

AT A MEETING of the Hampshire Local Outbreak Engagement Board of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL remotely on Monday, 2nd November, 2020

Chairman:

* Councillor Keith Mans

* Councillor Liz Fairhurst

* Councillor Patricia Stallard

* Councillor Judith Grajewski

Councillor Keith House

Invited Attendees

Also present at the invitation of the Chairman:

Councillor Keith House
Councillor Ken Rhatigan
Judy Gillow
Laura Taylor

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore, Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

There were no declarations of interest.

35. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

36. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations received.

The Chairman invited Councillor Jackie Porter to speak and she shared her concern regarding schools over the lockdown period and the way in which children can access schools. Parents are finding a disparity in terms of what is

being offered in terms of visiting new schools- some settings are encouraging people to visit, but many are not. She hoped that firm, consistent advice will be shared soon with schools.

It was agreed that Councillor Patricia Stallard would pick up on this query following the meeting, with Councillors Jackie Porter and Roz Chadd, as well as the Director of Public Health, as there was no official national position at the current time.

37. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman wished to acknowledge that the situation had changed radically over the weekend in terms of scientific and medical advice with rates rising and a national lockdown effective from Thursday, 5 November 2020. He noted that meetings with districts will continue and are even more necessary to ensure all actions are coordinated to lower the R rate, preferably to less than 1 and exit the lockdown early December.

The Chairman stated that the intention is to maintain the present arrangements for the Local Outbreak Engagement Board and to include additional briefings in order to rapidly and flexibly respond to developments and keep the public informed. The traditional notice period for publishing for formal meetings is a challenge for quick changes in the situation.

In the spirit of transparency, accountability, and reassurance, as the only dedicated public meeting to deliberate and manage the outbreak, more formal meetings will be added, and updates and information will continue to be shared by the Communications team. A properly joined up approach with Public Health, districts and unitary authorities, and Local Resilience Forum will allow for a coordinated response, but shared boundaries will remain a challenge.

38. OUTBREAK CONTROL POSITION REPORT

The Director of Public Health shared the weekly update with the Board outlining the current position in term of managing the outbreak in Hampshire including data on current infection numbers, the position for care homes and death rates across the county. It was noted that the presentation published is for Hampshire data only. Members heard:

While cases testing and diagnosed in Hampshire has been rising with 1526 confirmed in the last 7 days. Rates across districts have become closer in value with no particular area standing out. Prior to national lockdown, priority data being reviewed included the 7-day rate, rate for over 60s, and positive testing rate.

In response to questions, Members heard:

The Director of Public Health will share district rates following the meeting and consider changes to help the data be more accessible.

There have been 4 deaths from Covid in the past week and the death rate is lower than the 5 year average. The monitoring of excess deaths over the long-term continues.

The NHS continues to be open for any kind of business and residents need to continue to access healthcare the right way, in the right setting, at the right time. Working together closely to promote this message will be part of the restoration and recovery process. People need to go to the hospital for heart attacks, urgent cancers, etc. and support should be provided to primary care services for preventative care with a focus on those more at risk such as BAME population, being overweight, etc.

In supporting the NHS, 3 step-down units across the County are accepting patients who can legitimately move out of acute care facilities to release beds, though in many cases the pressure is not capacity, but rather staffing issues. Acute hospitals have appreciated this quick piece of work and it is a great service for patients finding care in the right setting. Adults' Health and Care services will continue to prepare to provide services in a lockdown scenario, especially for those extremely clinically vulnerable, some 52,000 people in Hampshire. Coronavirus helpline and volunteer support will continue alongside a range of preventative action.

All messaging has been joint working, clear and consistent since March, and aligned for across the county, NHS, and districts, in addition to promoting national messages.

The Hampshire Local Outbreak Engagement Board noted the current data and implications.

39. **ACTIONS OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

The Director of Public Health noted that a national lockdown had been announced on the evening of Saturday 31 October for Thursday 5 November. Members heard:

Actions have been taken based on high level data and settings, most within community and households, rather than workplace settings and managing cases and outbreaks of various sizes so as to take the correct actions to prevent spread.

Managing an outbreak or incident, regardless of the size, takes a significant amount of time and in certain settings require clear and quick actions to control spread. Schools, for example, have been busy because every case requires some action to isolate staff or bubbles. The Department of Education helpline has improved and is working well to provide support as schools respond to cases, hand in glove with Children's Services and public health.

In preparing locally for events, management of clear communication and animations on social media have ensured that the advice and guidance was clear and well-received.

Collaboration continues with unitary authorities and neighbours within Hampshire and Isle of Wight, as well colleagues across borders as needed for outbreaks or managing events across borders, as people, issues, events, and viruses are not limited by boundaries.

More local testing sites include 5 new ones within Hampshire and others due to open subject to DHSE approval. Walk in sites have increased access and lab capacity has seen a rise. Feedback continues to be received regarding testing sites to improve how they are working and make slight adjustments as needed.

Lateral flow testing that people can take themselves will be helpful but requires further validation tests to use them in appropriate situations. Those with symptoms should use testing sites. Work continues with the government, hospitals, and universities to use any variety of testing required to manage the virus and having access to testing and results. Most tests are coming back within 24 hours with increased national lab capacity and continuous monitoring by the regional team.

In response to questions, Members heard:

There are about 534 schools in Hampshire and since September have had 133 cases with 101 bubbles closed down. 114 of these cases took place in October. There are 26 special schools and 4 of these have had some level of infection and are more worrying as students are more vulnerable. All schools have test kits available to them and current feedback received is that tests are taking 5-6 days to get results causing delays isolation. The Director of Public Health confirmed that schools have limited tests to use in an emergency situation, but postal tests do take longer. Where possible, students should go to a testing centre and only use school kits if absolutely necessary with isolation commencing straight away until a negative result is received. The goal is to test quickly but positive symptoms should result in immediate isolation unless negative test. This messaging will be revisited with Children's Services.

While the new Anvil walk-in testing facility is ready and capable, it is not working to full capacity as it is not currently needed.

Members noted the update.

40. **COMMUNICATION ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Executive Member of Public Health updated the Board on communications and engagement noting that the two strands of communication continue with up to date information about what is happening now and keep safe guidance on social media. Members heard:

Engagement with the public remains high with targeted actions in place. The tier system and national graphics have been shared consistently. The data dashboard remains the most popular and the constant refresh of messaging has been engaging even more people. Branding right and consistent messaging across districts and partners together is working well.

More media inquiries have been handled and the number of news items covering the pandemic has also risen with the feedback largely positive or neutral. Key areas of inquiry have been regarding schools, care homes, events, and holidays.

Additional advice has been shared for those shielding and vulnerable. Messaging regarding the second lockdown is well underway and the team remains prepared for any changes.

Targeted support for high-risk settings have continued and enquiries from schools managed, keeping Councillors from that area involved and updates but individual information kept confidential. Follow up webinars have been set up for educational settings. The Public Health England South East Health Protection Team is providing template letters and guidance for playground etiquette, school posters, and newsletters.

Adults' Health and Care services are pulling together all information in one place and circulating a fortnightly newsletter. High profile messaging for the second lockdown, both general and targeted, continues in collaboration with key partners, Local Resilience Forum, and the NHS.

The exact lockdown guidance is pending from the government with legislation to be passed on Wednesday 4 November. The Communication team is ready to quickly pass on the information we received from the government with clarity in messaging.

The County Council is determined to work as transparently and effectively as possible and thanks all Board members for their efforts. The additional formal meeting will be confirmed following the briefing next week.

The meeting ended at 14:59.

Chairman,