

9 **UPDATE ON COVID-19 (ITEM NO. 9)**

Jonathan O'Sullivan, Director of Public Health, provided an update on Covid-19.

The level of infections had fallen over recent months, however it was acknowledged that due to free universal testing ending the data was not directly comparable to earlier in the pandemic.

Across North Central London, approximately 45 people were currently hospitalised with Covid-19 as the primary cause for their admission; whereas around 120 people were currently in hospital for another reason, however were testing positive for Covid. It was thought that the wave of Omicron peaked in Islington around mid-March.

The number of people seeking vaccination had fallen over recent months, however a small number of people every day were receiving their first vaccination. Anecdotally, it was thought that this was partially being driven by demand for international travel and differing rules in different countries.

Some vaccination centres had closed due to reduced demand, however pop-up vaccination clinics were still being held and work was underway to raise awareness of these. There was an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions about vaccination at the events.

A booster vaccination programme would take place in the autumn and would be targeted at those aged over 65, health and care workers, and those aged over 16 who were clinically susceptible to Covid-19.

Following a question, it was thought that levels of infection would rise again in the autumn, and in particular the BA.4 and BA.5 variants of Omicron were becoming increasing prevalent. However, there was a high level of immunity in the population and, unless there was another new variant of concern, it was thought that levels of serious illness would not be as high as previous waves. In the case of a new variant, it was thought that the government would need to review protective measures and advice, however a further lockdown was considered to be an unlikely scenario.

Following a question about Long Covid, it was advised that those who had been vaccinated were approximately half as likely to report Long Covid symptoms. It was advised that a report on this could be shared with committee members. The condition affected more women than men and had a range of impacts. There were around 1,500 to 1,800 experiencing Long Covid locally. The first Long Covid clinic in the country was based at UCLH.

Finally, it was noted that two people had been recognised in the Queen's Jubilee Birthday Honours for their work during the pandemic. Tina Jegede, Nurse Lead for Care Home Quality at Islington Council and Joint Director of Race, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Whittington Health NHS Trust, had been awarded an MBE for her services for social care in Islington. Oliur Rahman, a volunteer Islington Covid Health Champion, had been recognised for his contribution to the Islington community during Covid-19, and was awarded a British Empire Medal. The Committee expressed their thanks and best wishes to both Tina and Oliur.

10 **HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD UPDATE (ITEM NO. 10)**

Councillor Turan provided a brief update. The approval of the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment had been delegated to the Director of Public Health for approval. The Board had also discussed their future work programme for the year. The Health and Wellbeing Board would next meet on 28 June.

11 **SELECTION OF SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPIC 2022/23 (ITEM NO. 11)**

The Chair suggested a scrutiny topic on Adult Social Care and looking specifically at the Care Act, challenges and opportunities associated with it, and future developments in services.

A discussion was had about the impact of scrutiny and the possible outcomes from such a review. It was suggested that the committee could assess the robustness of the council's plans and provide constructive challenge on the directorate's proposals for future developments in service. It was also suggested that engagement with residents, service users and those with experience of care services would be an important aspect.

A brief discussion was had on the importance of transitions from children's to adult social care services.

It was suggested that models of service delivery should be considered alongside future developments in service provision.

It was requested that any background material be circulated to the committee prior to the review commencing.

The proposed topic was approved. It was agreed that a more detailed scope would be drafted ahead of the October meeting.

12 **WORK PROGRAMME (ITEM NO. 12)**

It was advised that the meeting previously scheduled for 29 September would take place on 4th October.

The Committee requested a further item on any health implications arising from census data.

The Committee requested an update on access to GP surgeries to be submitted to a future meeting.

It was requested that an update on access to NHS dentists be submitted to a future meeting.

It was agreed that updates on Covid-19 should only be received when required in light of major developments.

It was advised that the scrutiny topic on the Care Act would commence at the October meeting.

Subject to the above amendments, the draft work programme was approved. It was noted that the work programme would continue to be updated throughout the year.

Health and Care Scrutiny Committee - 6 June 2022

MEETING CLOSED AT 8.30 pm

Chair