

Nottingham City Council

Outbreak Control Engagement Board

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom with public parts of the meeting livestreamed on the Council's YouTube Channel - <https://www.youtube.com/user/NottCityCouncil> on 16 April 2021 from 10.00 am - 12.00 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Eunice Campbell-Clark (Vice Chair)
Steven Cooper
Councillor Neghat Khan
Councillor Sally Longford (Chair)
Sara Storey

Absent

Mel Barrett
Ruby Bhattal
Andrew Errington
Clive Foster
David Johns
Councillor Rebecca Langton
Vanessa MacGregor
Dr Hugh Porter
Amanda Sullivan
Hugh White

Michelle Lawson (substitute for Ruby Bhattal)
Mandy Clarkson (substitute for David Johns)
Sarah Carter (substitute for Amanda Sullivan)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Mark Armstrong - Town and City Centre Management, Nottingham City Council
Jason Carter - University of Nottingham
Vaughan Crompton - City Centre Management Officer, Nottingham City Council
Paul Dales - Chief Environmental Health Officer, Nottingham City Council
Steve Denton - Nottingham Trent University
Alex Favier - University of Nottingham
Clare Routledge - Public Health, Nottingham City Council
Jane Garrard - Senior Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council

213 Apologies for absence

Ruby Bhattal – Michelle Lawson attended as a substitute
David Johns – Mandy Clarkson attended as a substitute
Councillor Rebecca Langton
Amanda Sullivan – Sarah Carter attended as a substitute

214 Declarations of Interests for agenda items 3 - 8

None

215 Public Minutes

The Board approved the minutes of the public section of the meeting held on 12 March 2021 as an accurate record.

216 Nottingham's Outbreak Management Plan update

Mandy Clarkson, Consultant in Public Health, gave an update on Nottingham's Outbreak Control Plan, highlighting the following information:

- a) The absolute number of cases of Covid-19 in Nottingham is down with a rate of 33 per 100,000, compared with a rate of 110 per 100,000 for the previous seven days.
- b) The gap between the Nottingham rate and the England average (28.2 per 100,000 population) continues to narrow due to the sharp reduction in the Nottingham rate.
- c) The country is currently at Step 2 of the Government's roadmap and in the last week activities and businesses have started to reopen. The number of cases will be closely monitored to see what, if any, is the impact of this easing in restrictions. Citizens are strongly encouraged to continue to be cautious and follow the 'hands, face, space' approach.
- d) Testing for Covid-19 continues and is an important part of the control measures.
- e) The demand for symptomatic testing has reduced as would be expected given the reduced case rate, but is still available at walk to/ drive in sites.
- f) All adults are encouraged to participate in twice weekly asymptomatic testing. Lateral flow tests are widely available for use at home, and up to seven weeks supply can be obtained. New mobile testing options are becoming available and full details of these sites can be found on the Council's website. Increasingly, asymptomatic tests are available from pharmacies.

217 Operation Eagle

Mandy Clarkson, Consultant in Public Health, gave an update on Operation Eagle. She highlighted the following information:

- a) At the last meeting of the Board, Vanessa MacGregor, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control Public Health England – Midlands, spoke about virus mutation and surge testing. Nationally, plans for surge testing are referred to as Operation Eagle.
- b) Detailed multi-agency plans have been developed at the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and City levels, with clear structures and named leads for each part of the Plan and level of response.
- c) Stakeholders can access plans and documents relating to surge testing on Resilience Direct.

- d) The City is well prepared to respond to the need to stand up surge testing arrangements.
- e) The need to stand up surge testing will be an urgent response, rather than an emergency response.
- f) Elements of the plans include data mapping, communications, testing, enforcement, contact tracing and humanitarian assistance.
- g) Surge testing could be undertaken through a combination of methods including collect and drop sites, mobile testing units, existing community collect/ asymptomatic sites that could be used for PCR rather than lateral flow testing, supporting swabbing at specific premises e.g. care homes and mobile options for housebound individuals.
- h) Two City-focused exercises to test the plans have been undertaken. A full LRF exercise was held on 14 April.
- i) The Finance Cell is working through the financial implications of a potential surge response. Government has made assurances that it will cover all costs of testing.
- j) To date there has been no surge testing response required in the East Midlands, but learning is being taken from other areas including recent activity in London.

