

EAST STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

14 October 2020

Commenced: 6.40 pm

Terminated: 7.10 pm

Present: Councillors Pearce (Chair), Sharif (Vice-Chair), Sweeton, Billington, Dickinson, Feeley, J Lane, Patrick, Wild and Wills

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Jackson

1 MINUTES

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting of the East Strategic Neighbourhood Forum held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

2 COVID-19 UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods updating Members on the COVID-19 situation within Tameside.

The Director reiterated the measures that individuals should undertake to limit the spread of the virus:

- Regular hand washing (20 seconds with soap and running water);
- Maintain social distancing (2 metres or 1 metre with additional precautions);
- Wear a face covering in public spaces;
- Isolate and stay at home if showing symptoms; and
- Get tested if displaying symptoms.

The new restrictions in place for residents and businesses were also highlighted:

- Hospitality venues closed from 10pm until 5am;
- Increased fines for enforcement action (£1000 for first offence);
- Maximum number of mourners at a funeral restricted to 30, wedding guests restricted to 15 and six at religious ceremonies/celebrations;
- Mandatory wearing of face coverings for all hospitality and retail workers;
- Illegal to not self-isolate when required to do so (£200 fine); and
- Introduction of a £500 test and trace support payment for those eligible from October 12.

The Director explained the new 'Tier' system that had been introduced by the Government earlier in the week as part of an attempt to bring down infection rates in the worst affected areas of the country. Greater Manchester, including Tameside, was currently in Tier 2 and this meant that hospitality venues would be mandated to close at 10pm. In addition, individuals were prevented from mixing indoors, in both private and public settings, unless they were part of the same household or had formed a 'social bubble'.

Members were informed that COVID-19 infection rates had increased across all Greater Manchester boroughs in recent weeks and that Tameside was currently ranked seventh out of the ten boroughs in the city region for infections. In total, there had been 336 new cases, compared to 309 during the previous week. Infection rates had been particularly high among young, white British people of working age but also among the BAME community, particularly children. The spread of

infection was across the Borough and linked, in part, to hospitality, workplaces, schools/education settings, care homes and the hospital.

It was emphasised that any individual with symptoms of the virus should obtain a test and details of the new local testing facility at Darnton Road in Ashton-under-Lyne were given. The facility was open seven days a week between 08:00 and 20:00 and an appointment was essential and could be booked online or by calling 119.

Information was also provided in relation to the NHS COVID-19 app, part of a large-scale coronavirus testing and contact tracing programme in England and Wales. The app would be used alongside contact tracing to notify users if they had come into contact with someone who had tested positive for coronavirus. It was hoped that the rollout of the app would assist in understanding if COVID-19 was spreading in a particular area thus allowing the local authority to respond quickly to help stop the spread of the virus and save lives. Addressing privacy concerns, the Director explained that the app would protect the user's anonymity and nobody, including the government, would know who or where a user was.

Members were keen that any new information concerning the 'Tier' system or changes to the restrictions in the Borough were communicated as soon as possible so that this information could be disseminated to residents quickly and concisely.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

3 MINIMUM LICENSING STANDARDS CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods updating Members on the implementation of Minimum Licensing Standards for taxi drivers.

Members were informed that the proposals to introduce Minimum Licensing Standards for taxis had been put forward to support the city region's wider Clean Air Plan. The proposals focused on four areas:

- Drivers – common standards;
- Vehicles – accessibility and emissions;
- Operators – accountability; and
- Local Authorities – licensing and enforcement.

It was hoped that the proposals would achieve a single vision for licensed vehicles across the 10 local authority areas and ultimately lead to a zero emissions taxi fleet.

Members queried the impact that the proposals could have upon taxi drivers given that their trade had been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Director explained that by running the consultation in tandem with the Clean Air Zone consultation, this had allowed the region's local authorities to lever in central government funding to support the taxi trade to upgrade their vehicles, funding that would not otherwise have been available.

The consultation on the proposals would take place from 8 October 2020 for eight weeks and Members hoped that the consultation would not only allow local people to give their views but also provide an opportunity to dispel a number of myths related to the proposals.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

4 CLEAN AIR PLAN CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods updating Members on the implementation of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone. Air pollution was linked to a range of serious health conditions and contributed to around 1,200 early deaths in Greater Manchester each year.

Members were informed that local authorities across Greater Manchester had been mandated by central government to bring nitrogen dioxide levels on local roads within legal limits as soon as possible. The 10 Greater Manchester local authorities had worked together to consider a wide range of measures to tackle air pollution, including a Clean Air Zone. A public consultation on the planned Clean Air Zone for the city region would be launched in October 2020, lasting for eight weeks. The consultation would work to establish how and when the charges would apply and the Director urged Tameside residents to respond to ensure their views were reflected in the final scheme.

It was stressed that the Clean Air Zone would apply only to the most polluting commercial vehicles and would not apply to private cars or motorcycles. The scheme would include financial assistance to help the city region's people and businesses to switch to cleaner vehicles and avoid the charge.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

CHAIR