

# Southend Health & Wellbeing Board

Agenda  
Item No.

Report of the Director of Public Health

To  
Health & Wellbeing Board

on  
9<sup>th</sup> June 2021

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For information only	X	For discussion	Approval required	
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## Coronavirus Pandemic Management Updates from the Health Protection Board and the Oversight and Engagement Board

### Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

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#### Purpose

This is to provide an update on the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan implementation of the national Pandemic Management programme.

#### Background

The programme is a central part of UK government's COVID-19 recovery strategy. The primary objectives are to control the COVID-19 rate of reproduction (R), reduce the spread of infection and save lives, and in doing so help 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.

#### Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP)

Local planning and response is essential. Response includes a local containment strategy, the implementation of which is expected to be achieved within the existing legal framework and by appealing to the public's sense of civic duty and working with local community leaders.

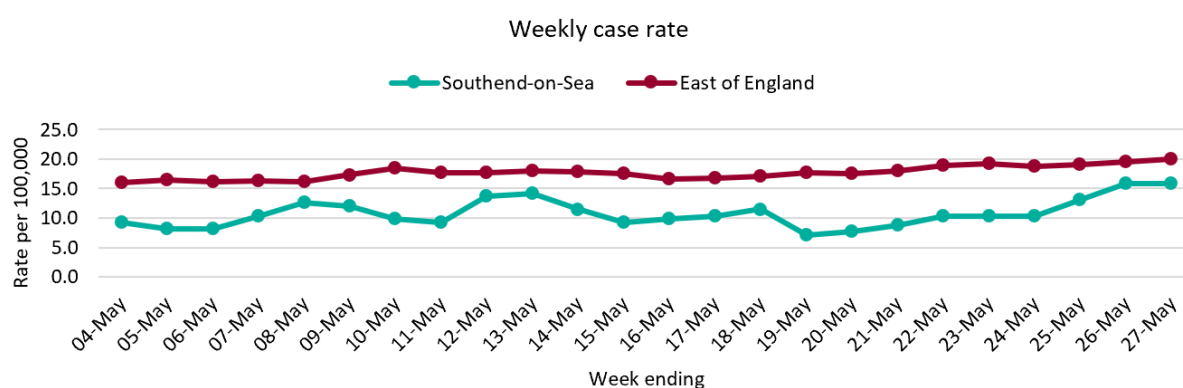
The [first version](#) of the Southend LOMP was published on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021, replacing the Local Outbreak Control Plan (LOCP) and will remain a dynamic document. The national Contain Framework was revised in April 2021. Good practice and lessons learnt have informed the LOMP with key additions around enhanced contact tracing, more community testing and alignment with the vaccination programme – this will support the Roadmap in exiting lockdown restrictions (see **Appendix 1**)

## Local Boards & Pandemic Management

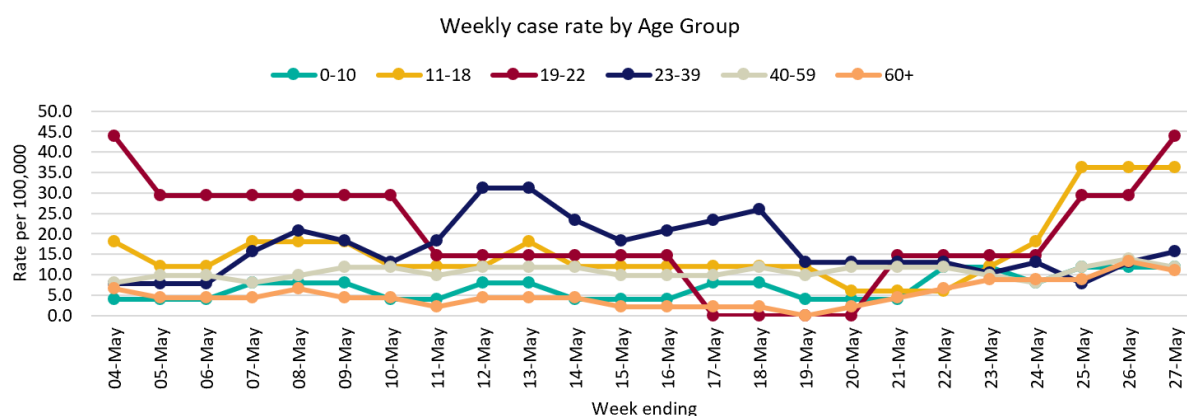
The Health Protection Board (HPB) is currently meeting on a fortnightly basis and receives the local Surveillance Report monitoring of our testing capabilities, infection rate, mortality rate, positivity rate, level of contact tracing, progress with vaccination and any report and case reviews of local outbreaks, as well as new variants. We also review our joint approach with Essex Police on compliance and enforcement.

