

# Minutes of Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**Monday 14 March 2022 at 6.00pm**  
**Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House**

**Present:** Councillor E M Giles (Chair);  
Councillors Bhullar (Vice-Chair), Akpoteni, Fenton, Fisher,  
L Giles, R Jones, Khatun and Melia.

**In attendance:** Councillor Suzanne Hartwell (Cabinet Member)

**Officers:** Elaine Gilliland (Community Diagnostic Centres Programme  
Lead, Black Country & West Birmingham Integrated Care  
System);  
Steven Nelson (Programme Manager – Targeted Lung  
Health Checks, Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals  
NHS Trust);  
Andy Thorpe (Healthy Urban Development Officer, Public  
Health).

## 11/22 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Costigan and Davies.

## 12/22 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

## 13/22 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 7  
February 2022 are approved as a correct record.



## 14/22 **Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business to consider.

## 15/22 **Air Quality Action Plan Update**

Further to Minute No. 14/21 (of 29 March 2021) the Board noted the progress made in delivering the Air Quality Action Plan 2020-2025.

The Plan had been approved by the Council on 23 March 2021 and subsequently accepted by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Local Air Quality Management team. However, it was a living document and members were therefore also invited to suggest how the Plan could be strengthened.

Seven priority actions were identified in the Plan - community work to reduce NO<sub>2</sub>; promoting and enabling sustainable and low emission transport; Council fleet; Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle emissions; planning policies to support air quality improvements; publicity campaigns and engagement and impact of Birmingham's Clean Air Zone. These priorities supported Sandwell's aims to reduce the overall health impacts and burdens of poor air quality; achieve the national air quality NO<sub>2</sub> annual mean objective in the shortest possible timeframe and reduce concentrations of particulate matter emissions to protect human health.

The impact of Birmingham City's Clean Air Zone was not yet known. However, there was no data as yet to indicate a worsening of Sandwell's air quality as a result of motorists re-routing to avoid Birmingham City Centre.

Annual monitoring of nitrogen dioxide levels was taking place at 123 sites across the borough. The last dataset for 2020 showed a reduction of 20% or more in nitrogen dioxide levels across all sites. 2020 was also the first time since 2005 that there had been no exceedances in annual mean objectives for nitrogen dioxide. This was largely due to significant reductions in NO<sub>2</sub> levels noted during Covid-19 lockdowns in spring and December 2020.



Five continuous monitoring stations were maintained in the borough, four of which had been upgraded in 2021 to allow monitoring of particulate matter (PM1, PM2.5 and PM10).

Eight faith centres across the borough were taking part in a DEFRA funded project that had provided air quality monitors (powered by solar panels), that displayed live data on NO<sub>2</sub> levels in an online dashboard. DEFRA had agreed to extend the project by a further six months.

The Council had received funding of £400,000 from Black Country Transport Group's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles to deliver 37 on-street public electric vehicle charging points. This would provide 74 chargers in total with installation to be completed by March 2023. The Board noted that the charging points would be located in residential streets where there was no off-road parking available. It was noted that the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board had received a report detailing the locations.

A Local Government Association (LGA) funded project with the University of Birmingham would establish a Net Zero Innovation Community Climate Champions programme, which would build on the Council's similar projects in other areas of public health.

Pollution from central heating sources was still high in the borough and a campaign to educate people on the impacts of wood burning stoves would also offer people incentives to turn to cleaner fuel sources. Members expressed concern that the formal consultation on establishing a boroughwide Smoke Control Area (SCA) had been delayed until May 2022.

The Environment Act 2021 had set new national objective limits for particulate matter which were to be announced in autumn 2022, with public sector bodies expected to work together to meet short and long-term targets.

The biggest challenge was in affecting behaviour change to encourage people to switch to more sustainable modes of transport.



The following was noted in response to questions and comments:

