

JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – COVID-19

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD
PERFORMANCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY SELECT COMMITTEE
HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
03/06/2020 at 3.00 pm

Present: Councillor McLaren (in the Chair)
Councillors Byrne, Hamblett, Jacques, Moores, Stretton, Surjan,
Taylor, Toor and Williamson

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Fielding	Leader of the Council
Councillor Shah	Deputy Leader of the Council
Carolyn Wilkins	Chief Executive
Rebekah Sutcliffe	Strategic Director Communities and Reform
Mike Barker	Strategic Director Commissioning
Mark Warren	Managing Director Community Services and Adult Care
Gerard Jones	Managing Director Children and Young People's Services
Lewis Greenwood	Head of Executive Services
Mark Hardman	Constitutional Services
Lori Hughes	Constitutional Services

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Councillor McLaren be appointed Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Committee (Overview and Scrutiny Board, Performance and Value for Money Select Committee and Health Scrutiny Committee) considering Covid-19 related matters.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Curley, Davis, Harkness, Ibrahim and Phythian.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business received.

5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it contains exempt information under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and it would not, on balance, be in the public interest to disclose the information.

COVID-19 - SCRUTINY BRIEFING TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive advised that at the outset the Council had declared a Major Incident and convened Gold/Silver/Bronze groups and meetings, including multi-agency groups to address the broad range of priorities, not least across the health and social care sectors led by the Council and the CCG where a series of Bronze groups had been convened to consider matters including community, bereavement and end of life.

The Overview and Scrutiny Chairs had raised a number of issues in advance of the meeting which provided the basis for the briefing the Joint Committee received.

The Strategic Director Commissioning reported on matters relating to the NHS over the period of the pandemic. He reported with regard to staffing implications for the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Northern Care Alliance in terms of workplace locations, levels of absence due to self-isolation and arrangements made to ensure key specialities were covered. Information was provided as to the number of patients treated locally in Hospital, including the demand on intensive care beds, the number of deaths recorded in Oldham to mid-May and the national R-Rate. The activity of the PPE Hub in distributing items of required PPE across the sector was reported. The processing of Covid tests locally was reported on, along with offers of testing made to front line staff and staff at GP surgeries, and the consideration of a local model for test and trace. The Strategic Director reported further on the impacts in terms of cancelled operations and outpatient appointments, numbers attending the Accident and Emergency Department and plans for a return to normal services.

The Strategic Director received and responded to questions from Members related to data on re-admissions to Hospital, the impact of Covid on the BME community, the male/female split of those aged over 65 years who had died, and the basis on which data was recorded. The Chief Executive further responded to a query relating to the availability of data at an electoral Ward level.

The Managing Director Community Services and Adult Care reported on matters relating to community services and care homes over the period of the pandemic. He reported with regard to staffing implications for community services in terms of levels of absence due to self-isolation or being in a household

with someone who was isolating with symptoms. He reported on the position of care homes in the Borough, noting the number of deaths that had occurred and that the pandemic had highlighted sustainability issues in the sector that were to be further considered. The issue of PPE was considered and the role played by the PPE Hub in supporting care homes was noted. It was reported that financial issues had not affected people getting the support they needed, but that going forward the way in which services were provided would need to be looked into.

The Managing Director Community Services and Adult Care received and responded to questions concerning the supply and provision of PPE locally.

The Strategic Director Communities and Reform reported on specific general services put in place by the Council to support the vulnerable, including the work undertaken by the Helpline, approaches to domestic abuse and communications.

The Managing Director of Children and Young People's Services responded to Members' questions concerning safeguarding issues arising from the report concerning domestic violence, advising on children in care issues and child protection matters, and further responding to questions concerning fostering and adoption. The Strategic Director Communities and Reform reported further in response to queries concerning domestic abuse.

The Chief Executive and the Head of Executive Services reported on activities at a Greater Manchester level and the involvement of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive in these matters.

Reference was made to a report that had highlighted the disproportionate impact of Covid on BME communities. The Chief Executive advised that Covid had highlighted issues across a range of disadvantaged groups which stressed the need to address structural inequalities. The Strategic Director Communities and Reform advised of work to progress a local Equalities Impact Assessment in respect of Covid.

A further comment was made concerning test and trace, it being noted that the Council would need access to data currently being collated centrally if it was to be given responsibility for running the programme locally.

Members noted that it would be wrong not to acknowledge the work of Officers and of partner organisations in the local response to the Covid pandemic.

The Chair noted conclusion of the presentations and the question and answer session, suggesting it was necessary for the Joint Committee to meet further and collate information to be used to support lobbying of MPs and other parties. Further meetings of the Joint Committee would be convened, it being

noted that some consideration of inequalities would need to be given at a future meeting.



The meeting started at 3.00 pm and ended at 4.55 pm