All our key pandemic indicators are currently green, although we are dealing with a number of confirmed and suspected VAMs (Variants and Mutations), all of which have been contained. The incidence rate during this lockdown has declined rapidly in recent weeks, whilst we have seen an increase in cases of the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant across the East of England and nationally.

Our overall rate was 15.8/100,000 (2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021), and we are now seeing a gradual increase in incidence at par with the rest of the East of England.



We are seeing some differences in virus transmission in age groups, especially younger people aged between 11-22 years.



The HPB has reviewed and approved:

- Revised Testing Strategy, including the closure of all LFD testing sites
- A new VAM Response Plan, including surge capacity planning

- Mortality Review in Care Homes and recommendation for action
- The development of a Southend Contact Tracing service

The vaccination programme is running effectively across Southend with over 66% having received their first dose and 42% the second dose. We are working with our NHS partners to identify and engage local sub-groups to help reduce vaccination hesitancy locally. A specialist mobile vaccination unit has been deployed by the Health and Care Partnership to cover some targeted areas in Southend as well.

**The Outbreak Control Oversight and Engagement Board** continues to lead on a number of communication and engagement activities, including refreshing our messaging to the public and local businesses – now meeting monthly. We continue to promote our key messages of maintaining social distancing, hand hygiene and using face covering in the appropriate settings. We have been holding regular community engagement events to provide reassurance, respond to local concerns and gain more insight to support our local response. Further messaging is planned as we mark the stepped changes with the national Roadmap to exit this lockdown.

All our actions and local interventions are reviewed and shared with the Regional Partnership Team.

### **Cabinet Office Visit**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021, the Cabinet Office COVID-19 Task Force paid a day visit to Southend as a key coastal town. They gathered information about our successes, potential challenges and key messages back to the national government to help inform the next stages of easing restrictions, given the rise in VAM cases. They also discussed how we were implementing the Local Outbreak Management Plan and our key lessons to date.

They met with key HPB members, the Oversight and Engagement Board members as well as key business leaders and conducted a number of site visits.

### **Recommendation**

1. For the HWB Board to note progress and ongoing implementation of the Local Outbreak Management Plan by the Local Health Protection Board and the Outbreak Control Oversight and Engagement Board.
2. For the HWB Board to note the key documents endorsed by the Health Protection Board

## Roadmap out of Lockdown

From 8 March, people in England will see restrictions start to lift and the government's four-step roadmap offer a route back to a more normal life.

While we must all remain vigilant - in particular against the threat from new COVID-19 variants - and continue to protect the NHS, a safe exit from lockdown can begin. It will take place in four steps; and at each step, we plan to lift restrictions across the whole of England at the same time.

### 2. Four steps

#### Step 1a – 8 March

- All children and students return safely to face-to-face education in schools and colleges
- Childcare and children's supervised activities can also resume where necessary
- Twice-weekly rapid testing for secondary and college pupils - in addition to regular testing for all teachers - to reduce the chance of the virus spreading in schools
- People allowed to leave home for recreation and exercise outdoors with their household or support bubble, or with one person from outside their household
- Care home residents will also be allowed one regular visitor.

