

## **SOUTH STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

**17 January 2022**

**Commenced:** 18:30

**Terminated:** 19:30

**Present:** Councillors P Fitzpatrick (Chair), Robinson (Vice-Chair), Affleck, Bowden, Cooper, J Fitzpatrick, Kitchen, R Welsh, Owen, Alam and North

**In Attendance:** James Mallion Interim Assistant Director for Population Health  
Chris Foster Superintendent (GMP)  
Toby Knight Inspector (GMP)

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Chadwick

### **5 MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

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

### **6 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed Superintendent Chris Foster and Inspector Toby Knight, 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 Chris Foster highlighted 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 Chris 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.

Inspector Toby Knight 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.

Inspector Toby Knight outlined the current priorities for the South area, which included:-

#### **Hyde Werneth**

- Drug dealing
- Burglaries (Gee Cross, Broadmeadow, Brabyns, Cheetham, Fold Estate)
- Anti-Social Behaviour

#### **Hyde Godley**

- Shoplifting (Hyde Town Centre)
- Anti-Social Behaviour (Hyde Market Ground/Hyde Bus station/KFC)
- Vagrancy (Morrison's/Post Office/Costa Coffee/Asda/Market Street)

#### **Hyde Newton**

- Anti-Social Behaviour (Bradley Green Estate)
- Wheelie bin fires (Ashton Road/Johnsonbrook Road)
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Public Order offences (Bennett Mews)

#### **Hattersley & Longdendale**

- Large groups of youths gathering and intimidating at Tesco Supermarket, Stockport Road
- Youths attempting to board buses for free and becoming abusive (Hattersley Estate)
- Youths gathering and causing annoyance (McDonalds Stockport Road)

It was reported that the Grafton Centre held a 3 day Christmas Community Event Where PCSO's helped serve meals and had a dance with the locals and Christmas Hampers were distributed to Vulnerable Victims in Tameside South during the festive period.

Members expressed concern with speeding within the borough, discussion ensued on the use of speed guns by members of the public, Superintendent Chris Foster explained that whilst some people had received training there were health and safety concerns arising from the public using speed guns. In response to questions from members on speeding in Gee Cross, inspector knight reported that due to complaints in Gee Cross GMP completed a day of action recently and not a single car was caught speeding. It was explained that sometimes there was a perception of speeding rather than an actual problem of speeding. However, work was underway with the community to establish if there was a problem with speeding in the local area. Inspector Knight agreed to share the results from the day of action with Members of the Forum.

In response to questions from Members Inspector Knight explained that as restrictions due to Covid were relaxed GMP would keep ward members updated on activities within their wards at community meetings. It was further explained that a review was taking place on the most effective ways to engage and interact with the community.

## **RESOLVED**

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

### **7 COVID UPDATE**

The Interim Assistant 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).

Members enquired on the availability of lateral flow tests. The Interim Assistant Director for Population Health explained that there were pressures in the previous week and pharmacies were in particular effected by the national supply chain issues. However, tests could be found in stock online. The forum discussed the use of the positivity rate to monitor Covid and the impact when PCR tests were no longer mandatory as a follow up to lateral flow tests.

## **RESOLVED**

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

**CHAIR**