218 Re-opening of Nottingham City Centre

Vaughan Crompton, City Centre Management Officer, and Mark Armstrong, Town and City Centre Management, gave a presentation about issues relating to the re-opening of Nottingham City Centre. They highlighted the following information:

- a) Overall, the approach has been to do everything possible to support businesses.
- b) A lot of planning work took place in preparation for the re-opening of shops and hospitality businesses after the first national lockdown, for example in relation to arrangements for safe outdoor seating, which has been crucial for business survival.
- c) While learning has been taken from the re-opening after previous lockdown periods, each time there are different issues to deal with. On this occasion, retail shops and outdoor hospitality businesses re-opened on the same day which presented some challenges.
- d) On 12 April, walks around the City Centre were undertaken by Enforcement Teams, Community Protection Officers and the Police. While there were a few issues, the situation was generally as expected. There were queues outside some shops e.g. Primark and businesses were asked to manage these queues. All relevant businesses complied with such requests. Where there were unexpected incidents e.g. queuing for a new brand of trainers, these were responded to quickly.

- e) Prior to the issuing of pavement licences for outdoor hospitality, physical inspections were carried out and where necessary, applicants were asked to make adjustments.
- f) It has been noticed that, during this first week, citizens appear to be making more use of leisure and hospitality services and retail has been a secondary focus. Many hospitality businesses are operating booking systems, but businesses are also accepting walk-ins and some are being selective about who they admit. Advanced booking is being encouraged as much as possible. Close contact services, such as nail bars, are operating booking systems and there has been no queuing outside those premises.
- g) There were some problems at some transport stops during the re-opening after the second lockdown, and work has taken place with transport providers to try and prevent this happening again.
- h) Footfall and flows are monitored and managed. Particularly busy areas have been Clumber Street, Long Row East/ High Street and Hockley, which experiences longer dwell times due to the number of hospitality businesses.
- i) Preparation is taking place for the next phase in the easing of restrictions, which is anticipated to be on 17 May. One consideration is an anticipated increase in weddings and associated hen and stag parties; and sporting events.
- j) The weather is unpredictable but has a significant impact on events.

During subsequent discussion it was confirmed that, so far, there has not been much resistance from people in complying with requirements.

219 Universities' student return arrangements

Jason Carter, University of Nottingham, gave an update on plans for the return of university students with a particular focus on the experience and plans of the University of Nottingham. He highlighted the following information:

- a) Current circumstances have not changed significantly since the last update to the Board. Most students have been accessing online learning since Christmas, unless their course has specific practical requirements.
- b) Based on Government announcements, it is anticipated that students will return to university face to face from 17 May at the earliest, and universities are preparing for this.
- c) The University of Nottingham is currently on Easter break and there are very few students on campus. Those who are returning will follow the same routine as previously, with initial PCR testing followed by a programme of weekly PCR testing for students and staff. The process for isolation and associated support has been refined through experience, and continues.

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- d) Since Christmas there have been very low rates of Covid-19 within the university populations and there are currently no active cases reported.
- e) Engagement continues to take place with students about their obligations.
- f) Part of the universities' approach is to start reopening more facilities on campus e.g. sporting facilities, to encourage students to stay local.

Steve Denton, Nottingham Trent University (NTU), reported the position at NTU was very similar to that at the University of Nottingham.

During subsequent discussion the following points were made:

- g) Lots of students have already returned to the City who don't have face-to-face teaching or more challenging home circumstances.
- h) Students are encouraged to get tested as soon as they return, and students generally accept that this is the right thing to do.
- i) In addition to revision and assessment there will still be under-graduate teaching taking place beyond 17 May and into June, and postgraduate learning will continue.
- j) The University of Nottingham has taken the decision to postpone graduation ceremonies until next year and NTU will be communicating its plans for graduation to students next week.

