

Item No. 7.	Classification: Open	Date: 11 November 2020	Meeting Name: Health and Wellbeing Board
Report title:		COVID-19 OVERSIGHT Update on Southwark Council's Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan, November 2020	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Jin Lim, Acting Director of Public Health Kirsten Watters, Consultant in Public Health (Health Protection)	

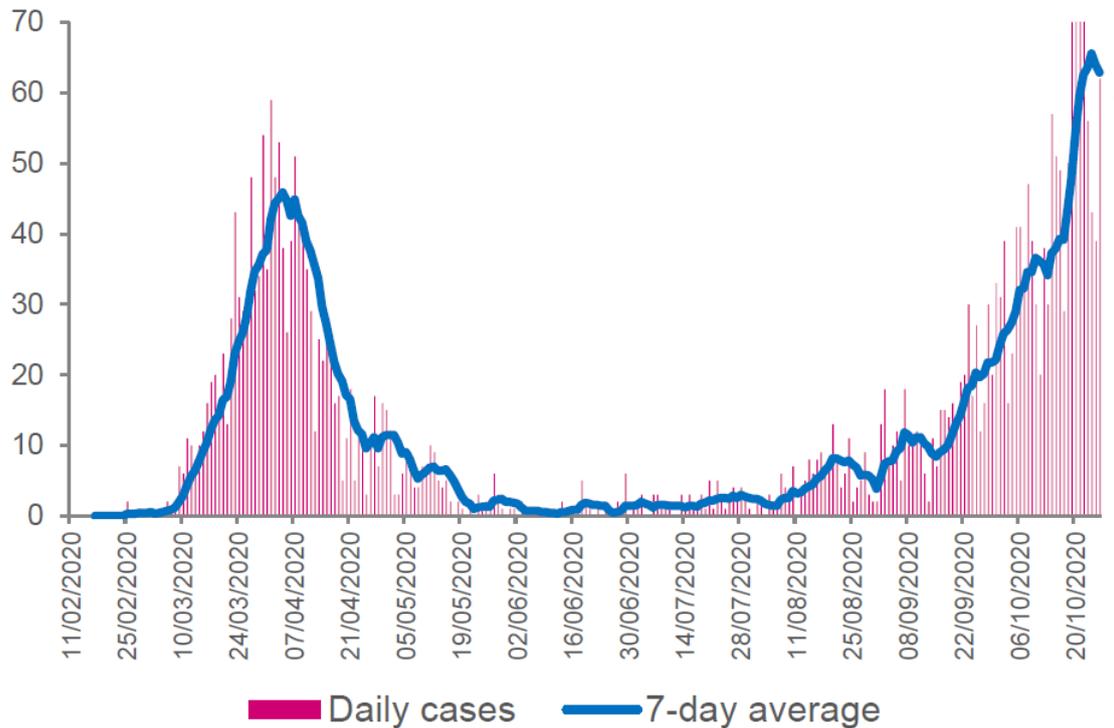
RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Health and Wellbeing Board receive and note the update from the Outbreak Prevention and Control Executive on the actions taken to implement the Southwark Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan (OPCP) and to prevent, identify and control the novel coronavirus pandemic in Southwark (Appendix 1).
2. That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the increased testing in Southwark and to note the increased capacity with the launch of an additional local test site at Peckham Pulse.
3. That the Health and Wellbeing Board note the launch of, and to promote with partners the Community Health Ambassadors Programme (Appendix 2).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4. Southwark Council published its Outbreak Prevention and Control Plan (OPCP) on 31 June 2020. In that document, the governance of Southwark's OPCS is established as being firstly Outbreak Prevention and Control Executive (OPCE) and ultimately both the Health and Wellbeing Board and Cabinet. This report to the Health and Wellbeing Board is the second update in reporting subsequent activity and progress pertaining to the OPCS.
5. Since the previous update presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board on 24 September 2020 both the epidemic itself and the response have evolved.
6. From late September through to late October the detected incidence of COVID-19 in Southwark remained below the London and England averages. South East London overall has fared better amid the second wave of disease that began to emerge in late summer. However, in the

final week of October (and partially driven by increased testing capacity) the scale of transmission and infection in Southwark has increasingly reflected the London average. Steep increases in infection have been observed in the week to 31 October 2020.



