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Meeting	City of York Outbreak Management Advisory Board
Date	13 January 2021
Present	Councillors Aspden (Chair), Runciman (Vice-Chair) and D Myers Ian Floyd - Chief Operating Officer, City of York Council Amanda Hatton – Corporate Director of People, City of York Council Sharon Stoltz – Director of Public Health, City of York Council Siân Balsom – Manager,- Healthwatch York Marc Bichtemann – Managing Director, First York Lucy Brown – Director of Communications, York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust James Farrar – Local Enterprise Partnership Professor Charlie Jeffery - Vice Chancellor and President, University of York Phil Mettam – Track and Trace Lead for Humber, Coast and Vale, NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group Julia Mulligan – North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Mike Padgham – Independent Care Group Steph Porter – Director of Primary Care, NHS Vale of York CCG Alison Semmence – Chief Executive, York CVS Lisa Winward – Chief Constable, North Yorkshire Police
In Attendance	Claire Foale - Head of Communications, Customer Services and Digital, City of York Council Fiona Phillips – Assistant Director of Public Health, City of York Council

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## 88. Declarations of Interest

Board members had no interests to declare.

## **89. Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 December 2020 and actions arising**

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes. The Board agreed the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held on 13 January 2021 2020.

## **90. Current Situation in York**

Fiona Phillips, Assistant Director of Public Health at City of York Council, gave a brief update on the rate of local cases, which stood at 637. This was higher than both the regional and national rates. The data showed a major rise in cases from 15-18 December, which was attributed to the increase in social gatherings before tougher restrictions came into place. The increase in cases was seen across all age groups, but the 60+ age group didn't see much of a change. As that cohort was most at risk they were more likely to adhere to the guidance. Fiona reported that hospital admissions were still rising and were expected to continue to rise. Compared to other previous years taken as a baseline, there was an excess of 142 deaths.

The local contact tracing service had followed up almost 90% of all cases received from the national system. Fiona added that messaging would be prepared to encourage people to engage with the service, as a follow-up at their residence was quite resource- intensive.

Sian Balsom, Manager of Healthwatch York, asked what the rapid increase in cases could be attributed to. Fiona thought this could be because of people travelling to York from other areas which were of higher risk and had tighter restrictions. It could also be attributed to the increase in indoor social interaction over the Christmas period when York was a Tier 2 area.

Councillor Myers asked what was being done for the children of critical workers, as the furlough scheme wasn't being taken up as much as last year. He also asked why groups of children of critical workers were allowed into school during the national lockdown. Fiona reported that there had been relatively few cases in schools throughout autumn. All risk assessments that had been provided by schools were good and had demonstrated good contact tracing and self-isolation over the pandemic.

Amanda Hatton, Corporate Director of People at City of York Council, explained that guidance had changed from lockdown 1, particularly around who was a critical worker. It was more difficult to support children of critical workers in the primary school setting as they had much smaller layouts.

Amanda reported that they were working to offer places for children as much as possible, sometimes placing them in other schools. She noted that the school system had managed well in a difficult situation.

Ian Floyd, Chief Operating Officer at City of York Council, added that furlough was the responsibility of the business to organise. There had not been any CYC staff furloughed because most had been seconded to other roles if they had nothing to do in their normal role. Working hours had been as flexible as possible for employees with children.

Marc Bichtemann, Managing Director of First York, asked whether we had an idea of where the rates are heading. Fiona expected the rates to drop with the lockdown measures in place but not in the immediate future. As soon as the lockdown was lifted cases were expected to rise again. However since it was a respiratory virus, moving into spring would bring a natural reduction in cases.

Julia Mulligan, North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, asked how the new variant had affected the rise in cases over Christmas. Fiona attributed this to the increased amount of indoor social gatherings over the holiday period but added that there was never a single reason for an increase.

The Board noted the report and the presentation.

## **91. Verbal Update on the Covid-19 Vaccination**

Stephanie Porter, Director of Primary Care at NHS Vale of York CCG, gave an update on the vaccination regime that would be delivered in York. Both the Oxford-AstraZeneca and the Pfizer vaccines were being used. Frontline health and social care workers were among the first to receive the vaccine, most of whom had been vaccinated before Christmas using the Pfizer vaccine. Vaccination sites at Haxby Health centre and Askham Bar had now been established. The hospital hubs were also now in operation using both vaccines. The main limiting factor would always be the availability of the vaccine.

Sharon Stoltz, Director of Public Health for the City of York, stated that the government had made a commitment to share local data with local authorities so that they could work in partnership with NHS colleagues to identify groups who hadn't responded to the invitation for vaccination. Hopefully the local data would be received before the next meeting.

Sian Balsom had received reports from other agencies that people could not book a vaccination unless they were online. Sharon assured the Board that people would get picked up through other means if they couldn't book

online. A number of external agencies had said they would help with digital exclusion.

