

SOUTH STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

12 October 2020

Commenced: 18:30

Terminated: 19:10

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

In Attendance: Ian Saxon Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods
Emma Varnam Assistant Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Alam

1 MINUTES

That the minutes of the South Strategic Neighbourhood Forum meeting on the 13 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

2 COVID UPDATE

The Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods gave a presentation updating Members on the situation in Tameside in respect of COVID-19. He began by reiterating the key messages individuals should undertake to limit the spread of the virus, as follows: -

- Regularly wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and running water
- Maintain social distancing (2 metres / or 1 metre with other precautions)
- Wear a face covering
- People with symptoms must isolate and stay at home for 10 days (and anyone else in the house for 14 days)
- People with symptoms must get a test

The changes to restrictions for residents and businesses were outlined as follows: -

- Hospitality venues had to close from 10pm until 5am
- Increased fines for enforcement action (£1000 for a first offence)
- The number of people at a wedding was restricted to 15 and 6 for religious ceremonies / celebrations
- Face coverings had to be worn in all hospitality venues and by retail workers
- A limit of 30 people at a funeral
- It was now illegal not to self-isolate when required to do so with a £200 fine
- Introduction of the £500 test and trace support payment for those eligible from 12 October 2020

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, which was the high risk category (with Tier 1 being medium risk and Tier 3 very high risk). This meant that the restrictions listed above applied and, 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 Tameside was currently ranked seventh out of the ten boroughs in the city region for infections. Infection rates had been particularly high among young, white British people of working age and there had been an increase in cases amongst the BAME community, particularly children. There had been further increases in older people with increased deaths and ICU admissions. The spread of infection was across the Borough and linked, in part, to hospitality, workplaces, schools / education settings, care homes and the hospital.

An update on COVID-19 testing was provided. With infections rates increasing it was vital that anyone displaying symptoms of the virus were tested. Details of the new local testing facility at Darnton Road, Ashton-under-Lyne were given. The facility was open seven days a week between 08:00 and 20:00. An appointment was essential that could be booked online at www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19 or by calling 119.

Information was also provided in relation to the NHS COVID-19 app, which was part of a large-scale 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 COVID-19. 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. The app would protect the user's anonymity and nobody, including the government, would know who or where a user was.

Members enquired on the QR code for the NHS Covid-19 app and process in place for those without a smart phone to participate in the tracing programme. The Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods reassured Members that all those premises that had to display the QR code had to have an alternative for those who did not have a smart phone.

Members expressed concern that the uptake of the NHS Covid-19 app may be hindered by privacy concerns. The Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods emphasised the importance of the uptake of the app to increase its effectiveness.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

3 MINIMUM LICENSING CONSULTATION

The Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods gave details of proposals put forward to introduce a Greater Manchester Minimum Licensing Standard for taxis to support the wider Clean Air Plan. It was hoped that the proposals would achieve a single vision for licensed vehicles across the 10 local authority areas and lead to a zero emissions taxi fleet.

The proposals focused on four areas: -

- Drivers – common standards
- Vehicles – accessibility and emissions
- Operators - accountability
- Local authorities – licensing and enforcement

The Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods advised that the consultation was launched on 8 October 2020 for a period of eight weeks and could be accessed at www.gmtaxistandards.com/consultation. The Director encouraged Members and Tameside residents to respond to ensure their views were reflected in the final scheme. The Director stated 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.

Members enquired if there would be a uniform standard for licensing across Greater Manchester. The Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods reassured Members that Tameside would not be lowering their standards but the whole of Greater Manchester would be brought to the same standard.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

4 CLEAN AIR CONSULTATION

The Director of Operations and Neighbourhoods gave details of the implementation of the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone. He explained that 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 had been launched on 8 October 2020 for a period of 8 weeks, to run alongside the consultation on Minimum Licensing Standard for taxi drivers, and could be found at www.cleanairgm.com/clean-air-consultation. The Director encouraged Members and Tameside residents to respond to ensure their views were reflected in the final scheme.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.