

## Manchester City Council Report for Information

**Report to:** Health Scrutiny Committee – 6 September 2023

**Subject:** UK COVID19 Inquiry

**Report of:** Director of Public Health

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### Summary

This report provides information about the UK Covid 19 Inquiry, how the Council has contributed to the Inquiry so far and describes the arrangements in place for responding to future requests. Information about the Inquiry is taken from the Inquiry website <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/> and may be subject to change.

### Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.

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**Wards Affected:** All

<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
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None
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<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments
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It will be important that the UK Covid 19 Inquiry hears from communities most affected by the pandemic and our submissions will reflect this.
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<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS/Contribution to the Strategy</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	It is hoped that the UK Covid 19 Inquiry will highlight lessons that should be learnt that Manchester, along with other areas of the country will respond to in order to improve outcomes for our residents.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

### **Financial Consequences – Revenue**

N/A

### **Financial Consequences – Capital**

N/A

### **Contact Officers:**

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**Background documents (available for public inspection):** None

## **1.0 Introduction and national context**

- 1.1 The UK Covid 19 Inquiry has been set up to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and learn lessons for the future. A public inquiry is a major independent investigation, set up in response to public concern about a particular event or set of events. An inquiry typically sets out to establish:
- What happened, and why.
  - What went wrong, and what went right.
  - What lessons can be learnt.
- 1.2 The Chair, Baroness Heather Hallett launched the Inquiry and opened its first investigation in July 2022.
- 1.3 The UK COVID 19 Inquiry is a statutory public inquiry. A statutory public inquiry has the legal power to make people appear as witnesses at hearings which are held in public, and to provide documentation and material evidence. Further, public inquiries will usually produce a report, or reports, and will make recommendations to the government based on what is in its Terms of Reference.

## **2.0 Structure of the Inquiry**

- 2.1 In order to allow a full and focused examination of all of the different aspects of the pandemic that are covered in the Terms of Reference, the Inquiry's investigation is divided into modules. Each module has a preliminary hearing and a full hearing. Hearings are live streamed via the Covid 19 Inquiry website and can also be viewed as a recording. The next preliminary hearing takes place on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 for Module 4 (Vaccines and Therapeutics).
- 2.2 Each module has Core Participants. A Core Participant is a person, institution or organisation that has a specific interest in the work of the Inquiry, and has a formal role defined by legislation. Core Participants are provided with disclosure of evidence relevant to the subject matter, subject to any restrictions made under section 19 of the Inquiries Act 2005; have the right to make opening and closing statements at any hearing; have the right to suggest lines of questioning and have the right to apply to the Inquiry to ask questions of witnesses during a hearing. Individual local authorities are not Core Participants in active modules but have provided input via the Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH).
- 2.3 Any individual can share their experience of the pandemic with the Inquiry via the '*Every Story Matters*' section of the Inquiry website. Stories will be collated, analysed and turned into themed reports, which will be submitted to each relevant investigation as evidence.
- 2.4 An update of active and future modules is summarised below:

Module	Scope	Hearings	Status
Module 1  <b>Resilience and preparedness</b>	Module 1 opened on 21 July 2022 and is designated to look into the preparedness for the pandemic. It assesses if the pandemic was properly planned for and whether the UK was adequately ready for that eventuality. This module will touch on the whole system of civil emergencies including resourcing, risk management and pandemic readiness. It will scrutinise government decision-making relating to planning and seek to identify lessons that can be learnt.	Hearings were held 13 June to 19 July 2023	Awaiting report – the Inquiry has announced they will publish in summer 2024.
Module 2  <b>Core decision making and political governance</b>	Module 2 opened on 31 August 2022 and is split into parts. First, it will look into core political and administrative governance and decision-making for the UK. It will include the initial response, central government decision making, political and civil service performance as well as the effectiveness of relationships with governments in the devolved administrations and local and voluntary sectors. Module 2 will also assess decision-making about non-pharmaceutical measures and the factors that contributed to their implementation. Modules 2A, B and C will address the strategic and overarching issues from the perspective of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These will be treated as individually separate modules and public hearings for them will be held in the nations that they concern.	Hearings for Module 2 will be held in Autumn 2023. Hearings for Modules 2A, 2B and 2C will be held in Spring 2024	Open
Module 3  <b>Impact of pandemic on healthcare systems</b>	Module 3 opened on Tuesday 8 November 2022. It will look into the governmental and societal response to Covid-19 as well as dissecting the impact that the pandemic had on healthcare systems, patients and health care workers. This will include healthcare governance, primary	Autumn 2024	Open