- There had been many projects with schools over the years, mainly focusing on sustainable travel (i.e. walking to school), however, it had been sporadic. A project by Birmingham City Council would see air quality monitors provided to a school in each ward in Birmingham and it was hoped that the same could be done in Sandwell
- The Council's vehicle fleet was around 500 vehicles (not including Serco) of which only four were electric. An electric vehicle for the mayor was being looked at. Affordability was however preventing most council departments from purchasing electric vehicles at the moment.
- The Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board was looking at the Council's fleet. Consideration would be given to holding a joint meeting of the two boards in the next municipal year to discuss these cross-cutting issues.
- There had been difficulties obtaining the appropriate data from Serco to support the Council's work with the Energy Saving Trust, so a report would be commissioned once all data had been received.
- Members felt that planning the right trees in the right places could be a cost-effective way of reducing pollution by capturing particles. It was noted that one of the Towns Fund projects would see an avenue of trees planted in West Bromwich.
- The Council would continue to apply annually for Air Quality Grants from DEFRA (which had funded the faith centres project).
- There were ongoing initiatives at regional level through the West Midlands Combined Authority, including work on introducing cycle lanes and the expansion of the tram network.
- Consultation was needed with taxi drivers on how they could contribute to improving air quality by switching to electric vehicles.
- The day saver tickets offered by National Express West Midlands did not cover some parts of the borough. The Chair undertook to write to the Council's representative on Transport for the West Midlands to raise this.



**Resolved** that the Chair writes to the Council's representative on Transport for the West Midlands to raise members 'concerns about the coverage of day saver tickets in Sandwell.

16/22

## **Community Diagnostic Hubs Update**

Further to Minute No. 38/21 (of 22 November 2021) the Board received an update on the current position regarding the development of Community Diagnostic Hubs in Sandwell and West Birmingham, which were now to be known as "centres", as opposed to "hubs".

The business case had now been submitted to NHS England to utilise Sandwell and Birmingham Treatment Centres as hub locations with capacity for complex testing such as phlebotomy, and health centres as spoke locations for more rapid, low complexity diagnostics. There was likely to be ministerial involvement in determining the final locations of the sites. However, given the amount of scrutiny and work already undertaken, significant changes were not expected.

The Treasury had now approved the funding for development of the Centres, however, the indicative capital allocation was only one third of the amount sought. Plans to recoup the shortfall from other funding sources were in place. A bid to West Midlands Combined Authority for funding for non-clinical diagnostic centres would also be made.

The CDC programme would be aligned with the national programme for elective surgical hubs and cancer testing developments. Creating capacity for 'cold' clinical sites was also looked at. These sites would deal with high volume, low complexity issues and would aim to get the patient tested, diagnosed and treated at one site on the same day, reducing stress and cost to the patient.

A system-wide approach was being considered, that looked at CDC development across the Black Country to ensure that Sandwell and West Birmingham had the right capacity / locations /



tests available, with mutual aid and cross-system working ensuring that the whole population had diagnostic availability.

Members expressed concern about continued uncertainty regarding the indicative revenue funding beyond 3-5 year plan. The Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health indicated her support to lobby government for more funding.

The following was noted in response to questions and comments:

- The recent successes of the Integrated Care Team were highlighted, including meeting the NHS Improvement Key Performance Indicator (KPI) on waiting lists in January 2022 and creating a 3-year programme for Level 2 Healthcare Assistants to graduate to radiographer posts.
- The centres were to be open 7 days a week, 12 hours a day. Not all centres and all services would operate at all of those times however.

Further updates would be brought to the Board in the next municipal year.

**Resolved** that the Cabinet Member for Adults, Social Care and Health be requested to write to the Department of Health and Social Care, expressing concerns at the continued uncertainty regarding revenue funding for the Community Diagnostic Centres programme in Sandwell and West Birmingham beyond 2027.



17/22

## Update on Mental Health Services Review

The Chair reported that an initial workshop was held on 3 March 2022 to prioritise what should be the key areas of the review. The workshop was well attended by health partners.

At the workshop it had been agreed that mapping out of current service provision was a priority to understand the routes into services. The importance of hearing stories from service users was also discussed and it was agreed to explore the various ways in which this could be done effectively.

Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust had been invited to the Board meeting on 28 March 2022 to give an overview of current provision, and its Mental Health Transformation Programme.

The following was noted in response to questions and comments:

- West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) would be invited to contribute to the review.
- The importance of encouraging men to discuss their mental health was highlighted. 'Tough Enough to Care', a charity focussed on supporting men's mental health in Wednesbury, would be invited to contribute to the review.
- Mental Health First Aid training would be factored in to the Member Development Programme.
- The establishment of a Black Country Joint Scrutiny Board was being considered.

18/22

## Scrutiny Action Tracker

The Board noted an update on progress on previous actions and recommendations.

19/22

## Cabinet Forward Plan

The Board noted the contents of the Cabinet Forward Plan.



20/22

## Work Programme

The Board noted its work programme for 2021/22. The final meeting of the year was taking place on 28 March 2022.

Domestic Abuse would be added to the long list of suggested items for 2022/23 work programme.

**Meeting ended at 7.39 pm**

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