

Health and Wellbeing Board (Local Outbreak Engagement Board)

Sub-Committee

Tuesday 19 January 2021 at 4.00 p.m.

Virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams

Held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020; and conducted according to the Council's Standing Orders for Remote Meetings and those set out in the Council's Constitution

Present Councillor S. Craddock (Chair)
Dr. A. Rischie, Clinical Commissioning Group (Vice-Chair)
Manjit Dehal, One Walsall
Mr. D. Fradgley, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust
Mr. S. Gunther, Director of Public Health
Dr. M. Lewis, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust
Chief Superintendent A. Parsons, West Midlands Police
Councillor I. Robertson

In Attendance Mr. G. Griffiths, Walsall Managing Director, Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs
Dr. U. Viswanathan, Consultant in Public Health
Mr J. Elsegood, Interim Director of Communications
Ms. C. Heath, Senior Public Health Intelligence Officer

Welcome

At this point, the Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Local Outbreak Engagement Board and explained the rules of procedure and legal context in which the meeting was being held. He also directed members of the public viewing the meeting to the papers which could be found on the Council's Committee Management Information system (CMIS) webpage.

42/21 Apologies and substitutions

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Dr. Lewis.

43/21 Minutes

Resolved (via roll call)

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2020, copies having been sent to each member of the Sub-Committee, be approved and signed as a correct record.

44/21 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

45/21 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985

There were no items to consider in private session.

46/21 Questions from the Public

The Chair reported that three questions from members of the public had been received. He introduced the questions, as set out in the report, and asked for answers to be provided in the forthcoming agenda items.

47/21 Walsall Covid-19 Data

Councillor Craddock introduced the item and welcomed Mr Ian Hawkins to the meeting.

Mr Hawkins explained how he had caught Covid-19 last year and was invited to explain its effects. He reported that he had caught the virus after visiting the Cheltenham Festival in March 2020. Three days after the festival he started to experience Covid-19 symptoms. He was admitted into hospital with his oxygen levels at 83%. He was in hospital for over 10 weeks with 3½ of those in an induced coma on a ventilator. During his time in hospital he survived organ failure, sepsis and had to undergo dialysis. As part of his recovery he had difficulty walking and holding his head up. At present he could still not feel his left foot, suffered from fatigue and breathlessness. Prior to catching Covid-19 he had been fit and healthy with no underlying health conditions. He thanked the Manor Hospital for saving his life and facilitating short outdoor visits with his family as he was recovering whilst visiting inside the hospital was forbidden.

Councillor Craddock thanked Mr Hawkins for sharing his experiences and invited the Senior Public Health Intelligence Officer to present a dashboard report providing an overview of the current situation for Walsall.

(see annexed)

She highlighted that following the national lockdown, introduced on 5 January 2021, cases were beginning to decline. They were currently 732 per 100,000 people compared to the previous week where rates were 815 per 100,000. She reported that around 25 people a day were being admitted to hospital. She also sadly noted that since the start of the pandemic 564 local people had died due to Covid-19.

Following a question the Senior Public Health Intelligence Officer explained that whilst positive cases had begun to decline it was expected that hospital admissions and deaths would continue to rise over the coming weeks.

The Director of Public Health reported that the Kent variant of Covid-19 was responsible for over 70% of cases. The working age population was the largest group testing positive. Outbreaks in care homes were also reported.

The Chair highlighted now the care home where his parents lived was experiencing an outbreak. This was despite strict control measures being in place.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

48/21 Covid-19 Vaccination Update

The Board received an update on ongoing work to deliver Covid-19 vaccinations across the borough.

Mr. Griffiths began by highlighting the significant partnership working that was being undertaken to deliver the vaccine across the borough. He thanked everyone for their efforts in particular the many volunteers who were giving up their time to help the local community.

He continued to outline the achievements of the vaccine programme so far and the logistical challenges being tackled including the refrigeration requirements for the Pfizer vaccine.

Regarding the safety of the vaccine he reported that nationally only 9 individuals had experienced any negative effects after receiving their first dose. None of the 9 cases had required hospital treatment. There had been no evidence of severe reactions and every incident was closely monitored. Vaccination centres were operated by healthcare professionals and safety information was shared widely to ensure that any risk factors were identified quickly for management. Other Board Members spoke in support of the safety of the vaccine.

Dr. Rischie reported some hesitancy about getting vaccinated in BAME communities. He highlighted that the vaccine contained no ingredients that made it unacceptable on religious grounds.

The Board discussed methods of engaging the local community to promote vaccine take up. Ms. Dehal offered to assist with this promotion through One Walsall.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

49/21 Walsall Local Outbreak Plan Update

Dr. Viswanathan, Consultant in Public Health, introduced the report updating the Board on the Local Outbreak Management Plan actions, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

(see annexed)

She highlighted work taking place with the deployment of lateral flow tests. Further to that she noted the majority of the plan had been achieved. Following a question she reported that data on different variants of the virus was captured at a national level and that numbers of reinfections were low.

The Chair suggested that, in future, the plan could be considered on an exception basis or if there were any changes made to it.

Resolved (by roll call):

That:

- 1) future updates on Walsall Outbreak Management Plan be made on an exception basis or if changes are made to it;**
- 2) the report be noted.**

50/20 Lateral Flow Tests Update

Dr Viswanathan introduced the report highlighting the approach being undertaken to test asymptomatic individuals within the community.

(see annexed)

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

41/20 Communication & Engagement

Mr. J. Elsegood, Interim Director of Communications, Marketing and Brand, gave a presentation updating the Board on the communication campaigns and how these linked with high level decisions and the Incident Management Team. He outlined the website traffic and the next phase of the communications campaign that would focus on the vaccine and lateral flow tests.

(see annexed)

Chief Superintendent Parsons reported that the Police were increasing the levels of enforcement relating to Covid-19 offences and encouraged support for this activity on social media.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

The meeting terminated at 5.45pm

Chair:

Date: