

Health Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 26 May 2021

Present: Councillor – in the Chair

Councillors: Nasrin Ali, Curley, Green, Hussain, Leech, Newman, Riasat and Richards

Apologies: Councillor Cooley, Mary Monaghan and Reeves

Also present:

Councillor Midgley, Executive Member for Health and Care
Nick Gomm, Director of Corporate Affairs, Manchester Health and Care
Commissioning (MHCC)

HSC/21/18 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 as a correct record.

HSC/21/19 COVID-19 Update

The Committee considered the joint presentation of the Director of Public Health and the Executive Clinical Director Manchester Health and Care Commissioning that provided an update on COVID-19 activity that included the latest available information on data and intelligence.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were: -

- The Committee paid tribute to the Director of Public Health, his team, all health partners and volunteers for their response to the pandemic;
- Noting the prevalence of Variants of Concern in boroughs within Greater Manchester, did teams work collaboratively across borders to plan and respond to these events as and when they arose;
- A Member commented that government inaction had resulted in the spread of the Indian Variant;
- A view was sought as to the efficacy of Lateral Flow Tests (LFT);
- Why were the vaccination rates in the Piccadilly and Deansgate wards relatively low;
- What work was being done to ensure people with Learning Disabilities and other groups, such as travellers, were vaccinated;
- Information needed to be provided in all languages that were represented within the city; and
- Was data available relating to the number of hospital admissions for those that had not been vaccinated.

The Director of Public Health responded by informing the Committee that Public Health teams did work collaboratively across borders to respond to both existing and emerging issues to deliver a coordinated response. He reassured Members that the supplies of vaccines remained sufficient across all wards.

The Director of Public Health stated that it was important for all members of the public to observe and adhere to Public Health guidance to mitigate the spread of infection. He further commented that it was the effectiveness of the UK laboratories that undertake genomic sequencing that quickly identified Variants of Concern. With regard to LFTs he stated that supervised tests were more reliable, however as people began to become more used to administering these themselves there was increased confidence that the testing was more effective. He stated that it remained the case that if an LFT provided a positive result the person should undertake a Laboratory PCR test and residents should continue to check for symptoms.

With regard to the relatively low vaccination rates for the Piccadilly and Deansgate wards the Director of Public Health commented that this could be explained due to a relatively high number of young, transient and often unregistered residents.

The Director of Public Health stated that hospitals were looking to collect data in relation to COVID-19 admissions to identify the numbers of those patients who had been vaccinated.

With regard to Learning Disabled citizens and the traveller community, the Director of Public Health stated that there were a number of initiatives that involved working with partners and across borders to engage with different groups and promote the take up of vaccination, similar to those described within the presentation.

The Executive Member for Health and Care reiterated the appreciation expressed by the Committee to the Public Health team, staff working across the NHS and all partners and volunteers in supporting the residents of the city during the pandemic. She stated that it was important to recognise that COVID-19 had not gone away and residents needed to adhere to Public Health advice and guidance to reduce the spread of COVID.

Decision

The Committee notes the report and presentation.

HSC/21/20 Overview Report

The report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which contained key decisions within the Committee's remit and responses to previous recommendations was submitted for comment. Members were also invited to agree the Committee's future work programme.

The Committee noted that it would be discussing the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year in further detail in a private session following the meeting, and that an updated work programme reflecting this discussion would be circulated as normal in the papers for the next meeting.

Decision

The Committee note the report.

HSC/21/21 Exclusion of Press and Public

Decision

To exclude the public during consideration of the following item which involved consideration of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons and public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

HSC/21/22 Scrutiny Committees' work on cross-cutting themes of the Our Manchester Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer that provided an overview of how cross-cutting themes in the *Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025* reset document were covered by MCC Scrutiny Committees during the 2021/22 municipal year.

Our Manchester Strategy – Forward to 2025 had reset Manchester's priorities for the next five years to ensure we could achieve the city's ambitions set out in the *Our Manchester Strategy 2016 – 2025*.

Decision

The Committee note the report.