

Nottingham City Council

Outbreak Control Engagement Board

Minutes of the meeting held at remotely via Zoom with public parts of the meeting livestreamed on the Council's YouTube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil> on 8 September 2020 from 1.00 pm - 2.52 pm

Membership

Present

Mel Barrett
Ruby Bhattal
Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark (Vice Chair)
Alison Challenger
Andrew Errington
Clive Foster
Councillor Rebecca Langton
Councillor Sally Longford (Chair)
Kate Meynell
Catherine Underwood
Hugh White

Absent

Nigel Cooke
Andy Haynes
Councillor Neghat Khan
Vanessa MacGregor
Dr Hugh Porter
Amanda Sullivan

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Marie Cann-Livingstone | - Commissioning Nottingham City Council |
| Paul Dales | - Safer Business, Food and Health and Safety Manager |
| John Dexter | - Education Director |
| Alex Favier | - Director of Global and Political Affairs, University of Nottingham |
| Sarah Fielding | - Nottingham Schools Trust |
| David Johns | - Consultant in Public Health, Nottingham City Council |
| Nick Lee | - Director of Education, Nottingham City Council |
| Kate McCandlish | - Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group |
| Rosa Waddingham | |
| Nigel Wright | - Deputy Vice Chancellor, Nottingham Trent University |
| Jane Garrard | - Senior Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council |

47 Apologies for absence

Councillor Neghat Khan
Andy Haynes
Amanda Sullivan
Nigel Cooke

48 Declarations of Interests for agenda items 3 -7

None

49 Public minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the public section of the meeting held on 25 August 2020 as an accurate record.

50 Nottingham's Outbreak Control Plan Update

Alison Challenger, Director of Public Health, gave a presentation updating on the Outbreak Control Plan. She highlighted the following information:

- a) There has been an increase in positive cases of Covid-19 across the country, particularly in the 15-44 age group.
- b) There has been an increase in the number of positive tests for Covid-19 across the country, which to some extent reflects the increase in testing.
- c) The Government watchlist is changing on a weekly basis. Newark and Sherwood has now been removed from the watchlist.
- d) Rates of Covid-19 in the City are largely following the national picture but there are variations. There was a small decrease in cases in the most recent weekly report but a more consistent increase is now being seen.
- e) Testing capacity continues to be an issue. There has been an increase in demand for testing and some people have found it hard to book a test. In such cases, people should keep trying to book a test. There is national recognition of a shortage of testing and issues are not specific to Nottingham. Once an individual has booked a test it is important that they only leave home to have that test and then return straight home to isolate until they have the results. Postal tests are available but the challenge is the ability of laboratories to keep up with demand.
- f) There has been a reduction in people maintaining social distancing especially when multiple households meet. A significant amount of the spread of cases has been within and between households.
- g) It is important that people wear face coverings when required to do so, especially on public transport, and that these face coverings cover both nose and mouth. Handwashing remains one of the best protections against the spread of Covid-19.

During the subsequent discussion the following points were raised:

- h) Messages about the importance of social distancing, wearing face coverings and handwashing etc are difficult because people want to get back to normal. However it is really important that clear, consistent and accurate messages reach as many people as possible to reduce outbreaks. The more Covid-19 there is circulating in local communities, the more likely it is to spread to the clinically vulnerable.

- i) There is scope for councillors and local community leaders to support with communication.
- j) The City has a good range of testing facilities. Infection, Protection and Control Teams are very responsive and can mobilise to take an active approach where needed. The City also has an effective testing co-ordination centre. However, the system is reliant on national arrangements for testing provided at local level. Nationally and locally there has been an increase in demand for testing and laboratory capacity has not been able to keep up but there is little influence over this locally.
- k) The rules can be complicated for people to understand and follow, especially when advice and guidance appears to be inconsistent.
- l) It is important that particular sections of the population aren't scapegoated for an increase in cases. For example, there has been an increase in positive cases amongst younger people but this may be because younger people tend to display fewer symptoms and therefore earlier in the outbreak may not have been tested, meaning it is difficult to know what the rate of Covid-19 was amongst this age group at the outset.

51 Board Member updates

Updates were provided by Environmental Health (minute 52) and Nottinghamshire Police (minute 53)

52 Environmental Health

Paul Dales, Safer Business, Food and Health and Safety Manager, gave an update on work that had been undertaken on environmental health issues since the last meeting. He highlighted the following information:

- a) There has been a focus on close contact services such as hairdressers. 108 visits have been undertaken. There have been 14 re-visits necessary to ensure that identified problems e.g. staff not wearing both visors and face coverings had been addressed. These sorts of issues can be hard to enforce but overall businesses have welcomed the visits and generally complied with requirements.
- b) 170 hospitality premises have been visited and overall there has been a reasonable level of compliance. The main issues identified have been tables too close together; lack of distancing in toilets; lack of one-way systems; lack of screens at bars and tills; and having items handled more than once e.g. condiment bottles. Overall businesses have welcomed visits and been willing to comply with requirements.
- c) Enforcement action required has been minimal so far.

