

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

LOCAL COVID OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD WEDNESDAY, 30 JUNE 2021
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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOCAL COVID OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30 JUNE 2021 AT 1400 HOURS ON-LINE

PRESENT: -

Councillor Matt Bennett, Opposition Spokesperson on Health and Social Care
Andy Cave, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Birmingham
Chief Superintendent Stephen Graham, West Midlands Police
Councillor Paul Tilsley
Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health
Councillor Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council and Chairman for the LCOEB

ALSO PRESENT:-

Richard Burden, Chair, Healthwatch Birmingham
Mark Croxford, Head of Environmental Health, Neighbourhoods
Dr Julia Dule-Macrae
Morag Gates, Project Director, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS
Foundation Trust
Dr Parmjit Marok, Black Country and West Birmingham CCG
Pip Mayo, Managing Director - West Birmingham, Black Country and West
Birmingham CCGs
Jabir Rai, BVSC
Errol Wilson, Committee Services

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- 184 The Chair welcomed everyone to the Local Covid Outbreak Engagement Board meeting.

NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

- 185 The Chair advised, and the Committee noted, that this meeting will be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's meeting You Tube site

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(www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 186 Apologies for absences were submitted on behalf of Councillor Paulette Hamilton, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and Deputy Chair of the LCOEB; Paul Jennings, Chief Executive, NHS Birmingham and Solihull CCG (but Morag Gates as substitute), Dr Manir Aslam (but Dr Parmjit Marok as substitute); Councillor Brigid Jones, Deputy Leader of Birmingham City Council; Pip Mayo, Managing Director - West Birmingham, Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs and Stephen Raybould, Programmes Director, Ageing Better, BVSC (but Jabir Rai as substitute).
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DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- 187 The Chair reminded Members that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared a Member must not speak or take part in that agenda item. Any declarations will be recorded in the Minutes of the meeting.
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MINUTES

- 188 **RESOLVED:-**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2021, having been previously circulated, were confirmed by the Chair.

CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 189 The Chair advised that Agenda Item 10 has been deferred to a later meeting due to some personal changes at the City Council. The Chair further advised that he would take agenda item 9 ahead of the remaining reports as Chief Superintendent Stephen Graham, West Midlands Police will need to leave the meeting early as he was deployed to overseas duties due to England winning the football match against Germany.
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ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

Mark Croxford, Head of Environmental Health, Neighbourhoods and Chief Superintendent Stephen Graham, West Midlands Police presented the item and drew the Board's attention to the information contained in the slide presentation on *Covid Marshall and Enforcement Update* and the report from West Midlands Police.

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(See document No. 1)

Councillor Paul Tilsley referred to the fines imposed on the Shusha Bars and enquired whether any of them had been paid or would we need to resort to the courts.

Mr Croxford advised that the Council was currently looking at court actions as they were openly being contested. Mr Croxford added that a visit was made by representatives from the Cabinet Office on Monday and that he along with the Police took them out to the two shisha bars in question and gave them some space to speak with the management and for them to put their views to the Cabinet officer as we had given our side whilst we were on our way to visit the sites. The management of the shisha bars were adamant that they were being picked on, but this was what the legislation stated. There was a real risk of spread as people were sharing the ends of the pipes i.e. from mouth to mouth which was high risk and unfortunately, we were at the point where the Fixed Penalty Notices were issued and we will be in court with them concerning the issue.

The Leader commented that they had been warned and for some considerable time now we had been communicating with businesses around the city about the need to follow all of the regulations. It was right that the Council had taken action as they were putting other people at risk.

190

RESOLVED: -

The Board noted the reports.

COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATE

191

Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health presented the item and drew the attention of the Board to the information contained in the slide presentation highlighting the main points.

(See document No. 2)

The Chair commented that there was a lot of very important hard work was being done by Dr Varney and his team. The Chair reiterated that it was rear for England to beat Germany at a tournament football match, but people do need in spite of the excitement to continue to follow all of the rules – hands, face, space – as that still applied and will apply on Saturday when England takes on the Ukraine in the quarter final. The Chair appealed to people to continue to follow all of the rules. He added that if you were going out to a bar or restaurant to ensure that you were wearing your mask when you were not seated at your table, regularly wash your hands and maintain a safe distance as this was the way to keep everybody as safe as we possibly could.

Dr Varney advised that our new buzz phrase was *#lateralflowbeforeyougo* which was an important message. If you were going out to watch the match, please do a lateral flow test before you go as it was a good way of finding out if you were infectious as you might go and spread that round. The lesson from

the Scotland match we were now seeing playing out in numbers was an important reminder so *#lateralfollowbeforeyougo*.

The Board noted the presentation.

