

## **Slough Outbreak Engagement Board – Meeting held on Wednesday, 5th August, 2020.**

**Present:-** Councillors Pantelic (Chair), Akram, Anderson, Bains, Carter, Mann, and Nazir

SBC Officers: Joe Carter (Director of Transformation), Cate Duffy (Director of Children, Learning & Skills Services), Stephen Gibson (Interim Director of Regeneration), Kate Pratt (Communications Manager), Alan Sinclair (Director of Adults & Communities), Richard West (Interim Director of Place and Development), Josie Wragg (Chief Executive of the Council), Dr Liz Brutus (Public Health Representative) and Dr Vanita Dutta (Public Health Representative)

Partner Agencies: Tracey Faraday-Drake (ICS Place Lead), Ramesh Kukar (Voluntary and Community Sector Representative), and Superintendent Gavin Wong (Thames Valley Police Representative)

**Also present:-** Dr Jim O' Donnell (CCG representative) and Tessa Lindfield (Director of Public Health) (from 5.35pm)

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Swindlehurst and Neil Wilcox (SBC Director of Finance & Resources)

### **PART 1**

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

None were declared.

#### **2. Public Questions**

No public questions had been received.

It was reported that the Council's 'One Slough' magazine had been sent to all households in the Borough. Included in the magazine was a section that invited residents to submit comments and feedback. The Communications Manager was requested to collate the responses received and to provide a summary of the key themes and questions submitted at the next Slough Outbreak Engagement Board meeting.

**Resolved** – That a summary of the key themes and questions submitted by residents via the One Slough magazine consultation be provided at the next Slough Outbreak Engagement Board meeting.

#### **3. Local Covid-19 Status Report**

The Service Lead, Public Health introduced the report and outlined the key public health messages.

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Evidence indicated that cases of Covid-19 had been increasing in some regions, following what had been a continual decline across all parts of the country. National lockdown restrictions had gradually been lifted, with many businesses re-opening and people able to see each other again. The announcement by the Government on 31st July 2020 that additional local measures were being put in place in some areas and that the planned measures for the further easing of lockdown would be paused, meant the next phase of the pandemic in England remained uncertain.

It was explained that the Council gathered data from a number of sources and information was consolidated on the 'Covid dashboard'. The dashboard included data relating to the number of people known to be infected, the number of deaths, where deaths had occurred, Test and Trace information, and an exceedance report, which indicated if there were more cases than expected in Slough. Presently, the number of new cases in Slough was continuing to fall.

A summary of the data received on 3rd August 2020, as set out in section 6.13 of the report was presented to the Board.

The key public health messages were: promoting the importance of regular hand washing or the use of alcohol sanitiser; the use of face coverings in enclosed public spaces; and encouraging residents to go for a test.

The Service Lead, Regulatory Services was then invited to outline the new powers provided by The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Amendment) (No.3) Regulations 2020. The new regulations gave the Council powers, in prescribed circumstances, to close or restrict individual premises, events and public outdoor places, in order to curb the incidence and spread of Covid-19.

The Chair invited comments and questions from Board Members.

During the course of the discussion, the following points were raised:

- Clarification was sought regarding the number of tests that had been carried out at the Montem Centre site. It was confirmed that the 'over 4000' figure provided in the report was an error and as of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020, approximately 600 tests had been carried out.
- A Board Member asked how residents were being encouraged to go for a test, and if it was possible for people to have more than one test. It was explained that some people were 'asymptomatic carriers', meaning they showed no symptoms; therefore testing was important to minimise the spread of Covid-19. Residents were able to return for a second test if they were concerned that they had been exposed to a particular risk.
- It was queried if the increase in cases was a reflection of new cases or due to an increased level of testing. It was explained that while the total number of cases had slightly increase, the proportion of positive

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tests in Slough remained low, in compassion to local authorities in the North West, where the positivity rate was high.

- It was asked what work was being undertaken by primary health care providers to communicate preventative measures to residents with underlying health conditions and those who were 'border line' and at an increased risk. In response, it was reported that the Council had been invited by NHS England to be part of a pilot study looking at the impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. The pilot involved partnership working between the Council, the NHS and the voluntary sector to establish preventative measures and treatments for Slough BAME residents. Part of the prevention work was about raising awareness, informing and engaging with residents. General Practitioners were also encouraging patients to have NHS health checks and providing advice regarding preventative health measures. Workplace health was also being considered as part of the pilot project and the measures that could be implemented to reduce occupational exposure to Covid-19. In view of the forthcoming winter period, the importance of those people who would ordinarily receive a flu vaccination, continuing to do so was highlighted. The Council's Public Health Team would be working with NHS England to amplify the communications in relation to flu immunisation.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

*(Tessa Lindfield, Director of Public Health joined the meeting)*

### 4. Key National Messages

The Communications Manager explained that there were currently no new messages to report; however the position was being continually monitored to ensure the Council was aligned with the Government's advice.

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

### 5. Key Local Messages

The Chair highlighted the importance of hand washing, social distancing and the use of face coverings. In addition, Board Members were encouraged to promote the importance of testing to residents.

**Resolved** – That Slough Outbreak Engagement Board Members be encouraged to promote locally the key messages, as set out above.

### 6. Any Other Business

The Chair wished to record her thanks to local partners and Council staff for all of the work that had been undertaken in response to the pandemic.

Discussion took place in relation to the use of community pharmacists to pro-actively encourage residents have a Covid-19 test. It was agreed that an

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update regarding the Council's communication with community pharmacists be provided at the next Slough Outbreak Engagement Board meeting.

The Voluntary and Community Sector representative wished to commend the outstanding work the Council had done to house and support rough sleepers during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

**Resolved** – That an update regarding the Council's work with Slough's community pharmacists to promote Covid-19 testing be provided at the next Slough Outbreak Engagement Board meeting.

### **7. Date of Next Meeting - 16th September 2020 (unless a meeting was required sooner)**

**Resolved** – The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 16<sup>th</sup> September 2020, unless it became necessary to hold a meeting sooner.

Chair

(Note: The meeting opened at 5 pm and closed at 5.42 pm)