



Minutes

Name of meeting	LOCAL OUTBREAK ENGAGEMENT BOARD
Date and Time	THURSDAY 10 DECEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 2.00 PM
Venue	VIRTUAL (MS TEAMS)
Present	Cllrs D Stewart (Chairman), S Hutchinson, C Mosdell and G Peace
Officers Present	S Bryant, J Metcalfe, W Perera

13. Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2020 be agreed.

14. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were received at this stage.

15. Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum

No public questions were received.

16. Reports of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board

16.1 Update on current situation

The Director of Public Health (DPH) provided the board with an update on the current situation.

The Government had published its winter plan and the DPH explained what the five indicators were:

- Case detection rates in all age groups
- Case detection rates in over 60's
- The rate at which cases are rising or falling
- Positivity rates (the number of positive tests taken as a percentage of the overall test taken)
- Pressure on the NHS.

The variations on restrictions and different tiers were noted, and the board were shown an illustrated map which displayed the local restriction tiers in a national context. The board noted there were some issue areas within the South East, although at week 47 there were some areas highlighted as red, despite the infection rate in those areas reducing. It was acknowledged the Island was in the lower bracket of cases, with the national infection rate also decreasing.

The DPH reiterated this demonstrated the Island was in a positive position, although caution to tackle complacency should be maintained. The DPH referred to the R number in Kent, Slough, Surrey and London, which were higher, it being important to remain mindful in respect of hospital capacity. In addition, pressures in hospitals in other areas would affect Hampshire.

Members of the board were provided with a summary of a range of statistics, nationally, the R number sat between 0.9 and 1.1. Concerning the seven-day Covid rates per 100,000 population, the following details were provided:

England 151
South East 156
Hampshire 73.1
Portsmouth 141.5
Southampton 66.5
Isle of Wight (23) 16.2

Rates on the Island and Southampton were coming down and the Island was in a good position with 23 cases in the last seven days and a rolling rate of 16.2 over the last seven days. Rates in those aged over 60 were important as they were more likely to be impacted by Covid. It was noted pressure on the NHS on the Island remained low, with currently 998 cases registered on the Island and 98 deaths. The DPH highlighted the five year average for deaths and advised the current number remained comparable, although there were more deaths in relation to Covid in October.

The Leader noted the positive position and the work the people of the Island in all they had done to look after the vulnerable and evidence people continued to play it safe. This being evidenced in the figures presented. The board appreciated the issues in respect of Portsmouth and the current infection figures. These would be a concern for people on the Island, they also sought further detail in regard to the Island deaths

In response the DPH confirmed it had been noted that rates in Portsmouth had increased and due to commuters, this was something we needed to remain aware of. In regard to Island deaths, the DPH advised these had mainly been in the older population.

Continuing on the theme off deaths, the board noted the overall number but asked if the rate was decreasing, the DPH was asked if that might relate to improved treatment levels, leading to an increased likelihood of survival. The DPH advised that deaths had been recorded differently at the start of the pandemic and that in the second wave of the virus the infections had been seen more in the younger age

groups. However, it was confirmed that there was a greater understanding and more treatments were available, allowing people to recover better. There was however a lag in the data being released.

In addition, members of the board noted that whilst a number of people had survived the virus, some had been left with a condition known as long Covid. The board enquired if statistics in that regard were available. The DPH confirmed this was being looked into and the NHS was looking to see that the right sort of treatment was in place as this was not a clear set of symptoms and there were a number of things that need to be picked up by the Health Protection Board to ensure the people of the Island were looked after.

The board moved their attention to the vaccination programme for the Island. The DPH reported it was fantastic news regarding the vaccination, but it would take time for the population to get immunised and immunity to take place. The vaccination programme was being run by the NHS. The vaccine had been approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) although it was challenging logistically as it needs to be stored at -70C. There needed to be care with the delivery of the vaccine and people would need two doses of the vaccine, at intervals.

It was noted people would need to remember they would still need to socially distance and the vaccinations would roll out from the Portsmouth hub over the next few weeks into different settings, with a supporting communications plan, with more sites coming on board in the next few weeks. Once we had the vaccine and have more people immune it would support the whole population and all were encouraged to get the vaccination when they were called up for it.