VACCINATION ROLLOUT AND UPTAKE

192

Morag Gates, Project Director, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, Dr Parmjit Marok, Black Country and West Birmingham CCG and Pip Mayo, Managing Director - West Birmingham, Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs presented the item.

Ms Gates made the following statements:-

- a. Across Birmingham we have now delivered 1.3m vaccines which was probably around 300,000 vaccines to people who did not live within the Birmingham or Solihull. The split was broadly 750,000, first doses and about 400,000 second doses.
- b. We continue to vaccinate people that were not from Birmingham quite rightly because they visit our city or work within our city. As we move down the cohorts, we were beginning to see hesitancy from our youngsters.
- c. As Dr Varney stated earlier, we had seen outbreaks amongst our students. However, we had a week of vaccinating students which had a targeted event across all of the universities.
- d. We had a tent in the university grounds today and we will be going back there if the students were still within Birmingham once they had the elapsed time between being positive and having to get the vaccine.
- e. It remained a group that we were targeting and focusing on that we all needed to encourage to come and get vaccinated.
- f. On top of that we continue to target the 15 Wards and we were doing that in the main through our community pharmacies, our local vaccination services and GPs and of course the roving models through our vans.
- g. We were grateful to all colleagues with the communications around the mobiles and the walk-ins in particular and we saw evidence of the communications improving uptake in our most vulnerable communities.
- h. Sometimes, when the vans goes out, we may only vaccinate between 40 and 50 people, but the view that we took was that this was just another 50 people that were safe and hopefully, they went on to speak with friends and family to make sure they were likewise safe.
- i. Dr Varney spoke about the clinically vulnerable earlier, and our local vaccination services in particular picking up our clinically vulnerable residents with one to one conversations to try and find out why people were not coming forward to be vaccinated and see what they could do to either dispel myths or to allay any fears that people may have.
- j. We continue with the three mass vaccination sites across the city - millennium Point, Aston Villa and Edgbaston. Aston Villa did close for a few days due to the football and Edgbaston had closed on a few occasions because of the cricket matches that had gone ahead there, but we continued to provide coverage across the city.

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- k. Ms Gates expressed thanks to community champions and Faith leaders - Faith leaders had been particularly instrumental in accessing some of our hesitant groups. As Dr Varney stated earlier, we had been to some of our Faith centres and we continue to target them now and in the future.
- l. Our message was twofold – we still had vulnerable people out there that needed to be vaccinated and it was important that people to come back for their second dose. We must encourage our youngsters to come and get vaccinated as we know that they were the groups that currently had a high proportion of the virus and they will spread it.
- m. We welcome any help that Members could give us in spreading that word to our youngsters and the most vulnerable in our community.

Pip Mayo made the following statements;-

- I. We were looking to increase the range of outlets locally and there were a lot of sites that were now offering walk-in vaccination which proved to be popular with some of our younger cohorts so that as and when people got up and feel right today was the day for my jab, they could go to any of the walk-in vaccination clinics and do so.
- II. There was good information on the Birmingham and Solihull website where those were at all times. This was regularly updated so that people could see where they could access that.

Dr Parmjit Marok made the following statements;-

- I. Dr Marok reiterated the points made by everyone and stated that there were three things – the opportunity to get vaccinated which we were addressing at the moment and the messaging around the importance for the different groups to get their vaccinations done and the vital information for the younger people.
- II. The other group was the hesitancy and the work we were doing around that and ensuring that patients and the public were feeling that this was the right thing to do and questions they may have about the vaccination, there was an opportunity for that to be answered as was stated previously.
- III. There was a lot of information that was out there via several different avenues in order to help with vaccine hesitancy. The main message was to get vaccinated to protect yourselves and those around you.

The Chair echoed the above comments and stated that if you were hesitant, please do not listen to myths or stories, but go and consult an expert. Speak with your GPs or those at the vaccination centre who will give you the correct advice. The Chair encouraged everyone to take the vaccine as it was the way to protect ourselves and our loved ones.

Andy Cave, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Birmingham commented that the importance of true community engagement around the vaccine programme and highlighted that particularly in West Birmingham we chaired the coordination group around community engagement and they were looking at targeting work around Ward bringing together community groups and community leaders to get together with those delivery partners so that we could have leading in time and support people to get to the vaccination centre. Hopefully, this will embed

some sustainable community development work within our communities to increase vaccinations going forward.

LEARNING FROM PILOTS AND POP-UPS

193

Pip Mayo, Managing Director - West Birmingham, Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs; Morag Gates, Project Director, University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and Dr Parmjit Marok, Black Country and West Birmingham CCG presented the item.