220 Board Member updates

Steven Cooper, Nottinghamshire Police, gave an update on the work of the Police in the City since the last Board meeting. He highlighted the following information:

- a) So far, the opening up of retail and outdoor hospitality has gone smoothly with very few breaches of compliance.
- b) Planning for the forthcoming weekend is taking place to ensure sufficient resources are available.
- c) Overall there have been approximately 3,300 fixed penalty notices issued across the Force since the start of the pandemic. Approximately 2,100 of these have been in the City and approximately one half of these issued during 2021. However, only 8 fines have been issued in the City so far this week and this greater level of compliance reflects the advantages and opportunities of more open hospitality.
- d) There was a recent high profile incident at a short let house rental and 95 attendees were issued with fines. The organiser has been identified.
- e) The Police continue to support the vaccination programme as appropriate but there is generally a minimal policing presence.

Paul Dales, Chief Environmental Health Officer Nottingham City Council, gave an update on the work of the Environmental Health Team in relation to the re-opening of businesses. He highlighted the following information:

- f) Extensive planning took place with partners prior to the re-opening of retail and outdoor hospitality. Advice was consolidated into a factsheet provided to businesses ahead of opening. Intelligence about planning for re-opening was also gathered and visits to premises were prioritised based on this and previous compliance history. Businesses were then advised how to conduct their business safely.
- g) In the past week 133 premises have been visited to assess compliance and give further advice and information. 85 of these were in the close contact sector and there were generally good levels of compliance. 15 premises were only partially compliant (the majority of which related to not displaying QR codes) and there was 1 major case of non-compliance. 48 hospitality premises were visited. Compliance was generally good, with three premises partially compliant and 1 non-compliant. The main issues at hospitality premises were outdoor seating structures that were not 50% open and poor signage. Overall there was general good co-operation in complying with advice. No fixed penalty notices were served and businesses rectified the issues.

Sarah Carter, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group, gave an update from a health perspective. She highlighted the following information:

- h) There continues to be improvements across the sector. Hospital admissions have returned to March 2020 levels and most people in hospital beds are not there for Covid-19 related reasons. Covid-19 related activity in intensive care has reduced and there has been a significant reduction in Covid-19 related hospital deaths. Calls to NHS 111 are also reducing.
- i) However, similar benefits experienced in summer 2020 quickly diminished so there needs to be ongoing messaging about the importance of 'hands, space, face'.
- j) There has been an increase in activity at the Urgent Care Centre and Emergency Department, which suggests that citizens are becoming more confident to access health services.
- k) Elective activity, both day cases and those procedures requiring admission, are being stepped up and there is planning in place to support an increase in activity over the next six months. Elective activity for the highest priority cases has been maintained throughout the pandemic but this is now being broadened out to all those on waiting lists.
- l) In Nottingham the Covid-19 vaccination has now been given to over 117,000 people and there continues to be incremental increases in rates.
- m) Covid-19 vaccination appointments are now available to book for over 45s; and anyone who is clinically extremely vulnerable, a carer or in cohorts 1-9 who

hasn't yet received their vaccine can still book an appointment at one of the local or national sites.

- n) Second doses of the vaccine are being rolled out, including to care home residents. It is important that people attend to receive their second dose as this offers the best protection.
- o) The Vaccination Bus has been in operation in Nottingham to drive up uptake in low uptake areas, including St Anns, Strelley and those in hostel accommodation. The Clinical Commissioning Group has been working with the City Council and voluntary sector on promotion of the bus in different areas of the City and it is operated by NHS staff. Further pop-up clinics are also planned.
- p) Local GPs have been clear that Muslims should not delay getting the vaccine during Ramadan. The British Islamic Medical Association has also confirmed that receiving the vaccine does not invalidate the fast.

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

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

222 Declarations of Interests for agenda items 11 - 17

See Confidential Minutes

223 Confidential Minutes

See Confidential Minutes

224 Situational round-up

See Confidential Minutes

225 Universities' student return arrangements

See Confidential Minutes

226 Operational Eagle

See Confidential Minutes

227 Re-opening of Nottingham City Centre

See Confidential Minutes

228 Local Covid-19 Vaccination Plan update

See Confidential Minutes

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229 Refresh of the Local Outbreak Management Plan

See Confidential Minutes