

# RBWM Outbreak Engagement Board

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021, 2.30pm, Zoom meeting

## Board Attendees:

- Cllr Carroll
- Cllr Price
- Cllr Baldwin
- Executive Director of Adults, Health and Housing – Hilary Hall
- Communications and Marketing Manager – Louisa Dean
- Consultant in Public Health – Anna Richards
- Executive Director of Children’s Services – Kevin McDaniel
- Executive Managing Director RBWM, Clinical Commissioning Group – Caroline Farrar
- Director of Public Health Berkshire East – Stuart Lines
- Head of Housing, Environmental Health and Trading Standards - Tracy Hendren

## Additional Attendees:

- Cllr Singh
- Cllr Bhangra
- Cllr Coppinger
- Cllr Bond
- Cllr Stimson
- Marc Connor

## Apologies:

- Chief Executive – Duncan Sharkey
- Head of Communities – David Scott
- Cllr Werner

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1.	Conflicts of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Carroll is currently working for the UK Government’s Vaccines Taskforce as an expert adviser and infectious disease and vaccines specialist, Sanofi Pasteur. he declared his employment in the interests of full transparency and to highlight that should for any reason during the meeting, or indeed during future meetings, the Board discussed anything directly related to Sanofi Pastuer’s business he would abstain from the discussion and leave the room as required. The Chairman also declared another personal interest as he was currently working as a policy advisor on the governments vaccine task force.</li></ul>
2.	Questions from the Public	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Given that Monday 19th July is ‘freedom day’, when we are able to open the country even further, how it is that Charters School, the only secondary school in the borough, has had to move to 100% remote learning due to the number of Covid cases (and</li></ol>

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	<p>resultant self-isolations) in the school, a situation not seen since early March? Is our children's education now not as important as Boris Johnson told us it was then?</p> <p><i>We have been working very closely with schools throughout the pandemic to understand the implications of the guidance and to support them with providing Covid-safe environments. It remains a constant challenge for schools to maintain 'bubbles' and a focus on learning.</i></p> <p><i>It is clear from the national media that there has been a widespread increase in the number of people being 'pinged' by the NHS app and requiring to self-isolate. Charters is no different – 18 staff have had to self-isolate and with positive cases amongst the students, a total of 250 are now isolating. As there are also no canteen staff, students can only access packed lunches. As a result of all these issues, the school made the decision to revert to home learning for the rest of the term which was only a matter of a few days.</i></p> <p><i>Schools have been guided by the Department for Education to retain the bubble approach until next term.</i></p> <p>2. I own and run a small dance school. After an incredibly difficult year and a half with virtually no support from Government what advice would you give small businesses like mine?</p> <p>To prevent having to close or return class fees as we move into a new way of living and working with Covid. would you advise continuing pretty much as I have been with track &amp; trace procedures, social distancing, no physical contact , increased ventilation and sanitised hands/frequent touch surfaces ? My biggest query is can I now increase numbers of students or should I be sticking to the 100 sq ft per person guideline still?</p> <p><i>While many of the legal restrictions that the Government has imposed through the pandemic will be lifted (from Step 4), cautious guidance will remain, making it clear this is not yet a return to normal. This is a new phase of continued caution whilst managing the risks of COVID-19.</i></p> <p><i>The government has published guidance for working safely during coronavirus: <a href="https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19">Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance from Step 4 - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a> This provides advice on sensible precautions employers can take to manage risk and support their staff and customers.</i></p> <p><i>The Government highlight the following ways to mitigate the risk:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Meeting in well-ventilated areas where possible, such as outdoors or indoors with windows open.</i></li> <li>• <i>Wearing a face covering where you come into contact with people you don't normally meet in enclosed and crowded spaces.</i></li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Asking staff and customers to clean their hands regularly and clean surfaces that people touch regularly.</i></li> <li>• <i>Social distancing guidance no longer applies and there are no limits on social contact between people from different households. COVID-19 can still be spread through social contact. You can mitigate this risk by reducing the number of people your workers come into contact with.</i></li> <li>• <i>Businesses will be encouraged to display QR codes for customers to check in using the NHS COVID-19 app, to support NHS Test and Trace, although it will no longer be a legal requirement. It will remain a legal requirement for people to self-isolate if they test positive or are told to do so by NHS Test and Trace. The public will continue to be encouraged to download and use the latest version of the NHS COVID-19 app to help reduce the spread of the virus.</i></li> </ul> <p>3. We are all aware of the number of Covid cases and tragic deaths in our Borough during the recent pandemic. Are we however aware of the impact that covid restrictions and caution messaging have had on other non-covid cases such as cancer, mental health, heart disease etc... in RBWM? Do we as a Borough have a handle on the real collateral damage lockdowns and restrictions have had on our services, economy, education of children, local businesses and to the NHS and all public services long term in RBWM during this pandemic? Even a projection of the knock on effects? We cannot ever lock our nation and Borough down again without even a simple analysis of the impacts and damages it causes. Where is that report? We owe it to those non-covid sufferers who have lost so much and in many cases have and will lose their lives due to delayed treatments and fears instilled. Where is the RBWM plan to now restore that confidence, reverse the fear filled messages and encourage people back to work and out to shops and restaurants again? Our towns need support with clear and positive messaging now - no more stay at home messages!</p> <p><i>The impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are multiple and complex, and it will not be possible to determine the differential impacts of the pandemic versus those of lockdowns quickly and easily at a local level. Significant national research and analysis will be needed to answer these questions, supported by the public inquiry which the government has announced will begin in 2022. Locally, the NHS has worked to restore services and continues to work to mitigate the impacts and reduce the backlogs of care that have built up. It would be inaccurate to attribute these backlogs to the lockdowns rather than the impact of Covid-19 infections themselves, including the need to treat people with a</i></p>

