

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE STRATEGIC CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM
HELD ON 16TH FEBRUARY, 2021**

PRESENT: D. Langton, P. Mousdale, D. Walker, J. Whittaker, M. Mason, J. McDonnell, S. Miller and K Watling

Apologies for absence were received from H. Culshaw, N. Watson, J. Watson and A. Goode.

PART 1

505. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Strategic Crisis Management Team (SCMT) meeting held on 2nd February, 2021 were submitted.

AGREED

That the Minutes be approved.

506. SITUATIONAL UPDATE

The Chief Executive reported that the infection rate continued to reduce with 175.9 cases per 100k population. Pendle now had the sixth highest rate in East Lancashire and was below the East Lancashire average. Preston had the highest rate at 247 cases per 100k population.

The Prime Minister (PM) was due to set out the Government roadmap on 22nd February. The likelihood was that schools would re-open on 8th March.

The vaccination programme was continuing. All of the top four priority categories had been offered vaccinations and they were now moving to cohorts 5 (those aged 65-69) and 6 (those aged 16-64 with underlying health conditions). The rate of take-up was at 98%.

It was expected that everybody over the age of 50 would have been offered a vaccination by the end of April 2021.

507. LRF UPDATE

An update on discussions at the various LRF Groups was given.

It was reported that, at the last meeting of the Business Compliance Group, businesses had been broken down into categories, e.g. retail, hospitality etc.

Lateral flow testing was being encouraged. In some cases, businesses were carrying out their own lateral flow

testing, after having received training from the military. Pendle Leisure Centre and West Craven Sports Centre were also open to workers who wished to be tested on a regular basis.

The HR Manager agreed to request details on the number of Pendle staff attending.

J. McDonnell

There had been issues with access to testing kits and waste disposal at testing sites. Companies were being encouraged to deal with the disposal of waste through their existing sanitary waste disposal arrangements. The Council was collecting from the Leisure Trust sites at present.

A collective look was being taken to see what things could be done together in relation to the Elections. The Electoral Commission had asked that the Council write to electors who were shielding to inform them of the availability of postal and proxy votes. A template letter had been written.

It was noted that the shielding list was likely to be extended considerably. This was to be discussed at a meeting of the Local Government Association (LGA) later in the day.

The Corporate Director advised that the Council was currently struggling to recruit staff for polling stations. At the time of the report it was short of 10 Presiding Officers and 60 Poll Clerks (based on two Clerks being needed at each station).

Participation was currently on a voluntary basis. However, if problems in recruiting staff continued into March, it would be necessary to make it a requirement. The fees had been increased in line with the going rate in Lancashire.

The Chief Executive advised that the Strategic Coordinating Group would consider the PM's statement at its meeting next Tuesday. If the plan included the re-opening of schools, it was important that testing in schools was carried out effectively. It was anticipated that the re-opening of businesses would follow approximately a month later.

The statistics showed that, in Pendle, infections were currently being seen in the 16-45 year age group. In early March and April, this age group would not have been vaccinated. If the announcement was as expected, reminders to this age group on the actions needed to

prevent the spread of the virus would be the focus over the next 6 weeks.

508. SERVICE POSITION STATEMENTS

An update from each service area was given and overall service provision was continuing. Staff were continuing to respond to demand.

The Environmental Services Manager reported that the supplier of burial vaults had warned of a potential shortage, due to a problem in accessing the raw products required. The Council currently had 26 vaults. It was estimated that, at the current rate, these would run out week commencing 15th or 22nd March, 2021.

AGREED

That a further 20 vaults be ordered.

D. Walker

509. IT UPDATE

Although there had been a further issue with the supply of the laptops, we now had the full quota and the rollout plan was underway.

Each laptop had to be configured to each individual user. IT staff were working through a priority list, which had been shared with SCMT. Marie Mason was due to meet with the ICT Service Delivery Manager at the beginning of March to discuss progress.

Reference was made to the importance of the Cyber Security and GDPR training for staff. It was agreed that a further message be sent to all staff, reminding them to complete all modules. Service Managers were asked to let Marie know of any difficulties identified. An updated list of progress would be circulated to the Team. A further report would be submitted to SCMT on 16th March.

**All Service Managers/
Marie Mason/Jane
Watson**

PART 2

510. TIMETABLE OF REPORTS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The timetable for future meetings was submitted for consideration in conjunction with the Policy and Resources Work Programme and amended.

AGREED

That a message be sent to Service Managers asking that they look ahead to future meetings and forward any items to Jane Watson.

**All Service Managers/
Jane Watson**

511. RESOURCES AND WASTE STRATEGY UPDATE

The Environmental Services Manager submitted a report which provided an update on the DEFRA Resources and Waste Strategy (RAWS) and related consultations.

The report also provided progress of the Environment Bill, the primary over-arching legislation needed for the RAWS proposals.

Latest information had indicated that the 2021 RAWS consultations would be released in March, with a 12-week consultation window. However, with purdah expected to commence on 26th March it was felt that this may need to be delayed until mid-May.

It was acknowledged that waste and recycling was one of the largest expenditures of the Council and that extra Government funding would be required for proposals such as extra collections and free garden waste collections.

A review of waste services would be carried out next year.

AGREED

That the report be noted and further reports be presented in due course.

D. Walker

512. ANNUAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT 2020

The Environmental Services Manager submitted a report which advised SCMT on the findings and recommendations of the annual Health and Safety Audit completed in December 2020.

The Audit identified that over the last 12 months the Council had maintained the level of progress managed in 2019 in relation to Health and Safety, with some areas being awarded a higher score than the previous year.

The improving scores had resulted in an overall score of excellent. This meant that the Council was compliant with health and safety legislation and best practice and was able to demonstrate a robust health and safety management system.

The Auditor's report was submitted for information, which included a number of recommendations by service area.

AGREED

- (1) That the content of the audit report be noted.
- (2) That the information be shared with staff during the staff update to be held on 17th February. **D. Langton/D. Walker**
- (3) That each manager be asked to look at the recommendations for their service area and feedback to the Health and Safety Officer. **All Service Managers**
- (4) That an action plan be produced and presented to Management Team within the next 4 weeks. **D. Walker**
- (5) That each manager be asked to follow up on the actions related to their service area. **All Service Managers**
- (6) That the Health and Safety Officer provides a progress report to the Council's Risk Management Working Group and future meeting of Management Team. **D. Walker**

513. UPDATED PROCUREMENT POLICY

The Chief Executive submitted a report which advised SCMT of proposed changes to the Procurement Policy as a consequence of the UK leaving the EU.

The revised Policy was a sizeable document, therefore a new two page Quick Reference Guide had been created.

AGREED

- (1) That the changes to the Procurement Policy be approved. **D. Langton/A. Qayum**
- (2) That the new two page Procurement Guide be adopted. **D. Langton/A. Qayum**

514. NEW ARRANGEMENTS IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Interim Chief Financial Officer presented a briefing note which provided information on the transitional arrangements in Financial Services.

The service area was moving towards a new structure with different roles and reporting lines. A further update would be given once permanent vacancies within the team had been recruited to.

It was noted that the appointment of an internal member of staff to the role of Payments and Accounts Officer was no

longer progressing, therefore this post was due to be advertised externally.

The final structure would include the Chief Finance Officer as the S151 Officer, with responsibility for the Liberata contract.

AGREED

That the report be noted.

515. PENDLE IT PROGRAMME BOARD

The minutes of the meeting of the Pendle IT Programme Board held on 9th February, 2021 were submitted for information.

AGREED

That the minutes be noted.