#### Council issues/challenges/comms

- Stay at home except for permitted reasons remains key message
- Testing strategy for schools – new site at Garon Park
- Return to school with confidence campaign and comms
- Car parking announcement ahead of 29 March and managing stay at home message until then
- Liaising and supporting care home sector re visits

#### Step 1b – 29 March

- outdoor gatherings (including in private gardens) of either 6 people (the Rule of 6) or 2 households will also be allowed, making it easier for friends and families to meet outside
- Outdoor sports facilities such as tennis and basketball courts will also be allowed to reopen
- formally organised outdoor sports return
- The 'stay at home' rule will end on 29 March
- Many restrictions will remain in place
- People should continue to work from home where they can and minimise the number of journeys they make where possible, avoiding travel at the busiest times and routes
- Car parks open on seafront – please still act with caution, don't drop your guard

#### Council issues/challenges/comms

- Managing message from Stay at home to stay local
- Complaints about 'over-sized' groups meeting up
- People meeting up in parks – litter/overflowing bins/alcohol related ASB
- Summer season starts early for seafront, parks and open spaces
- Managing crowds/toilets/car parking etc
- Visit Southend safely
- Internal staff comms re work from home – reiterate workplace measures (done last week)

## **Step 2 - no earlier than 12 April**

- Opening of non-essential retail, personal care premises such as hairdressers and nail salons; and public buildings, including libraries and community centres
- Indoor leisure facilities such as gyms will also reopen (but only for use by people on their own or in household groups); as will most outdoor attractions and settings including theme parks
- Hospitality venues will be allowed to serve people outdoors
- No need for customers to order a substantial meal with alcoholic drinks and no curfew, although customers must order, eat and drink while seated ('table service').
- Wider social contact rules apply in all these settings to prevent indoor mixing between different households.

## **Council issues/challenges/comms**

- Managing outdoor hospitality and ensuing issues such as ASB/litter/social distancing in busy areas/compliance
- Visit Southend safely
- Shop Local, Shop Safe
- Managing crowds/toilets/car parking etc
- Theatres and libraries reopen?
- Pier reopens?
- Civic Centre?
- Maintaining compliance and encouragement on hands, face, space messaging

## **Step 3 - no earlier than 17 May**

- Moving towards people deciding on the appropriate level of risk for their circumstances
- Most legal restrictions on meeting others outdoors will be lifted - although gatherings of over 30 people will remain illegal
- Indoors, the Rule of 6 or 2 households will apply
- Updated advice on social distancing between friends and family, including hugging
- Until this point, people should continue to keep their distance from anyone not in their household or support bubble
- Most businesses in all but the highest risk sectors will be able to reopen
- Indoor hospitality will reopen, with COVID secure measure still in place

- Indoor entertainment venues such as cinemas and children's play areas; the rest of the accommodation sector, including hotels, hostels and B&Bs; and indoor adult group sports and exercise classes to reopen.
- The government will also allow some larger performances and sporting events in indoor venues, outdoor venues and outdoor seated venues
- Up to 30 people still for weddings, receptions and wakes, as well as funerals.

#### Council issues/challenges/comms

- Managing messages around 'own level of risk'
- COVID secure compliance re indoor hospitality
- Visit Southend safely
- Managing visitors – summer comms – toilets/litter/ASB/parking enforcement
- 'Staycation' sector re-opens

Before Step 4 begins - the government will complete a review of social distancing and other long-term measures that have been put in place to cut transmission. This will inform decisions on the timing and circumstances under which the rules on 1 metre plus, the wearing of face coverings and other measures may be lifted. This will also inform guidance on working from home – which should continue wherever possible until this review is complete.

**Step 4 - no earlier than 21 June** - the government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact.

- remaining premises reopen, including nightclubs
- ease the restrictions on large events and performances that apply in Step 3.

#### Council issues/challenges/comms

- Night time economy fully open again
- COVID secure compliance re indoor hospitality
- Visit Southend safely/sensibly
- Managing visitors – summer comms – toilets/litter/ASB/parking enforcement
- End of social distancing/face covering measures potentially – we may want to encourage this as a 'social norm' still, even though not a legal requirement

#### General Government key messages throughout

- COVID-19 remains a part of our lives
- We are going to have to keep living our lives differently to keep ourselves and others safe
- We must carry on with 'hands, face, space'.
- Comply with the COVID-Secure measures that remain in place.
- Meet outdoors when we can and keep letting fresh air in.
- Get tested when needed
- Get vaccinated when offered
- If we all continue to play our part, we will be that bit closer to a future that is more familiar.