

Health Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2022

Present:

Councillor Green – in the Chair

Councillors N. Ali, Appleby, Curley, Johnson, Karney, Newman, Riasat, Richards and Russell

Apologies: Councillors McHale and Reeves

Also present:

Councillor T. Robinson, Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care

Councillor Collins, Deputy Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care

HSC/22/19 Urgent Business – IT Failure at the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust (NCA)

The Chair welcomed Councillor T. Robinson, Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care and asked him to address the Committee on the recent IT Failure at the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust (NCA).

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care stated that he had met with senior officers to discuss the emerging IT issue that was impacting upon North Manchester General Hospital. He advised that business contingency plans were being enacted and that a comprehensive briefing note would be circulated to all Members by the close of business.

The Deputy Director of Adult Social Services reassured the Committee that teams were working to ensure the continued safe treatment and discharge of patients.

Decision

To note the oral update.

HSC/22/18 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 as a correct record.

HSC/22/19 Covid-19 and Vaccination Programme Update

The Committee considered the joint presentation of the Director of Public Health and the Medical Director, Manchester Health and Care Commissioning, that had been circulated to all Members in advance of the meeting that provided an update on COVID-19 activity.

Key points and themes in the presentation included:

- An update on the current Covid data;
- An overview of the Manchester Health Protection System; and
- Information relating to the Manchester Spring Vaccination Plan.

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

- The need to learn the lessons from history and HIV/Aids and how stigma and misconceptions can arise in relation to health issues;
- Consideration needed to be given nationally as to the naming of monkeypox, noting that this could arise to public misconceptions;
- Further information was sought as to the Covid winter booster vaccination programme and if the public would be charged, in a similar way as the flu vaccination was administered;
- Noting that COVID had not gone away and was still prevalent and people needed to be reminded of this;
- Recognising the important role of community vaccination hubs and pop-up events to support the vaccination programme;
- Noting the relationship of the reported cases of COVID and the removal of free Lateral Flow Testing;
- The vaccination levels in Manchester were still relatively low compared to the national average and further information was sought as to the characteristics of those not vaccinated;
- Information on the future of Sounding Boards was requested.

The Director of Public Health addressed the issue of monkeypox by advising that at the time of reporting there were no reported cases in the North West. He advised that nationally there were 71 confirmed cases and that the risk to public health was very low, however the local situation would continue to be closely monitored and he was confident that local systems were in place to effectively respond in the event of an outbreak. In response to the discussion regarding misconceptions and stigma he stated that the team were also working closely with the Communications Team and the local Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners to ensure the messaging was appropriate and accurate. He further acknowledged the comments regarding the naming of the disease and he would raise this nationally following the meeting. He advised the Committee that he would keep them updated in regard to monkeypox.

The Strategic Lead Population Health Programmes advised that in terms of the vaccination cohorts the guidance of The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) was followed. She stated that it was recognised nationally that the wider vaccination system, such as flu and childhood immunisations needed to be streamlined. In regard to future vaccination charging, she said that the approach to this was yet to be decided at a national level. She described that unlike in other areas of the country Manchester continued to deliver a consistent vaccination offer, including the outreach services and pop-up events and that teams of core volunteers still operated and supported such community settings. She said that discussions were ongoing with NHSE regarding the future funding of the estate costs associated

with community services. In regard to the details requested regarding the non-vaccinated she said this information would be shared following the meeting.

The Director of Public Health commented that Sounding Boards had been established under the remit of the work of COVID-19 Health Equity Manchester (CHEM). He stated that these would continue to function this year and that their role and scope was to be reviewed to help identify gaps and support the wider work of health protection. He added that the work of Sounding Boards complimented the wider Marmot work underway across the city to address health inequality.

In response to a question regarding staffing and the reconfiguration of services the Assistant Director of Public Health advised that all the posts were permanent posts and had utilised the capacity within existing teams under existing funding arrangements.

A Member paid tribute to all staff and partners who had worked to protect the residents of Manchester during the pandemic. He said this was contrary to the actions of the government as highlighted in recent press reports and photographs. He called upon the Prime Minister to apologise to the residents of Manchester who had adhered to the Covid rules. He further called upon the Prime Minister to resign. The Committee supported this statement.

The Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Adult Social Care endorsed all the comments from the Committee and welcomed their deliberations and questioning. He further thanked the officers for the quality and breadth of the presentation. He concluded by paying tribute to his predecessor, Councillor Midgley.

The Chair and the Committee expressed their gratitude to all staff, partners and volunteers involved with tackling COVID-19 over the previous 24 months. The Chair expressed her ongoing confidence in all the established systems and staff and praised their ongoing commitment. The Chair further wished Dr Kumar her best wishes and congratulations on her new post and thanked her for her regular attendance at Health Scrutiny and in doing so welcomed Jenny Osborne, Strategic Lead Population Health Programmes to her new role.

Decision

To note the report.

HSC/22/20 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 notes the report and agrees the work programme, noting the above comment.