

LIVING WITH COVID BOARD

9 December 2020

Present	Elected Members	Councillors Warrington (In the Chair), Bray, Cooney, Fairfoull, Feeley, Ryan and Gwynne
	Tameside & Glossop CCG Members	Dr Asad Ali, Dr Ashwin Ramachandra, Dr Vinny Khunger, Dr Christine Ahmed, Dr Tim Hendra, Clare Todd, Karen Huntley, Kate Hebden, David Swift and Carol Prowse
	Chief Executive TMBC	Steven Pleasant
	Borough Solicitor	Sandra Stewart
	Deputy Section 151 Officer	Tom Wilkinson
	T&G ICFT Medical Director	Brendan Ryan
	Action Together	Anna Hynes

Also In Attendance: **David Berry, Steph Butterworth, Ilys Cookson, Jeanelle De Gruchy, Richard Hancock, James Mallion, Ian Saxon, Paul Smith, Jayne Traverse, Sarah Threlfall, Debbie Watson, Jess Williams**

Apologies for Councillors Kitchen & Wills
Absence:

Jane Higham and Karen James

29. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Living with Covid Board on the 18 November 2020 were approved as a correct record.

30 LATEST POSITION ON COVID DATA

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Director of Population Health, which detailed the latest position on Covid data. The Director of Population Health presented data on the trends in new cases for Tameside, it was reported that the rate of new cases had reduced. However, the rate of decrease had slowed, the rate of new cases was still high, the rate of new cases in the last seven days per 100,000 people was 117.9/100,000. This was a 20% reduction in new cases compared to seven days ago. Members were advised that the number of acute beds occupied by confirmed and suspected Covid cases had been trending down.

AGREED

That the presentation be noted.

31 RESTRICTIONS AND TIERS- NEXT STEPS

The Director of Population Health delivered a verbal report on the Restrictions and Tiers in Tameside and Greater Manchester.

It was stated that discussions had taken place across Greater Manchester, however, the decision was ultimately with the Government to decide if to change some areas in GM to tier 2. The Director of Population and Health reported that the Government would be evaluating the tiers on the 12 December 2020 with a further evaluation on the 30 December 2020. The Chief Executive highlighted that it was important to take a cautious position given high level of prevalence of Covid-19 in the region. It was reported that the data suggested that there could be a spike in cases in January and

that tier 3 restrictions may not be able to prevent this as students travel and households meet over Christmas.

AGREED

That the information provided be noted.

32 WINTER COVID GRANT AND SUPPORT TO THE VULNERABLE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader / Assistant Director of Policy, Performance and Communications. The report set out proposals for spending the 'Covid Winter Grant' before the 31 March 2021 to support families who were struggling to access food and warmth. The Council was committed to ensuring that all of the available Winter Covid Grant supported the most vulnerable families and households to access food and warmth during a challenging time.

On Sunday 8 November 2020, the government announced a significant package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme, which would be made available at the beginning of December, would see new funding to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Council's and London Boroughs), to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs.

Tameside had been allocated **£894,614.60**, funding would be ring fenced and cover period until end of March 2021.

It was proposed to allocate funding to the provision of food vouchers for major supermarkets to pay for food for key cohorts which included, all children attending schools in Tameside who were eligible for Free School Meals, all college students eligible for Free School Meals or bursaries, all 2, 3 and 4 year olds entitled to free child care, all Care Leavers. The amounts and costs of each of these proposals were set out in **Appendix 1**.

This approach would allow the Council to deliver an enhanced offer that would reach a large number of families in a short time frame and provide targeted support in time for Christmas, and would allow Tameside to report outcome requirements to the DWP.

Going forward the identified families would receive support for the 3 scheduled school holiday weeks to March 2021:

- Two weeks at Christmas (£20)
- One week at February half term (£15)

It should be noted that not all LAs had been allocated sufficient funding to cover Free School Meals' through the winter school holidays, this was raised with the DWP during the dial-in call as public expectation was that funding was being provided to LAs for this purpose, however, the DWP were clear that the funding allocation was not intended to replace the Free School Meals offer.

