

MEETING BETWEEN SCRUTINY & THE CCG

FRIDAY 14 MAY, 2021 - 2.00pm to 2.40pm

Present: Andrew Bird, Cllr Julie Cooper, Geoff Durham, Denise French, Tracey Shewan CCG

Apologies Cllr Ian Wilkes

Councillor Cooper asked for an update on second vaccinations. Tracey Shewan advised that she did not have the actual data but this would be received later today by herself. A full briefing for Councillors was being prepared for 16 June, 2021. Today, the vaccine programme had hit the 1 million mark for first and second Vaccines with 93% of cohorts 1-9 having received at least one dose.

Focussing on the second vaccine, everyone who had received their first dose would 'have their name on' a second dose.

The next cohort (38 and 39 year olds) was now being moved to and they would be offered the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

Councillor Cooper asked whether the first and second doses could be different. Tracey advised that although there was no evidence of harm in doing this, they were sticking to the same brand for both doses.

Councillor Cooper stated that there were still people refusing to have the vaccine, fearing that it had been rushed. Tracey stated that all of the Covid vaccines had been through the same protocols as any other drug. They had not been rushed but they had been prioritised and fully concentrated upon.

Andrew Bird stated that the vaccination programme had been fantastic in Staffordshire and was advised that the vaccine newsletter came out today and would be sent across to the Council's Communications Team.

Tracey stated that they were still on course to offer everyone over the age of 18, a vaccine by 1 July.

Tracey advised that communities that they had not previously been in touch with, such as the Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities had received 70% vaccine uptake. Eighty six percent of people with learning difficulties had been vaccinated and mobile vaccination units had been out to fruit farms for immigrants, travelling communities and homeless people.

Councillor Cooper asked about the Indian strain of the virus. Tracey stated that 4 people, all within one household and living near to Tamworth had contracted it and there was no indication that it had spread. However, it did need to be monitored to see how it was spreading nationally and whether it was causing serious illness. There was no reason to think that the current vaccines would not work against it. A briefing was due to be held later today by the Prime Minister ahead of the further

lifting of restrictions next Monday (17th May). The hands, face, space, air message still needed to be adhered to as would social distancing and the wearing of facemasks.

Andrew asked about the current hospital situation. Tracey advised that there were currently 12 Covid patients in the Royal Stoke with only one person in ITU.

Councillor Cooper asked if a booster would be needed in the autumn.

Tracey advised that there were four phases:

Phase 1: to vaccinate the adult population

Phase 2: to vaccinate secondary school children

Phase 3: to determine if a booster would be required with the flu vaccine – either together or 7 days apart or whether it would be a full re-vaccination programme.

Phase 4: to determine whether there was an ongoing need for vaccinations.

Councillor Cooper asked whether there was an alternative to an injection for children, for example, on a sugar cube. Tracey advised that the flu vaccine was administered through a nasal spray so that could be worked on.

Tracy advised that there was a backlog of other appointments which were categorised as priorities 1 - 4 with priority 1 being life-saving treatments.

Regarding access to General Practice, these were open for face to face consultations with some being more 'open' than others. The public needed to be educated that their GP may not always be the person they needed to see, for example a physio for leg or back pain.

Denise French stated that the pandemic had presented opportunities for the greater use of technology and that there were things that could be retained post pandemic. Tracey agreed, stating that it would be good to have bases rather than office space.

Councillor Cooper referred to the bed shortage during the pandemic and asked what plans were in place for future situations such as this. Tracey advised that surge capacity was catered for. There had not been a need for a nightingale hospital locally. However, the future did need to be thought about with possible surges – modelled on the R number being at different levels.

Andrew Bird asked if, from the Council's point of view, was it to continue pushing the message across to be vaccinated. Tracey agreed, stating that if any anti-vaccine groups were known of, to educate them.