

Scrutiny Report

24 June 2020

COVID-19: To be advised of plans going forward, with a focus on test and trace

Name of Scrutiny Committee **Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee**

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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	Not in Council Plan
Wards affected	All wards

Overview

The primary objectives of the national Test and Trace service are to control the COVID-19 rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of infection and save lives, and in doing so help to return life to as normal as possible, for as many people as possible, in a way that is safe, protects our health and care systems and releases our economy. Achieving these objectives requires a co-ordinated effort from local and national government, the NHS, GPs, businesses and employers, voluntary organisations and other community partners, and the general public. Local planning and response is understood to be an essential part of the Test and Trace service, and Milton Keynes Council has a central role to play in the local identification and management of infection.

The role of Milton Keynes Council in Test and Trace

All Local Authorities have been tasked with developing a Local Outbreak Control Plan by the end of June. Building on the foundation of the statutory role of Directors of Public Health at the upper tier local authority level, and working with Public Health England's local health protection teams, local government will build on existing health protection plans to put in place measures to identify and contain outbreaks and protect

the public's health. Local Directors of Public Health will be responsible for defining these measures and producing the plans. They will be supported by and work in collaboration with emergency planning forums and a public-facing board led by elected members to communicate openly with the public.

There are seven key themes that should be included:

1. Planning for local outbreaks in care homes and schools (e.g. defining monitoring arrangements, identifying potential scenarios and planning the required response).
2. Identifying and planning how to manage other high-risk places, locations and communities of interest including sheltered housing, dormitories for migrant workers, transport access points (e.g., ports, airports), detained settings, rough sleepers etc (e.g. defining preventative measures and outbreak management strategies).
3. Identifying methods for local testing to ensure a swift response that is accessible to the entire population. This could include delivering tests to isolated individuals, establishing local pop-up sites or hosting mobile testing units at high-risk locations (e.g. defining how to prioritise and manage deployment).
4. Assessing local and regional contact tracing and infection control capability in complex settings and the need for mutual aid (e.g. identifying specific local complex communities of interest and settings, developing assumptions to estimate demand, developing options to scale capacity if needed).
5. Integrating national and local data and scenario planning through the Joint Biosecurity Centre Playbook (e.g., data management planning including data security, data requirements including NHS linkages).
6. Supporting vulnerable local people to get help to self-isolate (e.g. encouraging neighbours to offer support, identifying relevant community groups, planning how to co-ordinate and deploy) and ensuring services meet the needs of diverse communities.
7. Establishing governance structures.

Progress to date and ongoing priorities

- Local discussions are underway in Milton Keynes to determine the most effective governance and footprint for Test and Trace operations. A new multi-agency co-ordinating group, the Outbreak Prevention Group (OPG) has been set up and is chaired by the Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Council (see Appendix A). Additionally, there will be a BLMK joint COVID-19 Health Protection Advisory Group.
- The draft Milton Keynes Outbreak Control Plan is currently being developed. Work is underway to identify high risk places, locations and communities across Milton Keynes.
- We are determining the level of resource needed to support local contact tracing and outbreak management and how this could be expanded if required. However, further detail is required to understand the estimated demand, and therefore capacity requirements.
- Work is ongoing to understand the role and responsibility of the local authority within the NHS Test and Trace programme, how the local authority will

interface with other key stakeholders (notably Public Health England); and how data flows will be achieved and operational information recorded. Several Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) documents are being developed regionally to outline roles and responsibilities of different agencies if there is an outbreak in a specific setting - for example care homes, schools and high-risk settings.

- £300m in national government funding has been provided to local authorities in England to develop and action their plans to reduce the spread of the virus in their area. Milton Keynes will receive £1,065,306 of this funding. Determining how this funding will be allocated to support the delivery of the Milton Keynes Outbreak Control Plan is a priority.

Appendix A



Controlling the re-emergence of COVID-19 in MK

Terms of reference [Draft 4, last updated 9 June 2020]

Context

1. We are nearly three months on from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in England. During this time our focus has been on supporting the national health and social care response and helping and reaching out to local people who are vulnerable.
2. We are now being asked by government to refocus on our efforts on making our local place as safe as possible by:
 - Playing a key role in Test and Trace by responding to any local outbreaks.
 - Reducing and maintaining low levels of infection in care homes.
 - Supporting the ‘unlocking’ and safe operating of the place.

