

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD - COMMUNITY SUB-GROUP
4 AUGUST 2020

(5.00 pm - 6.20 pm)

PRESENT Councillors (in the Chair), Councillor Stephen Alambritis,
Rob Clarke, Abi Fafolu, Dr Vasa Gnanapragam,
Councillor Rebecca Lanning, Martin Miranda,
Councillor Oonagh Moulton, Kalu Obuka,
Councillor Eleanor Stringer and Dr Dagmar Zeuner

Clarissa Larsen, Health and Wellbeing Board Partnership
Manager, Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer.,

1 WELCOME (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from James Blythe and Mohan Sekeram.

2 MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The Leader of the Council with responsibility for Adult Social Care and Health welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Leader said this is an important sub group which will support the implementation of the Outbreak Control Plan. It is likely that meetings will take place regularly until at least April 2021.

All panel members were invited to introduce themselves.

3 LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN (Agenda Item 2)

The Director of Public Health gave her presentation outlining the purpose of the Outbreak Control Plan. The Plan sets out responsibilities in the event of an outbreak and will involve close partnership working with agencies including Public Health England and the NHS. The council will specifically work closely with the NHS Test and Trace Service to act quickly within the community to prevent further spread.

The Director of Public Health said the sub group will give a voice to the communities who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 to date. Hearing the lived experience of local groups will be an important part of the work. We need to build trust within communities to help them have confidence in the approach set out in the Local Outbreak Control Plan so they support the process.

Community sub group members will be asked to use their contacts and reach out into their communities with key communication messages. Local authorities have new

legal powers to impose lock downs but are keen to work with the community to develop a consensual approach.

In response to questions, the Director of Public Health said the police are an important partner in this work and the council works closely alongside the police in the Borough Resilience Forum. The council will also work closely with schools advising them on COVID-19 related concerns and will work in partnership if any decisions need to be made relating to potential closures.

A sub-group member asked if there is a local timeline for the potential end of social distancing and COVID measures, March 2021 is a national date but things are constantly developing and there may be differences across the country. The Director of Public Health said the timeline is an approximation and is pragmatic, there will be constant reassessment.

A sub-group member asked if a choice was to be made between closing schools and pubs will this committee have a role in deciding this. The Director of Public Health said this will not be the responsibility of this sub group, though they might advise and Merton would work with partners to make such decisions. During the national outbreak some decision making took place at a London level. We will continue to draw on expertise and discuss with the relevant stakeholders.

A sub-group member asked what the message will be to communities during the autumn when there are both flu and Covid-19 risks. The Director of Public Health said there is a concern about the potential impact of flu on people's health and pressure on services. People are advised to have the flu vaccine. This sub- group can play an important role in promoting this within our communities. It is also important to ensure people have easy access to flu vaccines.

4 IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES (Agenda Item 3)

The Director of Public Health gave her presentation on the number of people in Merton who have died due to the Coronavirus. It was reported that the peak week was between 11-17th April, with levels of deaths from Covid-19 and higher than expected overall excess. Many deaths were among older people with limited life expectancy whose death was hastened by COVID-19. There are also indirect impacts of Covid- 19 which still need to be investigated.

Public Health England has published a report on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities. The report found that occupation, deprivation and overcrowded housing were among the factors that made these communities more vulnerable to COVID.

The Director of Public Health said the council has commissioned BAME Voice to conduct research to gain a better understanding of the impact on the community. This work will engage communities on local outbreak control and the importance of testing and contact tracing as a vital way of protecting vulnerable people. There will be an update on lived experience work at the next meeting. It is also recognised that BAME are a heterogeneous group.

The sub group agreed the importance of recognising the indirect impact of the pandemic on young people.

Martin Miranda highlighted impact on young people included not taking exams and uncertainty around university and health issues within their families. The youth network will be an important forum to continue engagement and reach new people and communities.

The Director of Public Health said they want to use digital media to engage young people and also to work with young people to capture their digital expertise to find new channels and ways to share messages on testing and contact tracing.

5 TERMS OF REFERENCE (Agenda Item 4)

The chair gave the sub group the opportunity to comment on the subject headings within the draft terms of reference. The group were asked to send any comments to Clarissa Larsen Health and Wellbeing Board Partnership Manager, Public Health Team by the end of August. The terms of reference will be presented to the next full Health and Wellbeing Board on 29th September 2020.