

Nottinghamshire County COVID-19 Outbreak Control Engagement Board Notes and actions

Meeting date: Thursday 10 September 2020 (3.30pm)

Location: This meeting was held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Members:

Councillor Kay Cutts MBE	Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Reg Adair	Deputy Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Tony Harper	Chairman of the Adult Social Care & Public Health Committee
Councillor John Knight (A)	Chairman of the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery & Renewal Committee
Anthony May	Chief Executive of Nottinghamshire County Council
Jonathan Gribbin	Director of Public Health at Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Simon Greaves	Leader of Bassetlaw District Council
Mayor Andy Abrahams	Executive Mayor of Mansfield District Council
Kate Meynell	Assistant Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire Police
Dr Andy Haynes	Managing Director of Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System
Idris Griffiths	Chief Officer of NHS Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group
Luke Barrett	Group Manager: Communications & Marketing, Nottinghamshire County Council

Other participants:

Edward Shaw	Public Health & Commissioning Manager, Nottinghamshire County Council
Carl Bilbey	Conservative Group Research Officer, Nottinghamshire County Council

Item 1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Councillor Kay Cutts welcomed members to the fourth meeting of the Nottinghamshire County COVID-19 Outbreak Control Engagement Board.

Apologies were received from Councillor John Knight of Nottinghamshire County Council and Councillor David Lloyd of Newark & Sherwood District Council.

Item 2. Notes and actions of the previous meeting

No.	Point / action	Action owner	By when
1.	The notes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.		

Item 3. COVID-19 in Nottinghamshire: situation update

Jonathan Gribbin provided a summary of the latest situation in Nottinghamshire. During the discussion the following points and actions were raised:

No.	Point / action	Action owner	By when
2.	The national COVID-19 alert level remains at level 3 (i.e. the COVID-19 epidemic is in general circulation).		
3.	The seven-day incidence rate in Nottinghamshire is increasing, with the current rate at 17.4 per 100,000 of the population. The percentage of individuals testing positive is also increasing. A similar situation is seen in other parts of the East Midlands.		
4.	There has not been an increase in COVID-related hospital activity, but there are some signs of increased NHS 111 activity.		
5.	The situation in Nottinghamshire involves a combination of sporadic cases, small outbreaks and larger outbreaks. Transmission has occurred in a variety of settings including households, social gatherings, care homes and workplaces, and as a result of travel / holidays. The majority of positive COVID-19 cases have arisen in people of working age, particularly those aged between 18-35 years.		
6.	Outbreaks in July occurred serially, but recently multiple outbreaks have occurred concurrently. A recruitment campaign is underway for a number of fixed term posts to sustain the ongoing work of outbreak control.		
7.	Councillor Reg Adair stressed the importance of encouraging people to maintain social distancing, and asked if a significant increase in cases is expected due to the reopening of schools, colleges and universities.		
8.	Jonathan Gribbin noted that work has been underway with universities to encourage compliance of social distancing amongst the student population. The recent Government announcement provides another opportunity to promote this message, and 'the rule of six' should be easier to enforce. Universities are asking students to sign a COVID-19 pledge and it is hoped the use of 'champions' can be used to promote compliance.		
9.	Through the Local Resilience Forum's Testing Cell, arrangements are being made in case testing facilities are required on university campuses.		
10.	Anthony May noted that four additional mobile testing units will soon be available in the East Midlands. Work has taken place nationally to commission more laboratory capacity. This is expected to double the national capacity.		
11.	Jonathan Gribbin noted a key message to be disseminated is for people to self-isolate and request a free test as soon as possible, <u>if they have symptoms</u> .		

Item 4. Number 10 Taskforce field visit to Newark

Jonathan Gribbin summarised the outcomes of a Government field visit to Newark which took place during August 2020. During the discussion the following points and actions were raised:

No.	Point / action	Action owner	By when
12.	The purpose of the visit was to provide the Government with findings on how national policy is being implemented locally.		
13.	Key findings related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Testing (including the importance of local knowledge in determining deployment)• The need for guidance and resources to enable local authorities to support the national contact tracing system• Challenges associated with local recruitment due to simultaneous national recruitment programmes.		
14.	The report emphasised that robust partnership working has taken place through the Local Resilience Forum.		
15.	The employer's contributions to the field visit and their response to the outbreak were complimented. Members agreed the need to provide positive messaging about employers who are responsive in their collaboration with the relevant authorities.		

