

Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 22 July 2020

(NOTE: This meeting was held as a remote meeting in accordance with the provisions of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020).

PRESENT: Councillors Cate McDonald (Chair), Steve Ayris (Deputy Chair), Sue Alston, Angela Argenzio, Vic Bowden, Lewis Dagnall, Mike Drabble, Jayne Dunn, Talib Hussain, Abdul Khayum, Martin Phipps, Gail Smith and Garry Weatherall

Non-Council Members (Healthwatch Sheffield):-

Lucy Davies

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Adam Hurst.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th June, 2020, were approved as a correct record with the exception of at Item 6.11(c), second bullet point, the first half of the sentence was missing and should be amended to read “passes on condolences to those who have sadly lost loved ones during this period – in particular the sad loss of Councillor Pat Midgley, the former Chair of this Committee;”.

4.2 Matters Arising

4.2.1 Councillor Steve Ayris asked if there was anything further on the proposed Strategic Review as was reported at the last meeting. The Chair said that information regarding this would be shared at the end of this meeting.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 The Chair, on behalf of Ruth Milsom, on behalf of Sheffield Save Our NHS, asked the following questions:-

Test, Track, Trace, Isolate

Going forward now that 'test, track, trace & isolate' is being implemented - how are the concerns about compliance raised by the Sheffield Community Contact Tracers pilot programme to be addressed?

What measures can be put in place locally to ensure that the TTTI scheme is sufficiently robust to prevent significant localised outbreaks?

How will SCC, and the Director of Public Health in particular, be working with staff, operators of care services, and trade union representatives to ensure that all those who test positive are confident in complying fully with the best practice of TTTI?

How will workers be reassured that self-isolating will not result in financial deprivation? How will contacts also be reassured on this point?

What is being done to bring employers on-side with compliance, given that they have valid concerns about the effect of contact isolation on staffing levels?

- 5.2 The Chair stated that the issues raised in the questions would be covered during the meeting, however if some questions were not answered, written answers would be provided.

6. TRACK, TRACE AND ISOLATE SYSTEM

- 6.1 The Committee received a report on the Test, Trace and Isolate (TTI) programme elements of the response to Covid 19, with a particular focus on the "trace" component, known as "contact tracing". The report sets out the work of both the national NHS Test and Trace Service and how the City Council, along with its partners in the city are supporting and augmenting the national system locally.
- 6.2 Present for this item were Greg Fell (Director of Public Health), Ruth Granger (Health Protection Manager) and Dawn Shaw (Director of Communities).
- 6.3 Ruth Granger introduced the report and stated that the Test and Trace system had been in place since the end of May and that contact tracing was a method used in the control of infectious diseases. Contact tracing helped to trace those who had been in close contact with anyone who had tested positive for Covid 19 and asked that they self-isolate for a 14 day period from when they were in contact with someone who had tested positive. It was hoped to fully engage with people and encourage them to engage with test trace and isolate to reduce the spread of the virus in the City. She said that the messages from Government were complex and that consistency in those messages was needed both nationally and locally and the focus was to enable communities to fully engage with the programmes outlined by the Government to keep them safe. Ruth Granger stated that the numbers of those who tested positive in Sheffield fluctuate daily but during the past seven days, there had been 11 positive cases reported to the NHS Test and Trace. She said that Sheffield has an overarching communications plan to keep people safe and reduce transmission whilst ensuring that businesses can re-open safely by using Public Health England communication assets as well as the locally tailored message particularly to

support people to enable them to self-isolate. Sheffield's key message was "Don't be a Contact" but it was recognised that asking people to self-isolate for 14 days was difficult, but asking people to maintain social distancing was a key part to prevent becoming a contact.

6.4 Greg Fell referred to the Outbreak Control Board (OCB) which had been set up in response to the Government's national strategy to reduce infection from the coronavirus, to create a Local Outbreak Plan which builds on existing health protection plans and putting in place measures to contain the virus and protect the public's health. The OCB membership is made up from cross-party elected members, key response services, voluntary and community organisations, Faith, BAMER, disability, carer and business groups and specific groups representing older people or student groups. Greg Fell stated that the Chief Executive of Leeds City Council has been asked by the Government to take a key role in its contact tracing programme across the country. He will lead on ensuring that the arrangements for linking contact tracing work effectively at local level and that the partnerships and capacity are in place to support this, not just in Leeds but country-wide. Greg Fell said that Sheffield had been allocated £3.1m from the Department of Health and Social Care which was to be spent on outbreak control work, but an optimal NHS Test and Trace Service, high quality data and a strong national impetus to promote public health was essential. He referred to the seven Government themes outlined in the report. He said the key themes for Sheffield were to keep its people safe, protect the vulnerable and re-open businesses in the City. The Government guidance doesn't always work locally, so meetings were held once a week to address the issues. The number of those infected in Sheffield was coming down but were still a little on the high side and this needed to be addressed. Those infected were mainly in the east of the City and Public Health was seeking to increase testing in those areas whilst being mindful of social cohesion.

