

## **NORTH STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

**18 January 2022**

**Commenced:** 6.30 pm

**Terminated:** 7.25 pm

**Present:** Councillors Bowerman (Chair), Choksi (Vice-Chair), Bray, Cartey, Costello, Drennan, Fairfoull, Glover, Huntbach, Lewis, McNally and Patel

**In Attendance:** Ian Saxon                      Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods  
Debbie Watson                      Interim Director of Population Health  
Dave Smith                              Partnership Manager for Community Safety and Homelessness

**Apologies for Absence:** None

### **5. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

**The Minutes of the meeting of the North Strategic Neighbourhood Forum held on 26 October 2021 were approved as a correct record.**

### **6. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING UPDATE - SAFER TAMESIDE**

The Chair welcomed Superintendent Chris Foster and Sergeant Lisa Halsall, Greater Manchester Police, who had attended the Forum to provide an update on Neighbourhood Policing in respect of recent initiatives and current priorities in the area.

Superintendent Foster began by highlighting recent improvements and was pleased to report that an additional 70 arrests were made in December 2021, a 45% increase compared to December 2020. Response times had improved with the majority of 999 calls responded to in under 15 minutes. Tameside had the highest reduction in vehicle crime and the best positive outcome rate for charges for burglary in Greater Manchester. There had been a 20% reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents and Tameside had seen the biggest reduction in hate crime offences. Two warrants had been issued relating to drug offences in St Michaels and St Peters and two offenders had been arrested and charged with seven offences relating to vehicle crime and had been remanded to custody.

Superintendent Foster provided information on Operation AVRO, a force-wide initiative that delivered a surge of extra resources and specialist officers to a different district within Greater Manchester each month. The operation targeted crimes that members of the public in the district had reported as giving them the most concern. Members of the press and key partners, including local representatives, were invited to attend Operation AVRO deployments to see results first-hand and conduct important multi-agency work, such as welfare visits.

Sergeant Halsall delivered a presentation highlighting Operation Safer Tameside and Days of Action, which took place across the borough on a monthly basis. The most recent Day of Action had taken place on 16 December 2021 and had involved the Neighbourhood Policing Team working alongside partners from the Council and the Fire Service in order to reduce anti-social behaviour and promote road safety in hotspot areas. The results were shared with the Forum and included:-

- 1 vehicle seized due to the driver having no insurance or MOT
- 4 drivers breathalysed

- 6 stopped for faulty lighting
- 2 stopped for illegal tinted windows
- 1 stopped for illegal number plates
- 9 stopped for exceeding the speed limit
- 4 delivery vehicles stopped for failing to wear a seatbelt
- 2 stopped for driving whilst using mobile device
- 3 warnings for anti-social driving
- 1 obstruction on public highway
- 1 driver contravening stop sign

Intelligence was also gathered with regard to a number of issues, which the Neighbourhood Policing Team would be looking into. It was reported that the next Operation Safer Tameside initiative was scheduled to take place on 25 January 2022 and would focus on violent crime towards women and girls.

Sergeant Halsall outlined the current priorities for the North area, which included:-

- Youth anti-social behaviour and street drinkers in Ashton town centre
- Burglary and drug dealing in Hurst ward
- Vehicle crime and burglary in Waterloo
- Vehicle crime and youth anti-social behaviour in St Michael's
- Drugs, anti-social behaviour, burglary and neighbour disputes in St Peter's

Officers had distributed selection boxes to Tameside Hospital Children Outpatients, donated money to the Believe and Achieve Christmas Party, which was a Charity for Children with Disabilities, and donated Christmas presents to the local Children's refuge.

Members thanked the Police for the work carried out in the North neighbourhood and for their attendance at surgeries that had been held prior to Christmas in order to exchange information.

Members raised questions relating to CCTV, anti-social behaviour and burglaries and voiced their concern around speeding. In addition, the importance of regular communication between elected Members and the Neighbourhood Policing Team was emphasised.

The Chair thanked Superintendent Chris Foster and Sergeant Lisa Halsall for attending and delivering an informative presentation and welcomed the improvements that had been made.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

## **7. COVID-19 UPDATE**

The Interim Director of Population Health delivered a presentation that provided an update in respect of the current position with regard to Covid-19.

