

## Minutes of the Corporate Review Committee Meeting held on 8 September 2020

Present: Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)

### Attendance

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Charlotte Atkins | Jeremy Pert                               |
| Mike Davies      | Bernard Peters                            |
| Helen Fisher     | Natasha Pullen                            |
| John Francis     | Conor Wileman (Vice-Chairman)             |
| Jeremy Oates     | Susan Woodward (Opposition<br>Vice-Chair) |
| Ian Parry        |   |

**Apologies:** Colin Greatorex and Stephen Sweeney

### PART ONE

#### 16. Declarations of Interest

Jeremy Oates declared an interest on agenda item 4 as he was a Borough Council Representative on the Local Outbreak Control Board.

#### 17. Minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2020

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 July 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 18. Staffordshire Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan

The Director of Health and Care gave a presentation which accompanied the Staffordshire Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan available on the Councils website.

The Director explained that the Local Outbreak Control Plan was a new and important role for local authorities. He explained that Covid-19 would be with us for the foreseeable future and that Authorities were preparing for 'Best', 'Middle' and 'Worst' case scenarios, with the main determinants being public compliance.

Surveillance and identification of outbreaks was done through testing and intelligence from Public Health England, neighbouring local authorities, local communities, Environmental Health teams and local members. Data was co-ordinated and reported through the Health Protection Board.

When an outbreak had been identified, the response would draw on local knowledge, skills and experience, to manage incidents in different settings. Examples of management were given as; isolation and cohorting of cases; 'Deep cleaning' of nursing

homes; Contact tracing; Increased testing; Support for self-isolation; Closure of settings or Enforcement.

It was reported that there were currently around 170 incidents in Staffordshire. The intention was to keep stakeholders informed about the more significant incidents without overloading people with too much information. The Covid-19 Health Protection Board met three times a week and there was a Member Led Covid-19 Local Outbreak Control Board which provided democratic oversight and lead communications with the public. There was multi-agency co-ordination through Local Resilience Forum.

The National Contain Framework was explained. This contained four levels of alert, these being: Stable; Areas of concern; Areas of enhanced support; and Areas of intervention. These were defined by the levels of infections. At the moment, Staffordshire was at the lowest 'Stable' level.

Local alert levels for use within the County had been developed and could be used for any sized outbreak e.g. for a whole Borough/District or a town or a single ward.

Currently the number of cases remained low but were rising in line with the national picture. At the moment there were around 10 to 20 new cases each day which was slightly lower than the national average. Currently, cases affected working age adults, which meant that we were not seeing increased numbers of hospitalisations and deaths.

Following the presentations, Members asked a number of questions covering the following areas:

Testing and lack of local appointments was raised. It was explained that this was due to a national shortage of laboratory capacity, and not necessarily a shortage of appointments. Tests were being prioritised for those areas at higher alert levels such as Manchester or Leicester. Individuals could book tests daily and when capacity reached a certain level, appointments at local sites were switched off so that priority could be given to these other areas. Government had indicated that this issue could take two or three weeks to resolve. This would include mobile testing units although discussions were taking place to see if drop-in sessions could be offered in the mobile testing units in local hot spots.

The hospitality trade and the effectiveness of the response strategy was questioned, particularly how we benchmark ourselves and how we ensure that we are following best practice. It was explained that licensed premises were high-risk, and Boroughs and District licensing teams, and the Police were being worked with to ensure the trade understood their responsibilities and obligations. If businesses consistently failed to follow national legislation and guidance then there were powers to issue warnings and enforce closure. Knowledge and evidence was necessary before action could be taken. It was felt that the best benchmark was the number of cases in an area and currently Staffordshire was below both the national rate and the West Midlands.

Children's Centres linked to schools were felt to be vulnerable as cases may increase in schools, affecting activities and people attending adjoining children centres. Members were informed that if a case was identified, the risk of spreading would be assessed, and action would be taken accordingly.

It was felt that Members' social media could be used to spread the message of the need to continue to socially distance etc. The Cabinet Member for Health Care and Well-being agreed to email all Members to encourage and suggest ways of using social media. It was also agreed that the threshold for sharing cases and information with local Members would be looked at.

Quarantine requirements when returning to the county from abroad was discussed. Apparently, this relied on trust and good will and the Council were not informed and could not enforce. There was a discussion on what happened when messages or guidance was not adhered to. It was explained that the Council could not enforce government guidance about household gatherings and could only advise and encourage individuals to do the right thing with only Government having the power to restrict movements if necessary.

The Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in some staff being transferred from other duties to take on the additional work. This had affected service changes such as the transformation plans. Funding had been identified to meet any shortfalls in year. NHS Track and Trace staff had not been devolved to the Council.

The NHS winter plan would be considered at a future meeting of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee., There was concern about the ability of the NHS to resource the influenza vaccination programme this winter..

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the Director of Health and Care be thanked for the information provided to the Committee.
- b) Members be supplied with information on the demographics of the current cases in Staffordshire.

**19. Work Programme**

Members raised the question of Gender equality and the previous suggestion to widen the Committees consideration of the topic to include all aspects of Gender equality (3 July 2020 meeting). The Chair and Vice Chairs agree to meet officers and discuss.

Information on the Entrust contract was requested. Councillor Woodward agreed to write to the Chairman explaining what she wanted this item to cover.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme be noted.

**Chairman**