

Covid Response Advisory Working Group

Monday 10 January 2022

Notes of meeting

Present:

Cllr Andy Foulsham

Chair

Cllr Gabby Barody

Vice-Chair

Cllr Lorraine Oates

In attendance:

Susan Whipp

Deputy Town Clerk / RFO (clerk to the meeting)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Cllr Eric de la Harpe.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None

3. **Notes**

The notes of the Covid Response Advisory Working Group meeting held on 6 December 2021 agreed, subject to clerk to the meeting being added to the notes for completeness.

4. **Updates from District and County Councils**

Cllr Andy Foulsham reported -

Covid case levels across the Vale are three times higher than those reported at the working group meeting in December. It was also noted that Oxfordshire has levels which are above average for the South-East of England.

It was acknowledged that local GPs have worked hard over the Christmas period to provide vaccinations and boosters.

Cllr Foulsham is in contact with the Chair of the Oxfordshire Joint Health and Scrutiny Committee and has received a request for information from Oxfordshire town and parish councils regarding the impact on local health provision. Cllr Foulsham explained that this could feed into a decision whether military assistance is required in the county.

Cllr Gabby Barody reported back that at present the John Radcliffe Hospital is coping well with demand. Cllr Barody has undertaken some recent shifts staffing the 111 service, noting that the volume of calls to 111 is variable, with some shifts having spare capacity and some shifts overloaded with calls. Cllr Barody reported that South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) is already using approx. 30 military personnel, mainly as drivers to cover staff sickness. Cllr Barody commented that there is a disconnect with the reporting from senior NHS Leaders, who are suggesting that the NHS is coping well, and the “on the ground” evidence that practitioners are exhausted, non-covid sickness levels and mental health wellbeing of NHS staff needs to be considered.

- ⇒ Cllr Barody to provide written comments to Cllr Foulsham for response to the Oxfordshire Joint Health and Scrutiny Committee’s request.
- ⇒ Working Group to consider ways in which ATC could support local NHS staff (noting that previously ATC had contributed to food snack scheme).

No update received from Cllr Nathan Ley, OCC due to Christmas break.

5. **Covid bounce back projects**

Grants

No grant requests received for this meeting. Cllr Barody was aware that there is increased pressure on Abingdon’s foodbank.

- ⇒ Cllr Foulsham to contact them to see how ATC could assist.

6. **Council services**

Cllr Foulsham asked for an update on any issues the council’s staff had. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the office staff were generally working from home, with any time spent in the office booked via calendar to limit the number of staff in the offices at any one time. Everyone has the correct equipment to do so, with minor niggles re IT and accessibility at times. The reception / information centre has reopened to visitors 10am – 2pm Monday to Friday, with phone and email access continuing until 4pm each day, and this is working well.

Staff at the Museum and the Outdoor Team are coping well, no issues to report.

No significant sickness levels or concerns on reduced services.

7. **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was noted: Monday 7 February 2022

The meeting closed at 6.35pm