A graph detailing the trends in new cases of the virus in Tameside as of 14 January 2022 was displayed. It reported that the current rate of new cases in the last seven days per 100,000 people was 1,122.3/100,000 (2,549 cases). The rate had increased rapidly in recent weeks, however this was now declining again but caution needed to be adopted to this trend due to the recent changes in testing. The highest numbers of new cases were in younger working age adults (aged 20 - 40), but there was an increase in new cases in children and young people since the return to school after the Christmas break.

The number of people in hospital with Covid-19 in Tameside and Greater Manchester had increased in recent weeks, however, overall, increases in intensive care usage for Covid patients had not been

seen, but this continued to be monitored. There were continuing pressures on the healthcare system due to staff shortages and delays to routine activity due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 situation.

Members were advised that:-

- Tameside had a similar rate of Covid to the rest of Greater Manchester and was currently ranked fourth
- The rate of new cases had started to reduce but this should be treated with caution due to testing patterns and access
- The positivity rate was extremely high with almost 1 in 2 tests coming back positive (45%)
- Numbers in children were still increasing and this may continue
- Guidance changes around testing
- Seeing high numbers of outbreaks and some large outbreaks – Care Homes
- Hospital activity had increased and there were indirect impacts in the health system and other public services due to staff absences and disruption to routine activity
- Ongoing pressure on all Council front line services and on direct Covid response within Public Health; Adult Social Care; Public Protection; Education; Communications.

Current drivers of the current situation in Tameside were outlined and included:-

- The new Omicron variant of Covid-19 was discovered in late November and had spread rapidly across the globe since then, driving a huge spike in infections
- The Omicron variant was extremely infectious and was spreading more quickly and more easily than previous variants, such as Alpha and Delta
- Omicron was now completely dominant across the country and in Tameside last week 100% of cases were Omicron
- This had come at a time heading into winter when seasonal viruses spread easily and there were relatively few measures and restrictions in place to limit transmission
- Outbreaks were widespread across settings in the borough, some of which were particularly high risk such as care homes. The further spread added to the overall numbers of infections
- Spread of infection linked to confined, crowded indoor spaces with inadequate ventilation.

Basic measures to reduce the risk of transmission that had been in place throughout the pandemic were emphasised, for example:-

- Regular, thorough handwashing with soap and running water
- Wearing a face mask / covering when in certain places
- Social distancing from others of at least 2 metres

The importance of following the relevant guidance and advice was also emphasised, which included regular testing, working from home where possible, Covid passports at certain venues and limit close contact with other people. Vaccination remained imperative in tackling the pandemic and the Interim Director of Population Health was pleased to announce that 76% of adults in Tameside had received a booster, which was the highest rate in Greater Manchester. The vaccine bus remained in operation and the team continued to tackle inequalities in vaccine uptake. A graphic detailing vaccination eligibility and where residents could obtain their vaccination or booster in the borough was displayed.

The test, trace and isolate system was highlighted and remained a critical tool in tackling the pandemic. Details were provided of where and when residents could obtain a PCR test at various sites throughout Tameside. Recent changes to testing and isolation advice were also highlighted, including the importance of registering test results online for data collection and in order that they could be followed up.

The presentation summarised how people were being encouraged and supported to tackle Covid in Tameside, as follows:-

- Ongoing messaging – testing / vaccination
- Engaging with communities to provide information and listen to concerns
- Community Champions programme
- Supporting people and services to follow guidelines and reduce spread
- The vaccination programme was vital and was tackling inequalities and supporting access
- Support to isolate – there were still support payments available for those needing to isolate and help via the council call centre (0161 342 8355).

The Chair thanked the Interim Director of Population Health for the informative presentation and asked for their thanks to be extended to the team for the excellent work that had been carried out throughout the pandemic. Thanks were also extended to the residents of Tameside for doing their part and for being pro-active in receiving their vaccinations and boosters.

**RESOLVED**

**That the content of the presentation be noted.**

**CHAIR**