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HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND OLDER PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

8 FEBRUARY 2022

(7.15 pm - 8.50 pm)

PRESENT: Councillors Councillor Peter McCabe (in the Chair), Councillor Janice Howard, Councillor Nigel Benbow, Councillor Pauline Cowper, Councillor Mary Curtin, Councillor Helena Dollimore, Councillor Jenifer Gould, Councillor Linda Kirby and Di Griffin

ALSO PRESENT: Simon Shimmens, CEO Merton Connected, Catherine Heffernan, NHS England, Jacqueline Walker, NHS England

Stella Akintan (Scrutiny Officer), Phil Howell (Assistant Director for Strategy and Improvement) and Dr Dagmar Zeuner (Director, Public Health)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 2)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record

3 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 3)

Councillor Dollimore declared she is a vaccinator with St Johns Ambulance.

4 IMPACT OF COVID IN MERTON (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Public Health reported that:

The pandemic is shrinking but there are still high numbers of infections in schools.

There are reduced admissions in hospitals.

The progress with vaccinations has slowed down, they are targeting smaller numbers from groups with lower vaccination rates.

The Director of Public Health said they are waiting further government guidance on planning for further surges and how to live with Covid.

A panel member asked if further Covid variants are on the horizon. The Director of Public Health reported that the original Omicron BA1 and Omicron variant BA2 are

spreading globally and within the UK and BA2 being even more transmissible than BA1. However BA2 is not rated as a new variant of concern because the impact on health and the required protection is not significantly different to BA2.

A panel member asked if we are ensuring that there is outreach to provide immune compromised people with a third dose of the vaccine. The Director of Public Health said they will be contacted by NHS clinicians. It is important this group do not slip through the net and the Director will raise this issue with primary care colleagues.

The Director of Public Health said they are providing information for pregnant women who are reluctant to get vaccinated.

5 IMMUNISATION PROGRAMMES IN MERTON (Agenda Item 5)

NHS colleagues gave an overview of the report.

A panel member said as there was a drop in routine vaccines, we need to look at ward level figures due to inequalities between the East and West of the borough.

The Principal Public Health Advisor for Commissioning Immunisations and Vaccination Services said they recognise we need better access to uptake by GP practice level. They will be resuming projects on these issues which were paused due to Covid.

A Panel member asked about advice given to pregnant women about the flu jab. The Operational Director for Covid and Flu said they reach pregnant women in maternity services in promoting flu vaccination.

Resolved

The Vice chair thanked NHS Colleagues for their report

6 REVIEW OF LUNCH CLUBS IN MERTON (Agenda Item 6)

Simon Shimmens gave an overview of the report, highlighting the purpose is to review lunch clubs to make them sustainable in long term and reduce reliance on council funding.

A panel member asked about funding for the programme. The Chief Executive said funding is to run the network, Merton Council has provided funding for the lunch clubs.

A Panel member asked if there are any collaborations with organisations such as scouts, schools to build collaboration and intergenerational work. The Chief Executive said this is a good suggestion and they will take this to project team.

A panel member thanked the Chief Executive for his work and said the language is important and they should be referred to activity groups which provide lunch. It was asked if there any plans to provide mini buses at reasonable rates. The Chief Executive agreed that the terminology needs to be changed. They have bid for

funding from the Department for Transport on a transport and loneliness pilot which could provide additional opportunities. Other options are also being explored.

RESOLVED

The Chair thanked for all involved in providing this important service.

7 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 7)

The Work programme was noted