For the purposes of distribution of funding it was proposed to allocate on the basis of children attending Tameside schools. All other GM authorities agreed this in principle (potentially with the exception of Wigan).

AGREED

That the Living with Covid Board approve the following:

- (i) **The Covid Winter grant be spent on supporting vulnerable families and individuals as set out at Appendix 1.**
- (ii) **A voucher scheme for children eligible for free school meals is established. This scheme will enable children eligible for Free School Meals to receive a £20 a week food voucher for the Christmas Break and £15 voucher for February half term.**

- (iii) Any families who are not eligible for Free School Meals but are in need of support to contact the Early Help Access Point for help, support and advice.
- (iv) That this voucher scheme is extended out to Care Leavers for the Christmas period (to a value of £40).
- (v) That this scheme is further extended to low income sixth form and college students (to a value of £20). Administration of grants to students via the colleges will be formalised by letter to the colleges reflecting any appropriate conditions in relation to the administration of the grants on behalf of the Council
- (vi) That an amount of money is invested in welfare rights to provide food vouchers to those who are in financial need (£120,000 to fund 1,200 vouchers to a value of £30 per household)
- (vii) That remaining funds are directed to organisation's working directly with the community to provide food and support with utility bills. Where grants made to third party organisations, this will be done by letter containing appropriate conditions) for grant funding up to £10k.
- (viii) As an element of the scheme is discretionary there is a risk that demand in December may limit the pot in February, enough funding will be retained to pay vouchers to the Free School Meals, college and Care Leavers cohort in February, all other committed funding will require a separate decision in January.
- (ix) To agree arrangements with the following supermarkets to distribute vouchers, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons' and Asda, subject to written terms and conditions attached to the purchase order.

33 MASS VACCINATION

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Director of Commissioning, which detailed the preparations for delivering vaccinations in Tameside.

It was stated that the aims of the vaccination was to prevent morbidity and mortality by protecting those most vulnerable to Covid-19. The priority would be older age groups, care home residents and staff, frontline health and social care workers who provide care to vulnerable people and the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV).

The Director of Commissioning detailed phase 1 direct prevention of death and supporting the NHS and social care system. Phase 2 would include targeting groups, which would further reduce hospitalisation and targeted vaccination of those who were high risk of exposure or those delivering key public services.

The Pfizer vaccine was approved by the Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Authority on the 2 December 2020 it was also expected that the Oxford and AstaZeneca vaccine would be approved imminently. Members were advised of the vaccine characteristics, storage requirements and the possible side effects of the vaccine.

It was reported that Hyde PCN would start vaccinations on Wednesday the 16 December 2020 and that bookings had already started. Confirmation was expected for vaccinations to start at Ashton and PCN on Friday 18 December 2020. Further, it was anticipated that as part of wave 3, Denton, Glossop and Stalybridge PCN's would begin vaccinations on Tuesday the 22 of December 2020.

It was highlighted that the communications were vital to the success of the vaccination programme. It was essential to raise awareness of the importance of continuing with the restrictions on the lead up to and after having the vaccine.

AGREED

That the presentation be noted.

34 MASS TESTING

Consideration was given to a presentation of the Executive Leader / Assistant Director of Population Health, which provided an update on Tameside's position for mass testing.

The Assistant Director of Population Health explained that central government had advised that rapid antigen tests should be made available to areas of high prevalence of Covid-19 including GM.

The roll-out of rapid antigen testing, which generated results on lateral flow devices, was being planned for Greater Manchester in line with Central Government guidance.

It was reported that central government initially indicated they would provide GM with tests to roll out to 10% of the population. DHSC last week offered GM sufficient rapid antigen testing to cover 75% of the population. GM had responded to the offer with a preference to undertake targeted testing at scale.

The proposed targeted cohorts for rapid antigen testing were health and social care staff, key workers, those in supported living, home care and schools with a focus on secondary school pupils and teaching staff.