Item 5. Local outbreak control: learning and next steps

Jonathan Gribbin summarised learning from outbreaks in other parts of the country, and findings from a Local Resilience Forum outbreak control exercise on Wednesday 29 July. During the discussion the following points and actions were raised:

No.	Point / action	Action owner	By when
16.	Directors of Public Health have access to a variety of learning through national, regional and local channels. As similar arrangements for outbreak control are in place across the country, this provides an opportunity to identify common themes and share good practice.		
17.	Members discussed learning from outbreaks that have occurred elsewhere in England. These have been grouped into themes of multi-agency co-ordination, co-ordination of local and central government, resources, communication, data / information, and humanitarian assistance.		
18.	Further learning has arisen from a Local Resilience Forum outbreak control exercise on 29 July. Over 100 people from 23 organisations participated, including local authorities, the NHS, emergency services, government departments / organisations and universities. An overview of local outbreak control plans was provided by the Directors of Public Health for Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City. Participants discussed a scenario which involved community transmission and a university setting in a fictional location.		

19.	Many of the recommendations build on work already undertaken by organisations, either internally or through multi-agency arrangements. These will be monitored by the COVID-19 Health Protection Board.		
20.	In response to queries from Mayor Andy Abrahams, Jonathan Gribbin noted that social media is used as a method of obtaining 'soft intelligence' about COVID-19 transmission, and the deployment of mobile testing units is now determined locally.		

Item 6. The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No. 3) Regulations 2020

Nottinghamshire County Council has been given powers under [The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(England\) \(No. 3\) Regulations 2020](#) to give a Direction which imposes prohibitions, requirements or restrictions in relation to individual premises, events and public outdoor places. Anthony May provided an overview of the Regulations. During the discussion the following points and actions were raised:

No.	Point / action	Action owner	By when
21.	In order to progress the preparations for the Regulations, a 'Task & Finish' group comprising the Director of Public Health, Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, and Group Managers responsible for Legal Services and Trading Standards has been established. Arrangements have also been considered by the chief executives of Nottinghamshire County Council and the district / borough councils during meetings on Tuesday 18 August and Thursday 3 September.		
22.	On 14 September, the Adult Social Care & Public Health Committee will be asked to formally delegate authority for the exercise of all powers under the Regulations to the Chief Executive. Councillor Tony Harper noted there is a deputy in place, so contingencies are in place should the Chief Executive be unavailable.		
23.	Councillor Reg Adair asked if enforcement powers have been used to date. Anthony May noted the powers have not been exercised yet, but it can be foreseen this may change in future, particularly in regard to pubs.		
24.	Assistant Chief Constable Meynell noted that Nottinghamshire Police have a role in enforcement and will continue to work closely with local authorities on this work.		

Item 7. Communications

Luke Barrett provided a presentation of the communications approach for responding to an outbreak in Newark during August 2020. During the discussion the following points and actions were raised:

No.	Point / action	Action owner	By when
25.	Nottinghamshire County Council's communication & marketing team have prioritised supporting the public health division, and multi-agency co-ordination through attendance in the various Local Resilience Forum groups / cells.		

26.	This has also involved supporting the development of incident management plans for various settings.		
27.	Communications activity has involved using a combination of traditional media, social media and other bespoke methods (e.g. outdoor advertising media such as banners on lamp posts). Many of these arrangements are applied across the whole of Nottinghamshire, but they could also be used at a more local level in response to specific outbreaks.		
28.	This work takes place under the overarching engagement & communication strategy which was approved by the COVID-19 Outbreak Control Engagement Board on Tuesday 28 July.		
29.	A significant amount of communication and engagement has taken place with the media, particularly in response to the outbreak in Newark.		
30.	An approach has been found which aims to provide the media with a regular source of information, whilst not placing excessive strain on public health colleagues. The Directors of Public Health for Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City make themselves available to the media during a weekly briefing.		
31.	Nottinghamshire County Council also uses its own website and social media presence to connect directly with people. The 'emailme' bulletins provide a method of reaching specific audiences. Search engine optimisation is used as a method of connecting with audiences who are unlikely to go directly to Nottinghamshire County Council's website as a source of information.		
32.	Councillor Reg Adair recommended exploring the variety of channels that could be used to support communications with pubs (e.g. Pubwatch, East Midlands Chamber, Business Improvement Districts).	LB	

Item 8. Any other business

During the discussion the following points and actions were raised:

No.	Point / action	Action owner	By when
33.	Luke Barrett agreed to contact district / borough councils in regard to the Assistant Chief Constable's news briefing on Friday 11 September about enforcing the 'rule of six'.	LB	

Item 9. Arrangements for future meetings

The next meeting will take place on Monday 12 October 2020 (1.30pm). Members agreed additional meetings can be held if required.