The Board noted the update.

## **92. Covid-19 Lateral Flow Testing**

Fiona Phillips gave a presentation on lateral flow testing. At the last meeting it was agreed to commence lateral flow testing for people who lived and worked in York. This would start with the hospitality, retail and transport sectors and then move on to vulnerable people. Fiona assured the Board that the offer for residents would continue and another site would be established to ensure there was sufficient capacity. The additional site was still being scoped out.

National government had announced that secondary school children should be tested before returning to school. After the national lockdown was announced, York's offer had been adapted to accommodate any children of key workers who would be returning to school. The universities had also been asked to ensure their students had been tested before their return. Both university sites had continued to operate throughout the holiday period. Had it not been for the close collaborative work with both universities, this provision would not have been deliverable. Through partnership work, we had been able to meet some tough deadlines.

Sharon Stoltz informed the group that the Poppleton Bar drive through testing site had been opened up to residents living in Askham Richard after an increase in cases in the area. Following a similar increase in Acomb and Woodthorpe, an additional mobile PCR testing unit had been provided, initially for a week but later extended due to the cases continuing to rise.

The Board noted the update.

## **93. Impact of the Lockdown: Verbal Update from North Yorkshire Police**

Lisa Winward, Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police, reported that there was good attendance in the workforce, with officers predominantly remaining well. She informed the group that a number of cases had been reported in the police service and the requisite isolation period had been followed. Even with a reduced capacity a full service was still being provided.

Lisa reported that most breaches resulted from people misunderstanding the difference between legislation and guidance. People tried to distinguish

between them in order to gain more freedoms under the restrictions. One of the biggest challenges had been with visitors travelling into a Tier 2 area. The act of travelling was not a Covid offence; it was what the person did in the area where the problem was found. Those in Tier 3 had to abide by Tier 3 regulations even if they had travelled into a Tier 2 area. These kinds of nuances were understandably confusing for the public.

154 fixed penalty notices had been issued, 115 of them to visitors. North Yorkshire was one of the nation's leaders in the number of fixed penalty notices handed out. During the lockdown, enforcement was much quicker as the rules were much easier to understand.

The Chair asked whether anything more could be done around the enforcement of infection prevention control measures in supermarkets. The Chief Constable reported an increase of assaults on emergency workers, predominantly from people being challenged around the rules. Lisa confirmed that face coverings should still be worn in shops and on transport. Police could attend a situation when called to but security should have a polite conversation wherever possible in the first instance. Lisa stated that it should be a partnership approach.

The Board noted the update.

#### **94. Communications and Engagement**

Claire Foale, Head of Communications at City of York Council, gave a presentation on the continued messages and engagement carried out by the Council. She outlined the progressing phases of the communications plan rolled out at certain stages in the outbreak. Claire informed the group of the various press releases that had been shared throughout the year.

Inaccuracies had continued to be addressed through social media updates, letters and the Ask The Leaders Facebook Live Q&A sessions. The most recent Q&A session, on 6 January, had reached over 8,300 people, with direct engagement from 1001 people. Support to parents who were home schooling had continued. Different ways in which the council could provide emotional support for pupils was also being explored. As secondary school pupils now had to engage with testing, guidance had been provided to ensure they understood the correct protocols.

Claire informed the Board of the new Complacency Campaign that was being developed to encourage compliance with the guidance. The least compliant cohort was males between the ages of 35-45. Claire explained that it was not only this group that was suffering from Covid fatigue.

Councillor Myers had concerns about outdated information still being prevalent around the whole city centre area. Claire assured the Board that she was aware of this issue and was in the process of resolving it.

The Board noted the presentation.

#### **95. Update from Sub-Group: Universities and Higher Education establishments**

Professor Charlie Jeffery, Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of York, informed the Board of the announcement from national government on 4 January asking universities and colleges to work online and remotely. Colleges were seeing a significant demand from parents who were critical workers to allow their children to study on site. Only a small number of courses had been permitted to go ahead. These were courses in teacher training, social work and health care. Students were also allowed to go in if they didn't have an adequate workplace at home.

The Board noted the update.

#### **96. Agenda Items for the Next Meeting**

The Chair confirmed that there were three standing items for all future agendas:

- Current Situation in York
- Communications and engagement
- Updates from Sub-Group/ Task and Finish Groups

A further agenda item on the impact of the current lockdown on the economy was agreed by the Board.

Board members were asked to email any further suggestions for any future agenda items.

#### **97. Dates of Future Meetings**

The agreed dates of future meetings were as follows:

- 10 February 2021
- 17 March 2021
- 7 April 2021
- 19 May 2021

#### **98. Any Other Business**

The Board had no other business to discuss.

Cllr K Aspden, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.03 pm].

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