

**Slough Outbreak Engagement Board – Meeting held on Tuesday, 14th September, 2021.**

**Present:-** Councillors Pantelic (Chair), Anderson, Carter and Mann  
Tracey Faraday-Drake ICS Place Lead  
Ramesh Kukar Voluntary and Community Sector Representative  
Supt Wong Thames Valley Police Representative  
Dr Sohail Bhatti Interim Service Lead Public Health  
Kate Pratt Group Manager, Communications  
Alan Sinclair Executive Director of People (Adults)

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Akram, Bains and Hulme  
Joe Carter, Director of Transformation

**PART 1**

**24. Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

**25. Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 4 August 2021**

**Resolved** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

The Chair reminded Board Members of the following follow up actions from the meeting held on 4 August 2021:

- Encouraging vaccine take up amongst pregnant women.
- Arranging a Members' vaccine briefing.
- Consideration of general public health matters in each Ward.
- Formulation of a detailed communications plan for the Autumn.

The Chair requested that any follow up actions arising from future meetings be noted at the end of each minute item.

**26. Public Questions**

No questions from the public had been received.

**27. Communications Update**

The SBC Communications Manager provided an update on the key

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communications activities and messages since the last meeting of the Board and responded to questions as follows:

- Her team were concentrating on assisting health colleagues in continuing to encourage vaccine take up. A new multi-agency Communications vaccination group had been set up.
- Discussions were ongoing regarding vaccinations for 12-16 year olds and her team were assisting the school immunisation team with communications planning and with vaccine drop-in sessions.
- The weekly head teachers' meetings continued to take place and schools were continuing to follow DfE (Department for Education) guidance. Schools were now being asked to report any outbreaks of more than two linked cases, though the DfE guidance was that any linked outbreaks of five cases or more should be reported. She confirmed that, to date, she had received notification of between four to five outbreaks at schools. The dedicated covid schools' officer was working closely with schools and encouraging them to seek assistance from the Communications department to get the message out.
- Her team had developed locally-based stand-by plans for the autumn and winter. Covid data, local preparations, modelling, scenario planning and the team's capacity to react at short notice to changing circumstances had improved since last year. All the usual mediums such as social media, media messaging continued to be used. The team had established excellent working relationships with partners, were closely monitoring the situation and sharing information with partners.

Following further discussion, the actions below were agreed:

**Action 1:** A paper or a flier setting out messaging that the Board could take forward to residents as part of the autumn/winter covid preparations to be submitted at the October meeting of the Board.

**Action 2:** A detailed Communication Plan for the autumn/winter, including messaging for pregnant women and those from BAME communities with low vaccine take up be submitted at the October meeting of the Board.

The SBC Communications Manager undertook to do this.

**Resolved:** That the Communications Update be noted.

## 28. Local Covid-19 Status Report

The Interim Public Health Service Lead provided a summary of Slough's current Covid-19 status. He advised that:

- The positivity rate in Slough was marginally lower than in the rest of England and the South East. There were indications that sporadic outbreaks continued to occur and the overarching trend was one of rising case numbers. It was useful to note that there had been thirteen and a half

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thousand cases of covid in Slough. On the whole, the age range for most positive cases related to the working age population (25-59 year olds).

- It was anticipated that the case rate amongst 11-15 year olds would rise following the reopening of schools. It was important to note that those testing positive at the beginning of the school term would most probably have become infected prior to the start of term rather than at school and the guidance from the DfE was to not count these as outbreaks. Schools had been testing extensively and plans to vaccinate school children were progressing. Pupils and teachers were encouraged to test at home twice a week. Those testing at home were unlikely report results unless they received positive PCR test results.
- There was a lower vaccine take up rate amongst some ethnic groups. Case rates in the black African community and the black Caribbean community was on the rise with the highest number being amongst the South Asian community.
- Covid related hospital admissions could sometimes lead to a prolonged stay. The death rate remained stable due to the levels of vaccination take up. However, it should be noted that protection from the vaccine took effect two weeks after vaccination.

The Chair requested that the latest messages regarding testing and vaccinations be included in the next issue of the Citizen magazine and the Council's website. She also suggested that the mobile vaccination units be located outside shopping areas.

Following questions regarding low uptake of lateral flow testing, the SBC Interim Public Health Service Lead advised that the provision of testing at local pharmacies and enabling local businesses to carry out lateral flow tests was being considered. He added that more mobile testing units would also be deployed.

**Action 3:** The latest messages regarding testing and vaccinations be included in the next issue of the Citizen magazine and on the Council's website.

**Action 4:** A vaccine update item be included as a regular agenda item at future Board meetings.

**Resolved:** That the Local Covid-19 Status report be noted.

## 29. Vaccine Update

The Executive Place Managing Director advised that her team were:

- Planning the flu vaccine campaign and flu clinics.
- The vaccine booster programme was in the planning and development stage.
- Public health colleagues were working to ensure school immunisation teams were on board for the vaccination programme for 12-15 year olds.
- The three sites continued to offer vaccinations for all cohorts and would offer the booster jab once it was available.

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- Mobile units would be providing three thousand vaccinations, mainly in Slough but also included the Frimley health area.
- The campaign to encourage all cohorts to be vaccinated would continue.
- Emergency departments and secondary care at Wexham hospital continued to be extremely busy. It should be noted that on the whole those patients in intensive care were unvaccinated. This was an important message to convey to the community.
- Evidence showed that people with autism and learning difficulties infected by covid had very poor outcomes. Additional funding of £25k was available Across the Frimley health area and would be made available to the Primary Care Networks to capture those with learning difficulties and autism to ensure they were vaccinated and included in the booster programme. The money would be used for things such as reasonable adjustments or a buddying system.
- Young people were increasingly coming forward to get vaccinated whereas those in middle age group seemed to be more resistant to getting vaccinated.

Following a question, the Director advised that the campaign to encourage everyone to be vaccinated would continue and the mobile unit would continue to be deployed. Priority groups for vaccination included the most vulnerable, school children and those with learning difficulties.

**Resolved:** That the update be noted.

### 30. Interim Plan for the Autumn of 2021

The SBC Interim Public Health Service Lead stated that:

- Despite the increase in the positivity rate there had been no large outbreaks in Slough recently. Central Government advice was to return to normal pre-covid activity. For example, the Council was looking into a phased and managed return to workplaces for its staff.
- The local plan was being revised.
- There was increased surveillance of any outbreaks at schools and a move away from contact tracing to outbreak management.
- Increasing testing and vaccination opportunities for the public.

Following further discussion, the actions below were agreed:

**Action 5:** A detailed plan for the autumn and winter of 2021/22 be submitted to the October meeting of the Board, and to include:

- contingency planning
- a vaccine plan (for both covid and flu)
- a plan regarding the deployment of volunteers
- how to increase testing opportunities and the distribution of free testing kits.

The SBC Interim Public Health Service Lead undertook to do this.

**Resolved:** That the verbal update be noted

**31. National & Local Key Messages**

The national and local key messages were summarised as:

- Continue to encourage vaccination take up for those not yet vaccinated by emphasising that mortality rates were lower for those who had been vaccinated.
- Most flu jabs were given at GP practices and autumn plans for these were in place.

The Executive Place Managing Director advised that it was not logistically possible to give the booster and the flu vaccine at the same time. The booster vaccine programme would probably rolled out in October/November. It was vital that flu vaccines be taken as soon as possible.

**Resolved** – That the National & Local Key Messages be noted.

**32. Date of Next Meeting - 12 October 2021**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 12 October 2021 at 5pm.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 5.00 pm and closed at 6.00 pm)