Ms Mayo made the following statements:-

1. Clearly the things that came to mind was the joint effort that had taken place behind the vaccine programme to ensure that we make the reach that we need.
2. In terms of some of the work that we needed to be effective was the persistent joint approach in as many outlets as possible. Offering hours that people wanted to access in places that people go delivering services by people they recognised.
3. In terms of the pop-up clinics that we put on that had gone into some of the particular BAME communities we ensured that we had clinicians that spoke the languages that matched the demographics of the groups we were going to try and vaccinate etc. so that some of those barriers were broken down from the outset.
4. We could see that that persistence had started to yield results as we were having some increased uptakes now in some of our Wards that were lowest to start off with.
5. Where this had been most effective (and we had alluded to this) was that coming alongside clinicians and community leaders, Elected Members and sometimes the business communities, we got the message right the way through the community that the vaccinations were here and vaccination buses were coming and people could come forward to have their vaccination.

At this juncture Ms Mayo then shared a slide presentation concerning a group of young people from the BAME community to do some work with us to create *Tik Tok* to try and set out what vaccine meant to them. We had been trying to use some of our young people as messengers. There was a huge amount of hits on these Tik Tok sites.

Ms Gates made the following statements:-

- a. We have been using mobile vans and pop-up clinics from the beginning of the programme.
- b. Looking back to earlier on in the year we recognised that marginalised communities were not going to access a big site, a hospital hub or a GP practice.
- c. Whilst the importance of the pop-ups had been heightened recently, it was worth reflecting that we had been running one or two vans within Birmingham City region right the way through the programme because we wanted to make sure no one was left behind and that there was equality on offer to people.

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- d. Birmingham had led the way in some of that as other cities had used pop-ups locally but we were using them across the city across the whole of the programme.
- e. The communication had been much better recently as we had engaged with more people and that was certainly a piece of learning that we need to take into the winter with whatever that might brought us.
- f. The importance of engaging with all stakeholders, Elected Members, Covid Champions and patient groups.

The Chair commented that the innovative ways that we came up with in trying to engage with people and making it easier and easier for them to get vaccinated was definitely the right approach. We still had some tens of thousands of people over the age of 50 that had not been vaccinated. We had to keep going at them to try and persuade them to come forward and encourage people that if they had any hesitancy this was far safer rather than leaving themselves at risk of catching the virus. The Chair further stated that let us learn the lessons that we had learnt so far and keep going and get the vaccine into as many arm as we possibly could.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SUBMITTED IN ADVANCE

- 194 The Chair introduced the item and advised that there were no public questions submitted for this meeting.

TEST AND TRACE BUDGET OVERVIEW

Dr Justin Varney, Director of Public Health introduced the item and drew the attention of the Board to the information contained in the report.

(See document No. 3)

Dr Varney highlighted that we had been well judged in some of our planning for this budget particularly the testing contingency budget that we built in. To date we had been able to claim reimbursement from the Department of Health for the Community Testing Programme. However, from the 1st July 2021, there was a change in the national tariff system which moved to a model in which the tariff was less and it was focussed purely on a specific element of testing. It did not cover any of the logistics, any of the storage or nay of the management of the testing service. This meant that in the next three months we had continuity of the testing programme until the end of September currently confirmed. That would create a cost pressure on the budget of about £280,000 for the workforce, logistics and the delivery of the testing programme over Birmingham. It was fortuitous that we put aside a provisional budget to support asymptomatic testing of £1.5m in this financial year. This would be coming and the cost pressure would start showing from September Board in the statement.

The Board will also remember that we proposed for the budget to take us through to the end of September 2022 to provide the additional capacity both in Public Health and Environmental Health to ensure that we had a robust

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enforcement in place to support the Commonwealth Games. It was hoped that Covid would have reduced to the level of seasonal flu by the time we got to 2022. It was prudent that we do have surge response in place not just for Covid but also for other challenges that may come. This was the reason the budget was profiled in that way. There were somethings for invoices to come in but this budget reflected the date from the beginning of April and the majority of spend was on staff which was what we expected.

We will be drawing down from the contingency budget to support some of the spend in the enhanced Wards , the 15 Wards were we were doing the additional work as this was not something, we could claim back from the Department of Health currently.

The Chair expressed thanks to Dr Varney and his team for the prudent response to the budget to deal with the on-going situation.

195 **RESOLVED:** -

That the Board noted the report.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

196 No items of urgent business were raised.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

197 It was noted that the next Local Covid Outbreak Engagement Board meeting would be held on Wednesday 21 July 2021 at 1400 hours as an online meeting.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

198 **RESOLVED:** -

That in view of the nature of the business to be transacted which includes exempt information of the category indicated the public be now excluded from the meeting:-

Exempt Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A.