6.5 Members asked a number of questions, to which responses were provided as follows:-

- Test and Trace was a national initiative and local input was for the management of complex cases involving care homes, schools, the homeless and local workplaces??
- There was a need to get a clear message across to the public so that they understand better the necessity of test, trace and self-isolation and provide them with better support. A cause for concern was that those even with mild symptoms of Covid 19 need to be tested.
- Financial support for those who self-isolate was being considered by the Government.
- Following tests, 78% to 80% of cases who had tested positive, were contacted within 24 hours of the test results, 99% of cases were contacted within 48 hours.
- The NHS and Public Health England were looking at ways to pick up to

prevent outbreaks.

- Community Response Teams were working to connect the communities, community organisations, services and partners and in particular work with elected members, facilitating everyone to work together. The Communications Team has co-ordinated a large number of proactive social media, website, print media and leaflet campaigns, in a number of different languages, to keep Sheffield's citizens informed about keeping safe, the support available to them and their families from the City Council and statutory and voluntary sector partners in the City.
- Business leaders have asked what they can do to help, but only they can decide on what steps they need to take to keep their employees safe and reopen Sheffield's economy.
- The Covid Helpline has been set up to provide help and support to those who need it.
- First time residents into care home are being tested. Every 28 days every resident in care homes are being tested and all staff are being tested every week. However, the testing of bank staff was currently a gap that needs to be resolved.
- With regard to Sheffield's schools, teachers will be tested from September onwards. Schools throughout the city have carried out extensive planning works to ensure that their schools are up to Covid secure standard. The Department for Education have asked that risk assessments are carried out and the schools will be well versed and trained ready for when the schools re-open. The aim is for early pick-up of infections and keeps infection rates really low. However, the term is still six weeks away so schools still have time to adopt the strategy.
- The full Terms of Reference for the Outbreak Control Board are still being finalised, but when complete they will be published on the website. Notes made at meetings of the Board will be circulated and they too will be published. It has already been agreed that public questions are to be taken at meetings and we are looking to hold public question and answer sessions. Meetings are held once a fortnight for one hour.
- Upper tier local authorities have been given powers to close local businesses as necessary as outlined in the recently published addendum to the Covid 19 Act. Ministers have, however, retained the power to override decisions taken at a local level. In Sheffield, the powers will be used sparingly, taking a similar approach recently taken by Blackburn. Whatever interventions made will apply to the whole of the city and not just parts of it. The Director of Legal and Governance has been asked to study and outline the powers contained within the Act.
- The Director of Public Health was to send a letter to every household in the City informing the public how to stay safe and prevent the disease from

spreading.

- The Outbreak Control Board was looking to convey the correct message out to the public with regard to the wearing of face masks. There was a lot of confusion at the moment, but it was hoped that clear messages would be sent out in the near future.
- The Head of Communication was working with community groups, especially those of the BAME communities to get the message across to them.
- Testing was being carried out at Meadowhall and the Olympic Legacy Park. Anyone can go the Park without the necessity of an appointment. We are working on opening up some other sites and tests were being carried out in some GP practices.
- National guidance does not stipulate the number of mourners being able to attend funerals, that number had been decided at local levels. However, now that the infection rates were dropping, the numbers had been increased.

6.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) thanks Greg Fell, Ruth Granger, Dawn Shaw and Councillor Jackie Drayton for their contribution to the meeting;
- (b) notes the contents of the reports on Test, Trace and Isolate and the Local Outbreak Control Plan;
- (c) gives thanks to all of the community and mutual aid groups across the city that have provided much valued support to people during isolation;
- (d) recognises that these groups continue to play an important role in the Test, Trace and Isolate system, and that further thought needs to be given to how we communicate with, and support, these groups going forwards;
- (e) believes that for the Test, Trace and Isolate system to be effective, barriers and disincentives to testing and self-isolation need to be removed. The Committee therefore believes it is essential that Government establishes comprehensive financial support arrangements for people who are required to isolate, and works with Trade Unions and employers to do this; and that a copy of this resolution is shared with all Sheffield MPs;
- (f) recognises the importance of consistent advice for businesses around issues such as the use of PPE, particularly in close contact industries, and asks that this is considered when developing local communications and guidance;
- (g) highlights the importance of clear, simple messages around prevention; welcomes the further work that is being done with community groups to

develop appropriate messages, and asks that these products and resources are shared with Councillors; and.

- (h) requests that Sheffield's test and trace numbers are shared with Councillors on a regular basis through existing communication channels.

7. SHEFFIELD LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN

- 7.1 The Sheffield Local Outbreak Control Plan formed part of the report but was considered as part of the previous agenda item.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer on the Work Programme.
- 8.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee agreed that the item for business at the next meeting would be to consider Mental Health, focussing on the impact of Covid on Mental Health and Access to Mental Health Services, and the Sheffield Health and Social Care Trust's Improvement Plan. and that work was ongoing to develop the work programme, including scheduling the strategic review of adult care provision. The Chair noted that the Committee's focus has to date been on the Covid19 response, and that discussions were starting on what other issues should be included in the work programme.

9. RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 9.1 The Committee received and noted a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer setting out the written responses to the public questions raised at its meeting held on 16th June, 2020.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Wednesday, 19th August, 2020, at 4.00.p.m. in the Town Hall.