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| Local Members Interest |
| N/A |

Cabinet – Wednesday 16 March 2022

Update from Covid Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board

Recommendation

1. Cabinet is asked to:
 - a. Note the March update from the Covid Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board;
 - b. Note that this is the final update planned from the Board; and
 - c. Extend the Council's thanks to all those who have played a role in managing the pandemic.

Current Situation

2. Covid case rates have fallen significantly, possibly in part because fewer people are testing themselves when they get symptoms. The number of people in hospital with Covid has also fallen and deaths are at or below pre-pandemic levels for this time of year. The Covid vaccination programme continues to make progress with a gradual increase in uptake of first and second doses as well as boosters in all age groups.

Expectations for 2022/23

3. The Government published England's plan for 'Living with Covid' on 21 February 2022.
4. From 24 February the legal requirement for people who test positive to isolate has been withdrawn, and replaced by guidance to avoid contact with others for at least 5 days and get two negative rapid Covid tests on consecutive days before resuming normal activities. Routine contact tracing has been discontinued.
5. From 01 April public testing, both PCR testing for people with symptoms and lateral flow device testing, will be removed. Testing will continue in some settings, for example PCR testing for people admitted to hospital with respiratory illnesses, and asymptomatic testing of health and care staff and care home residents.
6. There remains a risk of resurgence of the virus, especially if a new variant emerges. Ongoing precautions will be required in high-risk settings such

as care homes, and the country will need contingency plans and resources in place to manage escalating numbers of cases that put unsustainable pressure on health and care services.

7. The Council is planning that we will be able to continue to support prevention and management of outbreaks in high-risk settings such as care homes. We are prepared to manage localised surges in cases if necessary. We will continue to support the vaccination programme including any further boosters that are required during 2022/23. We will continue to provide public health advice to the public about the sensible precautions they can take to limit the spread of infection.
8. The Covid Member Led Local Outbreak Control Board has moved to monthly meetings and the ongoing requirement for the Board will be reviewed in line with emerging Government policy.
9. The Board would once again like to thank residents, schools, businesses, the voluntary sector, care providers, the NHS, the Council's own staff and everyone else who has contributed to the pandemic response. It has been a magnificent collective effort and leaves Staffordshire in a great position to face the future.