7. Reflecting the pattern of infection across the rest of London (and England), late summer and early autumn 2020 saw transmission in Southwark predominantly among younger adults aged 18-29 years (catalysed by social mixing and returning university students). The late-autumn period has seen increasing incidence of disease among older adults (50 years and above). Pressure on hospital services has picked up in the last week of October but remains materially below the levels observed in spring 2020.
8. Amid central government's new tiered approach to containing the infection, London began in Tier 1 (Medium) and rapidly escalated as a region into Tier 2 (High) on 16 October 2020. Entry into Tier 2 has introduced a range of new countermeasures including a ban on indoor household mixing, a blanket closing hour of 10pm for hospitality and a cap on outdoor mixing of six persons. The tiered escalation framework is attached (Appendix 4).

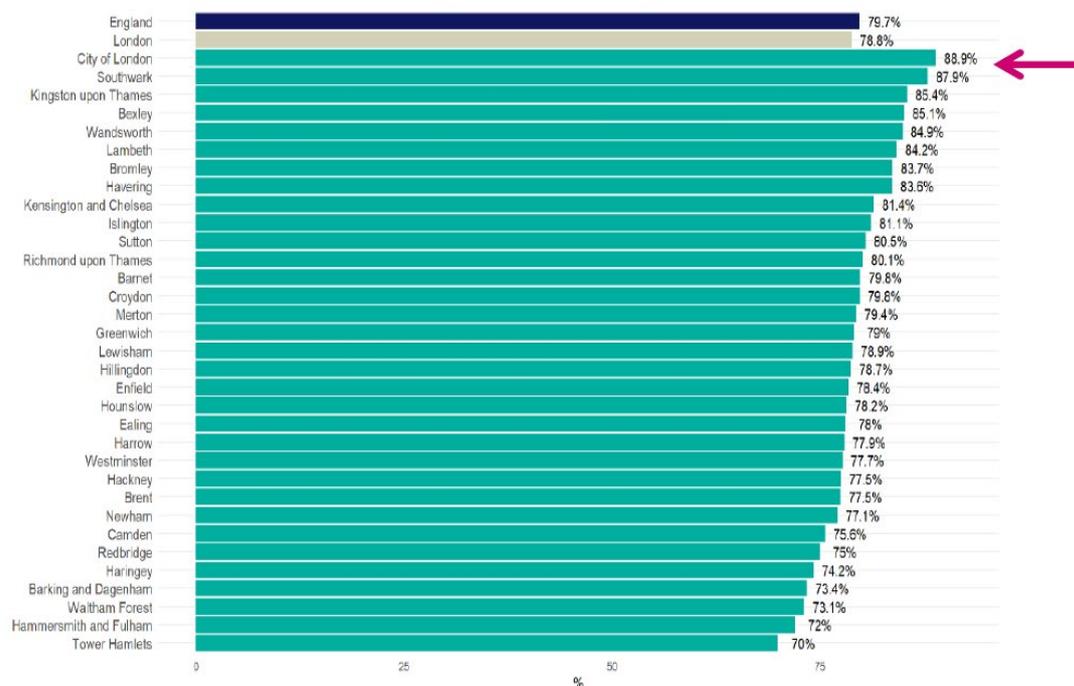
PREVENT STRAND

9. Communications work has been led by Southwark's Communications team with support from Community Engagement, Public Health as well as from Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners.
10. External communications have been updated to reflect the escalation of London into Tier 2. Outdoor advertising with a focus on town centers have been stepped-up and work is underway to sign-post residents to testing, use of the NHS app and other welfare support services.
11. Regulatory Services are delivering a programme of surveillance and visits to licensed premises as well as other hospitality and retail venues across the borough. Recent visits to premises (in tandem with Metropolitan Police Service colleagues) have resulted in advice and guidance. A number of venues, where advice and warnings have been ignored, have been subject to closure and additional penalties.
12. The Communications team are working with enforcement colleagues to ensure that key messages about COVID-security are amplified, and that premises owners are aware that the council will take enforcement action where necessary.
13. The Community Health Ambassador Network launched in October as part of the Prevent programme. The programme seeks:
 - a) To amplify and increase the reach of key messages on the prevention of COVID-19 and the Test and Trace process and guidance / rules, and wider health and wellbeing messages where relevant.
 - b) To empower local volunteers managed through Southwark VCS organisations to play a role in keeping their communities safe. The programme will be extended beyond the VCS in later phases.
 - c) To support a two-way communication about guidance, barriers to compliance and communities at risk and their concerns.
14. Further information on the Ambassador network is detailed in Appendix 2.
15. Work continues with local partners in social care, schools and universities to increase their preparedness, improve COVID-security, and facilitate an appropriate return to activities where it is safe and possible to do so.
16. In collaboration with the School of Public Health at Imperial College London, an organisation-wide online learning package about the COVID-19 pandemic in Southwark will be deployed in early winter 2020.