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	<p><i>Covid-19 infection and the reduction in staffing due to infections and self-isolation.</i></p> <p><i>The infection rate continues to rise locally and, in common with the national picture, we remain concerned that this will have an impact on NHS services due to the need to treat people in hospital, and due to the reduction in staffing that inevitably follows. Additional challenges include increased rates of other respiratory infections. We are currently preparing services for the next wave, as advised by the government's medical and scientific advisers, and this may include restricting services once again to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed.</i></p> <p><i>In line with national messages, we would advise caution at this time recognising that the number of people unvaccinated in our local communities is still high.</i></p> <p><i>In terms of the economy, during the pandemic and as we have moved through the roadmap to reopening, the council has been supporting the local business community through our Re-opening and Recovery strategy which has promoted local businesses via social media channels, online blogs and through provision of training sessions to digitally upskill local businesses. The campaign has both supported businesses and provided information to residents and visitors that the borough is unlocking safely and we are here to welcome people back to support our local economy. Campaigns such as 'Shop Local, Support Local' &amp; 'Independents Day' to support independent businesses have been run along with 'High Street Hero' blogs and lot of shared content from local people and business in the borough.</i></p> <p><i>The 'Don't Let Your Guard Down' campaign was rolled out across the Royal Borough as we moved out of full lockdown earlier in 2021 and will continue to be used to remind all that we still need to be careful post 19 July. In addition to My Royal Borough the Visit Windsor, Make Maidenhead and Enjoy Maidenhead channels have been used to support and amplify the messages of supporting local, 'Rediscover your Royal Borough' and encouraging Staycations locally.</i></p> <p><i>The Economic Growth team monitors various performance indicators including footfall in our main town centres which is starting to show signs of recovery as we move through the roadmap to reopening. Other indicators include numbers of residents unemployed and on furlough and we will be working alongside partners to ensure that there is jobs and skills support available to those that need it.</i></p> <p>4. How many double-jabbed people have covid? What percentage of hospitalisations or deaths are double- jabbed?</p> <p><i>This data is not currently available, but we understand it is in line with expectations around the efficacy of the vaccines which are not 100%. The vaccines have significantly weakened the link</i></p>

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	<p><i>between Covid-19 infections, serious illness and deaths and remain the best way to protect yourself and your family.</i></p> <p>5. I have suffered from ankylosing spondylitis since I was 11. At age 78 I am having problems breathing as my lungs are restricted as result of my curved fused spine. If I get exposed to Covid 19 I will no doubt suffer. Shopping for essentials in a life as a person with no children or dependants is a necessity. I have paid for my food delivery each week during epidemic. I now wear a mask and have felt confident enough to go into shops but from next Monday with no control on numbers in a shop... no social distancing or requirement to wear a mask I am scared to find myself in a shop queue with a person standing close behind me coughing. A risk I would be stupid to take. Why wearing a mask and keeping screens and social distance in essential shops is not to be maintained is selfish by society.</p> <p><i>Thank you for your question. We understand that you have concerns and wish to know how you can continue to take precautions to keep yourself safe. We would like to highlight that the Government will publish guidance on how to reduce risk through practising key behaviours: 1) <b>For individuals</b>, while we are moving away from most legal restrictions, the guidance is there to help us all act responsibly. While prevalence is high, it is essential that everybody follows the guidance and takes action to protect themselves and others. 2) <b>For businesses</b>, setting out advice for how to understand and mitigate risks as we start to live with COVID-19. 3) <b>For those who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable</b>.</i></p> <p><i>Relevant guidance:</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/moving-to-step-4-of-the-roadmap">Moving to step 4 of the roadmap - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-response-summer-2021">COVID-19 Response: Summer 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-from-step-4">Working safely during coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance from Step 4 - Guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/covid-19-guidance-on-protecting-people-defined-on-medical-grounds-as-extremely-vulnerable">COVID-19: guidance on protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></p> <p>6. Will local companies be able to continue with the rules of masks and social distancing?</p> <p>7. Will a company (eg a bus company or pub) be able to insist on customers wearing masks or can they only ask customers to do so? Does RBWM have any legal powers to enforce mask wearing?</p>