53 Nottinghamshire Police

Kate Meynell, Assistant Chief Constable Nottinghamshire Police, gave an update on the work of the Police since the start of the lockdown period. She highlighted the following information:

- a) Between April and August, night-time economy offences fell by 30%, with 832 less crimes committed compared with the previous year. The biggest fall was in the City Centre, with a reduction of 68%.
- b) There has been an increase in anti-social behaviour during this period. One of the reasons for this is the lack of a specific category for recording Covid-related issues and therefore they have been categorised as anti-social behaviour. Noise issues have accounted for approximately half of all anti-social behaviour problems. This may be an increase in gatherings or reflect that more people have been at home to create noise and be affected by the noise of others.
- c) 999 calls fell significantly at the start of lockdown but have since returned to normal levels.
- d) The number of calls to 101 has remained fairly constant throughout, due to the reporting of anti-social behaviour.
- e) 77 reports of issues at licensed premises have been received since the start of lockdown. The main issues have been alcohol being sold when it shouldn't have been and lack of social distancing and/or people not wearing face coverings.
- f) Within the last week the Police have been given new enforcement powers in relation to gatherings of over 30 people. This will make it easier to respond to issues. The first notice was issued in relation to a party in the City.
- g) The Police want to work with the universities in relation to the return of students to the City. It is anticipated that this will result in an increase in calls to 101 about gatherings.

54 Plans for mitigation against and management of outbreaks in specific settings

Plans for the mitigation against, and management of outbreaks in schools (minute 55) and universities (minute 56) were discussed.

55 Schools

John Dexter, Education Director, Nick Lee, Director of Education, and Sarah Fielding, Nottingham Schools Trust, spoke about the work taking place to mitigate the risks of outbreaks in schools and manage an outbreak if it occurs. They highlighted the following information:

- a) 92% of schools in the City are open with 88% attendance. This is above the national average.

- b) Education colleagues meet with representatives of the Department for Education every day and raise local issues with them. One issue that has been raised is the issue of testing for Covid-19. If a teacher has to be tested for Covid-19 this results in a big demand from parents for their children to be tested and, particularly at this time of year, many children have coughs and colds which can lead to requests for tests. This increase in demand for tests, issues with accessing testing in a timely manner and the impact of this have been raised with the Department.
- c) The Nottingham Schools Trust has met regularly with the headteachers of its schools. Schools have carried out risk assessments, supported by a Health and Safety Officer and discussed with the trade unions. They have plans in place for being fully open, fully closed, and partially open with blended learning. These plans are regularly revisited in line with Government guidance and as a result of experience. The Trust has also created a Covid Toolkit for its schools to support staff and students. Staff have been provided with information and training.
- d) Schools have worked hard to prepare their environments for the return to school for all pupils in September including provision of personal protective equipment, classroom environment arrangements, staggered start times and amendments to delivery of the curriculum.
- e) Some of the challenges for schools include maintaining social distancing (particularly for younger pupils); the physical layout of school buildings which makes social distancing, one way systems etc difficult; and accessing testing as demand for it increases which can make it difficult for schools to fully staff classrooms when teachers are at home waiting for tests/ the results of tests.

During the subsequent discussion the following point was raised:

- f) The academy sector is not accountable to the Council, but the Council is working in partnership with academy trusts and schools. When schools closed to most pupils in March a system of link officers was put in place to liaise with schools and it has been decided to retain this to maintain co-operation and communication.

56 Universities

Nigel Wright, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Nottingham Trent University, and Alex Favier, Director of Global and Political Affairs at University of Nottingham, spoke about the work taking place to mitigate the risks of outbreaks in the two universities in the City and to manage an outbreak if it occurs. They highlighted the following information:

- a) Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham are working closely together on these issues.
- b) In order to mitigate the risk of an outbreak occurring, the universities have been looking at their arrangements including timetabling, staggering start times and encouraging walking and cycling to reduce pressure on public transport, reconfiguring physical space, taking a blended approach to teaching and learning

with more online, introducing one way systems on campus and using student ambassadors to act as role models and advise and guide students.