Our local response

Coordination

3. To provide medium to long term co-ordination, a new multi-agency co-ordinating group called **Outbreak Prevention Group (OPG)**. The group will be supported administratively through the MK Together team and can link to the Health and Wellbeing where necessary. The group will meet fortnightly initially and be chaired by the Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Council. Representatives (the chief officers or their nominee) of the following organisations will be core members along with the Director of Public Health for our area and the Director of Adult Social Care with others invited as appropriate:
 - Milton Keynes Council

- Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
 - Milton Keynes University Hospital Foundation Trust
 - Thames Valley Police
 - Central and North West London (CNWL)
 - Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue
 - South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) NHS Foundation Trust
4. The primary objectives of the OPG will be to control the COVID-19 rate of reproduction (R) and reduce the spread of infection and save lives and in doing so help to return life to as normal as possible, for as many people as possible, in a way that is safe, protects our health and care systems and releases our local economy.
5. The first task of this group will be to agree the **MK Outbreak Control Plan** which will cover the following key areas:
- Care homes and schools
 - High risk places, locations and communities
 - Local testing capacity
 - Contact tracing in complex settings
 - Data integration
 - Vulnerable people
6. We expect the plan to have two parts, the first part will be informed by nationally prescribed processes and the second part setting out more detail about our local area, and areas or places that we think will need special attention.
7. Milton Keynes works with Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Council to operate a shared public health service and we intend to make full use of our local public health partnership. This means that the fundamentals of our plan will be similar and that timely and coordinated specialist advice and guidance to the MK OPG will be best provided through the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Health Protection Board.
8. The main data source used by the OPG will be based on the interactive data dashboard being provided by the Department of Health and Social Care National Testing Programme, NHS Digital and NHSX. We expect this dashboard to contain data from three sources:
- NHS Digital's COVID-19 National Testing Programme database, which consists of data received from the National Pathology Exchange (NPEX)
 - The consolidated data covering the National Testing Programme
 - 111/999 data about the rate of calls to these services relating to COVID-19
9. With support from the Health Protection Board, the OPG will monitor this data and other local information and work proactively to reduce the spread of infection. This will include supporting any restrictions on movement that may be needed, for example a business or residential area. The Health and Wellbeing Board will provide oversight be the public facing board to communicate openly with local people.
10. The OPG will oversee the MK Care Home Group. The purpose of the Care Home Group is to 'protect residents, living in care homes and/or those receiving care, from COVID-19 by agreeing on a joint approach to early identification and timely management of cases, outbreaks and other related issues'. It will be chaired by a member of the OPG, in the first

instance the Director of Public Health. This will ensure a direct reporting line to the OPG. The OPG may set up task and finish groups if required.

11. The OPG will link as appropriate to the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and the Bedfordshire Local Resilience Forum and the respective social care cells as well as to Public Health England's local health protection team. Regional working has an additional challenge in MK as local partners link to both the Thames Valley Local Resilience Form and the Bedfordshire Resilience Forum depending on their geographical coverage (for example Thames Valley Police does not cover Bedfordshire whilst the CCG footprint does). Arrangements such as using a joint Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Health Protection Board should help us maintain a sense of connectivity.
12. Northamptonshire is outside both Local Resilience Forum areas and so a particular effort will be made to stay in touch with the situation in Northamptonshire.
13. The OPG will be the conduit for contact from Milton Keynes as a place with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

Tracing

14. We understand that the more complex tracing work will be passed to local areas from the national test and trace contact centre and Public Health England. The early indication that complex work would include:
 - Cases in care home/long term care facilities
 - Cases in Healthcare workers
 - Cases in Emergency Services workers
 - Cases in Border Force and Immigration officers
 - Cases who attended healthcare for non COVID reasons
 - Cases in those living or working in Prison or other places of detention
 - Cases in those attending or working in special schools
 - Cases in homeless hostels or shelters or refuges and similar residential settings
 - Cases attending Day care centres for older/vulnerable people
 - Cases with concerns about deductive disclosure
 - Cases or employers unwilling to provide information
15. To be able to respond to request to respond to contact tracing in complex setting, we will be redirecting virtually all our public health capacity in Milton Keynes Council other than essential regular tasks, to work as a tracing team. At this point we do not know what the level of referral for complex tracing may be and will need to keep the resource allocated and on standby for tracing under close review. Milton Keynes Council environmental health officers may also be bought in to join the tracing team effort if require, as could other resources from partners.

Safe operating of the place

16. The Milton Keynes Outbreak Control Plan will include a package of preventative work that will include general community engagement and more targeted work with communities more at risk. There will be a link with the economic recovery work that Milton Keynes Council is co-ordinating. The commissioning and co-ordination of the preventative work will be driven through the OPG.

17. There will also be a link to the local Support for Care Homes plan, submitted to government on 29 May 2020 which sets out how we will continue to support care homes and utilise the £2.1 million provided to MK from the government to support this sector. The OPG will oversee the implementation of this plan and the budget.

Funding

18. We have been notified that £300m in national government funding will be to local authorities in England to develop and action their plans to reduce the spread of the virus in their area. The use of our share of this funding (£1,065,306) will be overseen by the OPG.

Annex

Structure diagram