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	<p><i>Post 19 July it will be a decision for each business to make as part of their own risk assessments. Many businesses have already made the decision to continue with mask wearing and social distancing in order to keep their staff safe and offer reassurance to customers. The Royal Borough has no legal powers to enforce mask wearing.</i></p> <p>8. The statistics speak for themselves. When are they going to offer vaccinations to secondary school aged children or are they expected to spend their summer in isolation? If it's safe for pregnant women to have the vaccination and other countries are vaccinating older children why can't you push for this to start happening or will this carry on into the next school year?</p> <p><i>The decision to vaccinate children is not a local one and will be taken by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. Local services will work to implement the decisions of the JCVI in line with NHSE/I guidance.</i></p> <p>9. I am a business start-up owner who has had no business at all, for well over a year. For survival purposes, food on table and bills to be paid, I am having to go to work and my work, being a self-employed artist and musician, means I will be front facing the public. I have already had Covid 19 over a year ago and have also had my first vaccination and sadly due to minor clotting issues I ended up in A&amp;E for observation. I have lost one good friend, young and fit gentleman to Covid 19 and 2 other friends as a consequence of Covid 19. I am with a sad heart, not be taking the 2nd Vaccination as I am concerned about further clotting . Having researched, I have discovered that I am at the most vulnerable group to contract the Delta Variant as I have already had Covid and only the first vaccination. I will be testing myself on a regular basis but I am not protected.</p> <p><i>We would encourage you to discuss your concerns with a clinician, as the vaccine is the best way to protect yourself against the virus and there may be other options for you. Please contact your GP practice to discuss your concerns.</i></p> <p>10. If we are vaccinated with a double dose, what does this achieve as regards to Long Covid? Long Covid is a fundamental problem which raises many fears, and cost for the NHS. Are we, in fact, immune from carrying the virus which can cause Long Covid? Would we suffer ourselves let alone in the community at large? Are we to wait for the ultimate vaccine which would destroy this problem?</p> <p><i>As the question indicates, Long Covid is a serious issue which may affect people's health in the long-term. Although research is</i></p>

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		<p><i>still ongoing, it is clear that vaccination reduces the risk of being infected with Covid-19 and for those who do become infected, reduces the severity of illness. The vaccine remains the best available protection against the virus and we would encourage everyone to take up the offer when they receive it.</i></p> <p>11. It seems to be taking such a long time to decide whether to vaccinate secondary school age children. It would be useful to have an update on the latest thinking and a timeline for a decision. If they are not vaccinated then is it considered acceptable for them to mostly catch Covid as it is spreading so rapidly in this sector and likely to get worse in September. I am concerned this will cause more educational disruption.</p> <p><i>The decision to vaccinate children is not a local one and will be taken by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. Local services will work to implement the decisions of the JCVI in line with NHSE/I guidance.</i></p> <p>12. Will RBWM maintain the wider pavement areas in areas such as Windsor town marked with temporary bollards to provide safe distances for pedestrians during the next phase of Covid precautions. If not why not and what is your risk assessment for their removal.</p> <p><i>A review is underway on all active travel measures that were put in place as a result of the pandemic which will take into account feedback from members of the public and businesses before any decision is taken.</i></p>
3.	Local Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 247 cases per 100,000 population. This represents 374 cases in the last 7 day period. This is an increase on the previous 7 days. This is also in line with the South East and England average. The South East case rate is 291 cases per 100,000. England's case rate sits higher at 399 cases per 100,000 population.</li> <li>• 44 cases per 100,000 population for the 60+ age group. This has also increased and represents 16 cases.</li> <li>• All of the wards within RBWM have had cases.</li> <li>• Weekly case rates at 8<sup>th</sup> July show the highest rates in people aged 20 – 24 year olds (601 cases per 100,000) and 15 – 19 year olds (575 cases per 100,000). Over the last few weeks there have been an increase in all age ranges.</li> <li>• The number of Covid-19 patients has continued to stay at low levels in FHFT Hospitals 5 new admission on 4<sup>th</sup> July. On 6<sup>th</sup> July, 13 patients were in FHFT Hospitals for Covid-19 with 1 on mechanical ventilation.</li> <li>• The number of daily admissions for Covid-19 patients also remains low in Royal Berkshire Foundation Trust hospitals. There were no new admissions on 4<sup>th</sup> July. As of 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2</li> </ul>