- c) The universities have incident management plans in place and these are updated in response to Government guidance.
- d) The universities have been continuing their communication with existing students during the lockdown period but there has been less time to communicate with new students about what to expect as a result of delays to confirmation of A Level results and subsequent offer of university places. Communication with students has covered issues including engaging with local retail and hospitality venues and housing.
- e) There is expanded support from the universities for community protection work in local communities and security staff will be going off campus to observe and report any issues. Some issues involving existing students have occurred and where appropriate disciplinary action has been taken.
- f) The universities have been liaising with other stakeholders, for example as part of the LRF.
- g) Testing for Covid-19 amongst students is reliant on the national testing system, which is currently facing challenges. The University of Nottingham has academic expertise in this area and is looking at developing an asymptomatic testing service to try and reduce asymptomatic spread. Other universities are exploring similar ideas but there is no consistent national policy picture so organisations are approaching things differently and will be focused on working with their local systems. The University is also asking for local testing solutions for symptomatic students and staff. It is intended to use local structures for tracing students and staff, and wifi networks could be used to trace contacts; and then to provide isolation support so that individuals do not breach isolation guidance. There are a number of detailed complexities but the ambition is to cover both universities. It is anticipated that arrangements will be confirmed shortly.

During the subsequent discussion the following points were raised:

- h) Arrangements for asymptomatic testing will be reassuring for local residents.
- i) There will be some students coming to the university from areas with high rates of Covid-19 and/or in local lockdown. It won't be possible to screen all new students and there is a risk that testing all arriving students would give a false sense of security as the test is only accurate for the moment in time that it is taken. The proposals are for high frequency and targeted testing of students and staff based on risk.
- j) The universities have been, and continue to communicate with their students about Government guidance and legal requirements in relation to social distancing, wearing of face masks and gatherings indoors and outdoors. Incidents are monitored and where appropriate action will be taken against students. This action can lead to serious consequences for students including fines and ultimately suspension from or termination of their course.

- k) The University of Nottingham is aware of a recent party in Lenton involving its students. This is being investigated and will then progress through the disciplinary process. The University is also supportive of the Police who can issue fines of up to £10,000.
- l) The universities will have no tolerance for students not following Covid-related guidance and requirements, and are working together on communication campaigns to remind students of their responsibilities to their university and as members of society.

57 Flu Vaccination Plan

Rosa Waddington and Kate McCandlish, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, gave a presentation on the flu vaccination plan. They highlighted the following information:

- a) Eligibility for a free flu vaccination has expanded from previous years and it is expected that over 400,000 people from Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will be vaccinated.
- b) In the City there is an increased level of co-ordination in place to support delivery of the programme and additional resources can be deployed if needed.
- c) Through the Primary Care Networks, key risk groups such as care homes have been identified.
- d) There has been learning from Covid that the same approach does not work for all sections of the population and different groups will need different methods of contact and delivery. In this context it will be important to make every contact count for offering a vaccination.
- e) Last year some work took place to engage with faith groups to promote vaccination. It was successful but done too late, so this year that will be a focus from the outset.
- f) There is learning from Covid about the use of text messaging to communicate with people on key messages such as flu vaccinations.
- g) Delivery of the programme began at the beginning of September, and it is hoped that this will enable capacity to be available to deliver a Covid-19 vaccination if that is available.
- h) There is now a single point of contact for advice on flu and flu vaccinations to make it easier for people to get the right information.
- i) There is a detailed delivery plan for the City and it is a priority to improve uptake.

During subsequent discussion the following points were raised:

- j) There will be a mixed approach on where people can get vaccinated depending on other services they are accessing and will include GP practices and community pharmacies. Concern about getting Covid-19 is affecting peoples' willingness to access services.
- k) Although they are different and separate, some people are confused between vaccinations for flu and Covid-19 and there are risks that concerns about a Covid-19 vaccination will stop people getting the flu vaccination.
- l) There needs to be a strong, clear and consistent message to counteract anti-vaccination messages. These will be developed by the Council and Integrated Care System Flu Leads and communicated through routes such as social media campaigns.
- m) It is acknowledged that not all those in hard to reach groups have been reached in the past so there will be a tailored approach to communications for different communities. It is also recognised that the vaccine needs to be taken to people and not expect them to come and get it.
- n) There is a mobile and flexible workforce in place to enable a focus on under-performing areas. Take up rates will be reviewed regularly and resources redeployed as necessary.
- o) Maximising the uptake of flu vaccinations is important to help the system manage Covid-related pressures over winter.

58 Exclusion of public to move into confidential section of the meeting

The Board agreed to move into the confidential section of the meeting.

59 Declarations of Interests for agenda items 10-13

See Confidential Minutes

60 Confidential minutes

See Confidential Minutes

61 Situational round-up

See Confidential Minutes

62 Plans for the mitigation against and management of outbreaks in specific settings

See Confidential Minutes

63 Schools

See Confidential Minutes

64 Universities

See Confidential Minutes

65 Any other business

See Confidential Minutes