It was explained that a train the trainer model would be used for mass testing. It was explained that an external provider or local team would train staff or volunteers in a setting. The staff and volunteers would administer the tests and register the results. It was stated that Dukinfield Town hall, Denton Festival Hall, Ashton Primary Care Centre, Mobile unit and Tame street had been considered as test sites. Sites would be chosen based on demographics and hotspots. Jubilee Hall at Dukinfield Town Hall had been selected as the central site with Denton Festival Hall as a smaller 'spoke' site.

With regards to staffing, there would be 2 teams of 60 staff for the Dukinfield Town hall ATS, the teams could work on a shift basis. The current focus was identifying staff internally and staff that could be released on commissioning work.

AGREED

That the presentation be noted.

35 LOCAL RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT GRANTS - MANDATORY

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth / Assistant Director of Exchequer Services. The report detailed the administration of the Local Restrictions Support Grant in accordance with guidance issued by the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

It was reported that the amount of payment was the same for each mandatory grant for the relevant qualifying period:

- Businesses occupying premises appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of less than £15,000 would receive a payment of £667 14 day qualifying restriction period.
- Businesses occupying premises appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £15,000 and less than £51,000 would receive a payment of £1,000 14 day qualifying restriction period.
- Businesses occupying premises appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of £51,000 or more would receive a payment of £1,500 for each qualifying restriction period.

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) was a mandatory grant aimed at businesses that had to close as a result of the area being placed in Tier 3 of COVID restrictions. Businesses that would be eligible for this funding were those which;

- were open and providing in-person services to customers from their business premises;

- were required to close for a consecutive period of not less than 14 days as a result of regulations made under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984; and
- had their first full day of closure on or after 9 September 2020.

It was explained that Tameside's first day of being in Tier 3 was deemed to be 23 October 2020 until 4 November 2020 when national lockdown started, LRSG (Closed) would be payable to eligible businesses for the 13 day period pro rata. BEIS had confirmed that in this instance the 13 day period of closure should be paid although the guidance states that businesses must close for not less than 14 consecutive days.

Members were advised that the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Sector) was aimed at specific business sectors that had been required to close nationally from 23 March 2020 onwards, however grant funding could only be awarded to eligible business from 1 November 2020 onwards and was not retrospective. Businesses that were eligible to receive this funding were:

- Nightclubs, dance halls, and discotheques;
- Sexual entertainment venues and hostess bars.

The amount of grant for the period 1 November to 4 November 2020 (eligible period prior to national lockdown commencing on 5 November 2020) was to be paid pro rata at the same rate as other mandatory Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed).

The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Addendum) covered the period 5 November 2020 (date of national lockdown) to 2 December 2020 and was aimed at businesses that were mandated to close to manage the spread of coronavirus and includes non-essential retail, leisure, personal care, sports facilities and hospitality businesses. Rate of payment was the same as LRSG (Sector) and (Closed) Payment was to be made per 28 day period that the region was in lockdown as follows:

- Businesses occupying premises appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of less than £15,000 would receive a payment of £1,334 28 day qualifying restriction period.
- Businesses occupying premises appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of exactly £15,000 and less than £51,000 will receive a payment of £2,000 28 day qualifying restriction period.
- Businesses occupying premises appearing on the local rating list with a rateable value of £51,000 or more will receive a payment of £3,000 for each qualifying restriction period.

Grant funding would be issued to local authorities at the beginning of the 28-day payment cycle, which was the first day nationwide restrictions come into force. If the allocation proved insufficient for all eligible businesses, top-up funding would be provided. Funding would then be provided on a rolling 28-day basis for as long as national restrictions apply.

The Assistant Director of Exchequer Services reported that as at 20 November 2020, a total of 654 had been received and 110 paid to date to the value of £143,434. The assessment of each application would follow specific criteria to ensure that the application was eligible and to guard against potential fraudulent claims.

AGREED

That the Executive Cabinet be recommended to note the payment of mandatory grants to business rate payers.

36 LOCAL RESTRICTIONS SUPPORT GRANT (OPEN) AND ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT - DISCRETIONARY

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member for Finance and Economic Growth / Director of Growth. The report set out preferred options for the disbursement of the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) (LRSG) and Additional Restrictions Grant Funds.