	care, NHS backlogs, the effects on healthcare provision by vaccination programmes as well as long covid diagnosis and support.		
Module 4 <b>Vaccines and therapeutics</b>	Module 4 opened on 5 June 2023 and will consider and make recommendations on a range of issues relating to the development of Covid19 vaccines and the implementation of the vaccine rollout programme in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Issues relating to the treatment of Covid-19 through both existing and new medications will be examined in parallel. There will be a focus on lessons learned and preparedness for the next pandemic.	Summer 2024	Open
Module 5 <b>Government procurement</b>	Module 5 will examine Government Procurement across the UK. The Inquiry will open this investigation in October 2023, with evidence hearings scheduled for early 2025.	2025	Opening October 2023
Module 6 <b>Care sector</b>	Module 6, examining the care sector across the UK, will open in December 2023.	To be confirmed	Opening December 2023

2.5 Further modules will be announced in coming months including:

- Testing and tracing
- The Government's business and financial responses
- Health inequalities and the impact of Covid 19
- Education, children and young persons
- Other public services, including frontline delivery by key workers

### 3.0 Local response to date

3.1 Manchester has so far submitted the following information to the Inquiry via the Local Government Association (LGA) and Association of Directors of Public Health (ADPH) (core participants):

- *November 2022*: LGA survey to all local authorities on resilience and preparedness between June 2009 and January 2020. (Module 1) Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive of LGA gave evidence to the public hearing on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July.

- *March 2023*: ADPH survey to all Directors of Public Health on resilience and preparedness between June 2009 and January 2020. (Module 1) Prof. Jim McManus, President of the Association of Directors of Public Health gave evidence to the public hearing on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July.
- *July 2023*: Request from Covid Inquiry to LGA to seek information from local authorities on procurement of PPE between 1 January 2020 and 28 June 2022 (Module 5).

This information informs the evidence presented at the hearings by the organisations representing Local Authorities and Directors of Public Health. All submissions have had appropriate legal advice.

- 3.2 An internal City Council working group is in place, chaired by the Director of Public Health, to prepare for and coordinate further requests for information relating to different modules of the Inquiry. The working group will be ‘stood up’ as required and will provide an agile and proportionate response. Membership of the group is detailed below.

#### **UK Covid-19 Inquiry: MCC Internal working Group Membership**

David Regan	Director of Public Health (Chair)
Sarah Towers	Senior Solicitor
Christine Raiswell	Strategic Lead – Health Protection
Fiona Sharkey	Head of Compliance Enforcement and Community Safety
Shefali Kapoor	Director of Communities
Alun Ireland	Head of Strategic Communications
Penny Shannon	Head of Health Communications
Sean McKendrick	Deputy Strategic Director, Children and Education
Marie Hall	Education Business Partner for Schools
Tom Wilkinson	Deputy City Treasurer
Karen Crier	Assistant Director, Adult Social Services
Michael Seal	Data Protection Officer
Tom Powell	Head of Internal Audit and Risk Management
John Rooney	Director Neighbourhood Delivery
Suzanne Halligan	Business Partner, Greater Manchester Resilience Unit

- 3.3 The Chair of the MCC Internal Working Group will provide regular briefings to the Executive Member for Healthy Manchester and Social Care and the Leader of the Council as the Inquiry progresses. The City Solicitor will advise on all submissions made by the City Council.
- 3.4 Support and coordination for requests for information will also be provided through Greater Manchester Resilience Unit and the Greater Manchester Directors of Public Health Group to reflect the Greater Manchester ‘system’ response to emergency planning and outbreak response.
- 3.5 In collating relevant documents, reports presented to the Manchester Health Scrutiny Committee, Council Executive and Manchester Health and Wellbeing

Board provide an invaluable source of local information, in particular the Public Health Annual Reports for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022

#### **4.0 Recommendations**

- 4.1 The Committee is recommended to note the contents of this report.