Members were mindful the terms of reference of the board, which focussed on the containment of the virus and minimising its spread through the community. It would be important to focus on the fact it would take a while for the vaccine to roll out and to see the benefits of that so there was still a need for us to manage the virus and manage how we behave. The rollout was being managed by the NHS and they are still developing their plans, it was very important that we engaged with that. It would be important to reinforce the message we can't afford to let our foot off the accelerator; it hasn't gone away because we have a vaccine and we still have a responsibility to the Island.

16.2 Actions taken and required

The Leader referenced the restrictions for the upcoming Christmas period and the need to be aware of the Christmas bubble arrangements with more people mixing indoors and increases in cases, due to mixing. The Leader summarised the arrangements, that three households could form a bubble and they must remain in that bubble. However, if they opted not to form a bubble, they should follow the Tier one rules. Otherwise they would need to be outside in a public space.

The DPH confirmed the Island arrangements and reminded that the hands face, and space message remained, whilst in a bubble people could sit inside, together.

The board were advised the local test and trace was being set up and the Covid testing centre in Newport was working well. There are new modalities in terms of testing, including the lateral flow test, and salivary tests and they are pilot programmes. All were working hard to make sure these could be rolled out. The national CTAS service had 85 per cent of contacts traced and we could enhance with the local contact tracing service. A small area of the Island had initially been identified for the local approach, although we had asked to rollout to a larger area but this knits in with the national service.

The advantage to the local service was that all calls are made from a local number and we could assist in terms of local questions regarding self-isolation or pharmacy services and the council could provide that support.

16.3 Update on Communications Activity

The Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Strategy Officer (ACX) updated the board in respect of communications activity but commented that many of the messages had already been discussed by the board in the previous agenda items.

They went on to highlight a communications plan was in place that would run from the current date until the 4 January 2021. The plan had been split into two elements, one for internal staff and the other providing messages aimed at the general public, our stakeholders and including those messages from specific sectors, such as Regulatory services.

The message associated with the Islands Tier one status, was that this was through residents choosing to do the right thing, such as hands, face, space, with ventilate becoming a critical part of the overall actions.

The ACX acknowledged there was some confusion in terms of the rule of six and sought to clarify the details. If you were applying the rule of six and meeting with six people indoors you still had to socially distance and wash your hands thoroughly and regularly. The rule of six was not the same as a support bubble and the hands, face, space message needed to be combined with that rule of six.

For those that might have symptoms, they should continue to, self-isolate, book a test and participate in tracing, which was more important as we have local tracing and noted the good supportive added value that we can supply which was positive for us.

The ACX continued, the other element is why we need to do all those things, we need to continue to work together to keep the Island safe and we all have our role to play. We have our tier one status which will be reviewed every two weeks, indications are we will remain in tier one.

Those present agreed now was not the time to let our guard down, if we all continued to make the good choices, we have been making then we can sustain the tier one status into the new year. 2021 can start in a better position than 2020

finished, we would not want to be in the position in January where we could have done more.

All acknowledged Christmas was an important time for family and friends and people would want to mix. The board noted you could do that by forming family Christmas bubbles but all were to continue to remember hands – face – space which should be the everyday norm and undertaken as a matter of course.

The ACX stated they were also using insights they were getting from the Covid support officers and feedback received, with focus on four key themes:

- How to shop safely
- Christmas bubbles
- Going out and what that means, booking tables and how to get home, drink responsibly.
- Visitors to the Island from tier two, enjoy your stay in a tier two way.

We will also need to consider any new guidance, plus advice regarding vaccinations and testing. Which will feed into our communication programmes.

In summing up it was noted that use of the QR scan codes at Island venues offered useful support to track and trace activity and the use of promoted by all. In addition, the board appreciated the efforts made to ensure any communications were accessible to a wide audience, including those that might not have access to smart phones, the internet and alike.

17. **Members' Question Time**

No questions were received.

CHAIRMAN