IDENTIFY STRAND (INCORPORATING INTELLIGENCE)

17. The Knowledge and Intelligence team continue to surveil the data and information coming into the council from a range of Joint Biosecurity Centre, Public Health England, NHS and other sources. Daily briefings are provided to the Public Health consultant on call (and Director of Public Health).
18. Daily lists of positive cases attributed to the borough are reviewed every day by analysts and cross-matched with a local list of vulnerable settings. This additional check is identifying a range of new incidents including outbreaks of infection linked to social care settings, schools, universities and other high-vulnerability residential contexts. This is enabling the team to take public health actions forward in advance of (slower) regional cluster identification processes.
19. Southwark is one of three London boroughs to pioneer a local tracing partnership (LTP) since 21 September 2020. This service operates seven-days a week, and takes all positive cases who have not responded to national NHS Test and Trace contact within 24 hours. The service in Southwark is referred to as Test and Trace Southwark (TTS).
20. Despite significant operational challenges interfacing with the national system, Southwark has moved from an average of ~70% completed follow-up for confirmed cases to >85% of confirmed cases in the latest national reporting (to 22 October 2020). This is the highest follow-up completion among the 32 London boroughs for the last two weeks that have been reported.

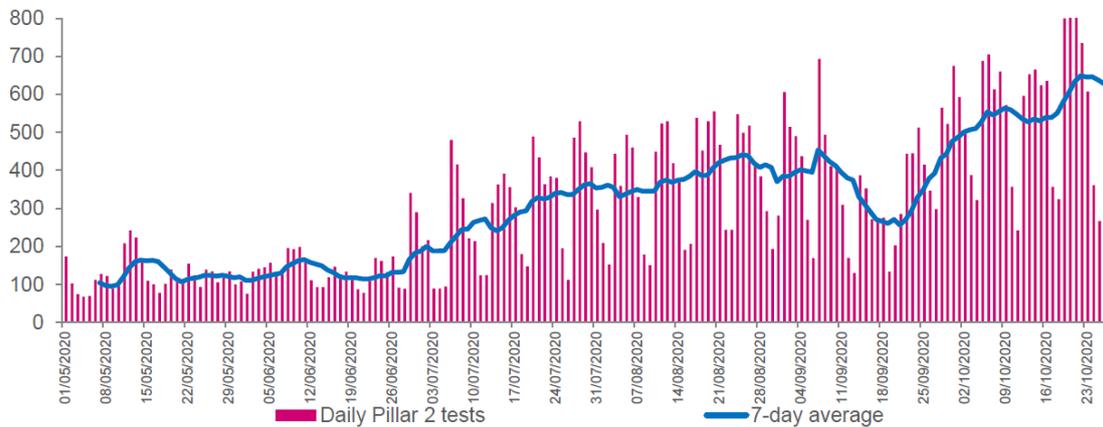
Figure 2: London borough case completion in week to 22 Oct



21. The local contact tracing service has worked well to overcome many of the challenges and as one of the early adopters in London, we have shared lessons on setting up the system with other boroughs and organized learning seminars. Appendix 3 provides more detail on the local contact tracing experience.
22. Development is underway to incorporate a door-knocking capability (working with Environmental Health and Housing) for cases who the local team are unable to reach. The pilot for this service is scheduled for early November 2020.
23. Development is also underway to scale capacity both on a short-term and more-sustained basis. A pilot incorporating Southwark call centre staff as call handlers is scheduled for late November 2020.
24. The TTS Delivery Group have worked with Exchequer Services and agreed pathways to ensure roll-out and access to the self-isolation support grant for those residents on low incomes and isolating.
25. There are currently no plans to extend the scope of TTS to include the tracing of contacts (*cf.* cases). Test and Trace Southwark will continue to be Public Health-led, although will require considerable scaling given the projected increased incidence and continued problems within the national NHS Test and Trace programme.

26. Testing capacity for Southwark, like much of London reduced in early September by as much as 40% compared to previous months. This capacity has now been restored. Testing rates are now higher than over summer.

Figure 1: Daily and weekly average Pillar 2 tests in Southwark



27. The Southwark Mobile Testing Unit (MTU) continues to operate once every three days in Burgess Park. Although this is a ‘drive up’ option, it is very much accessible by cycling and pedestrians too.
28. To further increase access to testing for the borough, a new Local Testing Site (LTS) was launched at Peckham Pulse car park in mid October. This facility operates between 0800hrs and 2000hrs seven-days per week. This site is a ‘walk to’ facility and is placed in the centre of the borough where there is relatively lower car ownership, relatively lower income and potentially more residents engaged in front-facing jobs.
29. The criteria for testing continue to be COVID-19 symptoms and members of the public are asked to book an appointment on line <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or via NHS 119. Although testing rates have increased in Southwark ie more people are seeking and able to test by requesting a home kit or at one of the local sites, local monitoring and assessment suggest that there is capacity at Burgess Park and Peckham Pulse and that there should be no delays or difficulties in getting a test for Southwark residents compared to late summer.