The Head of Employment and Skills stated that the LRSG (Open) was intended to help kick start recovery for businesses that were not legally required to close but were severely impacted by the restrictions under LCAL 2 (Tier 2) and LCAL High type restrictions, and was retrospective applying from 1 August 2020 (as per LRSG (Open)).

Tameside Council had been allocated £1,811,940 (84 day allocation, funding confirmed by BEIS on 6 November 2020) for the period 1 August 2020 to 4 November 2020). It was proposed that Tameside Council managed this allocation closely and utilised the Additional Restrictions Grant to top up the budget set out above should demand exceed Government funding. It was expected that all Local Authorities would be given a new 28 day allocation following re-entry into Tier 3 or 2, however this had not yet been confirmed with a funding amount in formal guidance or offer letters by Government.

Members were advised that the Additional Restrictions Grant was intended to allow Local Authorities to support businesses in their local economies and to provide additional support to grant funding under the Local Restrictions Support Grant from the 24 October 2020 (GM entering LCAL 3 'Tier 3'). Government envisaged that this would primarily take the form of discretionary grants, but that Local Authorities could also use this funding for wider business support activities. Tameside Council had been allocated £4,792,000 (confirmed by GMCA 13 November 2020) for the period beyond 24 October and was required to spend the money in financial years 2020/21 – 2021/22.

Tameside Council had been allocated £4,792,000 (confirmed by GMCA 13 November 2020) for the period beyond 24 October and was required to spend the money in financial years 2020/21 – 2021/22. It was proposed Tameside Council would not utilise any other funding beyond that provided by Government and would not overspend on this allocation. It was further proposed that initially £2m of funding would be utilised for Additional Restrictions Grant with the remaining £2.7m available for top up of LRSG Open and potential additional use for Additional Restrictions Grant.

The number of self employed residents in Tameside could be gained from Government data provided in August 2020 **Appendix C** which suggested that there were 9,800 Tameside residents eligible for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, of which 7,700 had made a claim by 31/7/2020. The options set out in the report did not include support for self employed who had not received support due to the limitations of the Government's national scheme. Tameside Council as part of GMCA continued to lobby the Government on modifying the national scheme.

It was explained that The Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) preferred option was predicated on a streamlined approach to administration with Rateable Value (RV) the basis of award levels and Non RV based on property rental / mortgage costs and was aligned to other GM LA schemes. The report proposed that income levels were not used as the options were targeted on sectors that have had restrictions. This would provide a more responsive process for applicants due to lower processing times. Other non preferred options were set out in **Appendix D**.

With regards to Additional Restrictions Grant funding options for the allocation for period 24 October to 31 March 2022. Authorities in Greater Manchester are working towards the following collective principles in the design of an Additional Restrictions Grant scheme:

- a) Businesses which were badly affected by the restrictions but who were not receiving other grant support
- b) Other businesses which were important for each LAs economy

The Additional Restrictions Grant fund would need to be spent by the end of 2021/22 (31/03/2022). It was likely that the funding would be fully utilised during the national lockdown period and following months due to need and demand.

The preferred option for Additional Restrictions Grant was for Tameside trading businesses who were not receiving LRSG (Closed) / (Closed) addendum / (Sector) grant would receive one off payments based on employee numbers. This option was open to RV and Non RV but not domestic businesses including employed in domestic premises.

AGREED

That the Executive Cabinet be recommended to :

- 1. approve the recommended Local Restriction Support Grant (Open) and Additional Restriction Grant schemes and approve payments covering the periods before and after National Lockdown.**
- 2. Approve applications to be paid immediately once eligibility checks are completed and appropriate state aid declarations have been completed by the applicants.**
- 3. Receive a review and outcome report setting out all applications paid to be published on the Council website in April 2021.**
- 4. To agree the temporary re-prioritisation until February 2021 of the Growth Directorate Services as set out as 7.1 to enable the delivery of Local Restriction Support Grant Open and Additional Restrictions Grant.**

CHAIR