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		<p>patients were in RBFT Hospitals for Covid-19, with 1 patient needing mechanical ventilation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The best way for people to protect against the virus is to continue following the Public Health advice. This can be found on <a href="http://www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk">www.berkshirepublichealth.co.uk</a></li> <li>• Allergy clinics have been run at Wexham Park for some weeks for those who may potentially have a reaction to the vaccination. The number of people that can not be vaccinated is very low.</li> <li>• Case rates will continue to go up within step 4 and the current relaxation on rules.</li> <li>• As of today, we are moving into phase 4 within the government roadmap. There is a recognition that we are moving into a new phase of continued caution whilst managing the risk of Covid.</li> <li>• There has been a number of weeks since RBWM have had a death in relation to Covid.</li> <li>• There is a five-point plan to manage the virus in the next phase which can be found on the government website.</li> <li>• Locally, there is work continuing around vaccinations, making the guidance 'real' for local residents, visitors and businesses, Test, Trace and Isolate and Contingency measures to respond to unexpected events.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action – AR to look into the delay on reports for testing.</b></p>
4.	Update on High Risk settings	<p><b>Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan for the summer is to ensure that the interpretation of the guidance that will be in effect from September is clear.</li> <li>• From 16<sup>th</sup> August, the current plan is that anyone under the age of 18 years old will not need to isolate even if identified as a close form of contact. This will hopefully cause less disruption.</li> <li>• There is a continued effort to encourage staff to take up the vaccination within school settings.</li> </ul> <p><b>Adult Social care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuing to encourage vaccinations within care homes. From Autumn, this will be a mandatory requirement.</li> <li>• There is one care setting which is in outbreak. All residents and staff have received the double vaccination.</li> </ul>
5.	Engagement and Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The comms team have continued to promote the vaccine programme and the pop ups/vaccine centres in Maidenhead.</li> <li>• An online vaccine campaign has been done targeting 18 – 24 year olds.</li> <li>• A mobile testing van has been going through the borough, offering lateral flow tests and also offering vaccinations.</li> <li>• General testing reminders have been sent out.</li> <li>• Vaccine posters have been done for the mobile library as this is out in the community.</li> <li>• Short videos from residents aged 18 – 24 on why they are getting the vaccines.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The comms team have met with officers within the same age range to help with ideas for engaging with the younger cohorts.</li> <li>• There is a new summer campaign which is Unlock for Summer vaccine.</li> <li>• Daily posts have been done on Facebook and Twitter on all topics.</li> <li>• There are over 53,000 subscribers to the newsletter, which has a 45% open rate.</li> <li>• The community information champions email has 153 recipients, which is also sent out weekly.</li> <li>• With the roadmap for step 4, the comms team will be encouraging people with messaging around tests, face coverings, symptoms and transmission.</li> <li>• Working with public health Berkshire in regards to long covid to use for messaging.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action – LD to look at adding the track and trace app into the comms messages.</b></p>
6.	Enforcement and Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned inspection visits have been the focus over the last week.</li> <li>• 9 routine food inspections and 8 new food registration visits.</li> <li>• 24 service requests within the last week, 1 of which was covid related</li> <li>• 6 new food premises requests</li> <li>• 15 general non covid requests</li> <li>• Outbreak notifications – 13 within schools and 1 care home.</li> <li>• It has been agreed with Public Health how the team will provide advice going forward.</li> </ul>
7.	AOB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to there being a face to face full council meeting on the following day (20 July), Cllr Baldwin recommended, as outlined in the meeting, that everyone should complete a lateral flow test beforehand.</li> </ul>
8.	Date of next public meeting	16 <sup>th</sup> August 2021, 2.30pm, Zoom meeting