CONTROL STRAND

30. The Acute Response Team (ART) has operated since February 2020, with a seven-day consultant-led service operating 0900-1700hrs every day. The publichealth@southwark.gov.uk is a monitored group inbox that serves as the single point of contact (SPOC) to all coronavirus-related enquiries. The team meets every weekday at 1600hrs to manage situations and respond to enquiries from across Southwark Council and organisations across the borough such as schools, care homes, universities and local businesses.

31. Since late summer the volume of enquiries coming into this team has steeply increased. There is now daily work coordinating with partners in social care, education and universities to assure Southwark's local response.
32. The ART continues to provide support internally too for the council. The team is working closely with the Health and Safety team and HR departments to support safe working practices within the organisation. Within this package of work, a monthly briefing is provided to trade unions updating them on the pandemic and the health protection response.
33. Seminars, training and Q&A sessions are also conducted for schools, care homes, businesses and voluntary and community forums.
34. Additional capacity has been added to this team both at an operational and leadership level.

OUTLOOK

35. As we move into the winter period, and in the absence of additional society-level constraints, the epidemic trajectory will continue and likely accelerate. This will create additional pressures on capacity across an already-fatigued health and social care system, as well as wider government and society. Winter pressures driven by the possibility of influenza, other respiratory viruses and adverse weather may also emerge and further complicate.
36. Plans for targeted vaccination of health and social care workers and those deemed highly vulnerable are emerging for early 2021. Yet there remains considerable uncertainty in the timeline, efficacy and effectiveness of novel coronavirus vaccination candidates. It is unlikely that vaccination at population-level will be possible before mid-2021, although there are suggestions that an earlier start to begin the vaccination of key priority groups may be possible from early Spring. Even if technical, logistical and behavioural challenges were overcome, it is very unlikely that novel coronavirus will be eliminated in the medium-term. Accordingly, non-pharmaceutical interventions (for example 'Hands, Face, Space') are likely to remain the mainstay of prevention strategies going forwards.
37. The Southwark Public Health team is exploring the potential benefits of point of care testing as technology evolves.
38. Appendix 4 sets out the national Tiered escalation level. London moved formally into Tier 2 High 15 October. Many of the interventions will be superseded from 5 November, following an announcement of a month long national lockdown made on the 31 October with the intention of flattening the steep rise in cases before Christmas.

Community impact statement

39. The OPCP involves close collaboration with a range of VCS partners and explicitly recognises the differential impacts of the pandemic on different groups. An evaluation strategy is in development to anticipate the risks for different communities, and ensure that differential impacts are characterized and mitigated where possible.
40. A short online training course on the pandemic impacts on inequalities is being developed by the Public Health Team together with Imperial College London University. The intention is to promote a better understanding of how the pandemic affects more disadvantaged and vulnerable population groups. This resource will be made available to the wider Council and VCS through My Learning Source.

Resource implications

41. In the same way that the pandemic has created new resource pressures across the public sector, the work driven by the OPCP has created unprecedented staffing and financial pressures across Public Health, Regulatory Services, Communities and Communications.
42. The Council continues to be under funded by central Government in many respects for pandemic related activities while taking on additional responsibilities for contact tracing and other outbreak prevention control functions.
43. Ensuring the health and wellbeing of staff who have committed above and beyond their duties for more than six months is a priority. At the same time, qualified public health consultant leadership is highly constrained, with demand far outstripping supply at a national level. A sustainable approach that safeguards health and wellbeing is essential as we project the pandemic response into 2021 and beyond.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Southwark Outbreak Prevention Control Plan	Public health First Floor, Hub 1 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	publichealth@southwark.gov.uk
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=365&MId=6771&Ver=4		
Covid 19 and the impact on health inequalities	Public health First Floor, Hub 1 160 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QH	publichealth@southwark.gov.uk
http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=365&MId=6771&Ver=4		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Update report from the Outbreak Prevention Control Executive
Appendix 2	Southwark Community Health Ambassadors Programme
Appendix 3	Implementing Locally Supported Contact Tracing
Appendix 4	National Tiers - Escalation Framework

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Caroline Bruce, Strategic Director of Environment and Leisure	
Report Author	Richard Pinder, Consultant in Public Health Medicine	
Version	Final	
Dated	28 October 2020	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		6 November 2020