The total deaths since the start of the pandemic remained at 253 and the mortality rate for June was lower than the five year average, which showed that the vaccine was working.

LOCAL OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD (PUBLIC) - 21 JUNE 2021 - MINUTES

The Chairman queried whether there was data to demonstrate if there was a correlation between vaccination data and Covid infections, i.e. were vaccinated individuals catching the new variants? This was being monitored at a national level where they could match hospitalisations against vaccination records. The vaccine had been shown to reduce infection by 60-70 percent, hospitalisation risk by 50 percent and transmission by 80 percent based on national data. Hospitalisation was still possible with the vaccine, but it was significantly less likely.

167 Vaccination programme update

The Board considered a presentation from Jo Reeves (Agenda Item 5) on the vaccination programme. Key points were as follows:

- She demonstrated the updated Government Coronavirus dashboard, which included local authority level vaccination data and was being updated daily. This showed that within West Berkshire 107,563 residents had received their first doses and 77,625 had received their second doses.
- Local data showed that within West Berkshire: 78 percent of the eligible population have had at least one dose of the vaccine (up from 73 percent two weeks ago), and 55 percent have had their second (up from 46 percent two weeks ago). These figures were comparable to the national rate for England.
- Although younger age groups were being targeted, vaccines were still available for people aged over 40 and could be accessed via the online booking service.
- The uptake in vaccinations amongst ethnically diverse groups had improved, with younger age groups coming forward quickly.
- There were no immediate plans for surge testing within West Berkshire.
- Vaccinations within the more deprived wards had caught up well, particularly in Thatcham Central.
- A mobile vaccination bus has been deployed in Wokingham and Reading to support the vaccination programme.
- Uptake has been high in vulnerable groups. There was a push to encourage high-risk individuals to receive their second dose.

Councillor Doherty asked for more information about the mobile vaccination unit. The mobile bus unit was to be deployed in West Berkshire starting the week beginning 28th June 2021, particularly targeting the racing industry. Communications regarding its schedule to be released shortly.

Councillor Macro raised the need for communications on alternative vaccination sites following the closure of the facility at Newbury Racecourse.

168 Public Protection Partnership update

The Board considered a presentation from Sean Murphy (Agenda Item 6) on the work of the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). Key points included:

- Rising local infection rates were primarily, but not exclusively, centred on schools.
- Monitoring was ongoing on seven days a week.
- The PPP was extending compliance work with local businesses until the new Step 4 date in July. This would be reviewed as necessary.
- The delay in Step 4 would impact on events. Some would only have a few days in which to make a decision, while others had been delayed until 2022 to avoid the uncertainty of this summer. The PPP was working with organisers to support them with the changing guidance and legislation.

No questions were asked.

LOCAL OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD (PUBLIC) - 21 JUNE 2021 - MINUTES

169 Communications update

The Board considered a presentation from Martin Dunscombe (Agenda Item 7) on communications. Key points were as follows:

- Communications have focussed on the following topics:
 - The announcement of the delayed move to Step 4. An E-bulletin was sent out after the Prime Minister’s announcement.
 - Community testing services and access to home testing.
 - Vaccine eligibility information and encouraging uptake amongst young people, including an Instagram campaign (#WhatsYourReason) highlighting why people wanted to have the vaccine.

There were no questions.

170 Future meetings and agenda items

The Chairman suggested that Local Outbreak Engagement Board meetings should continue for at least one meeting after the end of restrictions.

Matt Pearce proposed an agenda item on vaccine hesitancy and inequalities.

Members were invited to email Councillor Bridgman or Gordon Oliver if they would like any other items to be added to future meeting agendas.

171 Any other business

No additional matters were raised.

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and closed at 6.40 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature