NORTH YORKSHIRE OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD

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DISCUSSION PAPER – REVIEW OF THE OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD

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INTRODUCTION/CONTEXT

1.	The Outbreak Management Advisory Board (OMAB) was established in June 2020, as required by Government. It has met sixteen times. Its purpose is to provide political ownership and public-facing engagement and communication for outbreak response.

2.	It is a non-decision making body and, essentially, an informal meeting. However, in the interests of transparency, the Board holds its meetings in public.

3.	Core business has settled into four main areas, comprising updates on or from:

    - the current position;
    - vaccinations;
    - communications; and
    - partners.

4.	There is some local discretion around format, business and regularity.

5.	The purpose of this discussion paper is to seek the views of partners on:-

    - the functioning of the Board – how well has it worked?; what, if anything, needs to change?; and
    - the frequency of future meetings

6.	In addition, agreement is sought to continuing to hold meetings remotely.

7.	I have discussed this informally with County Council Members of OMAB and, purely for the purposes of discussion, their feedback is included below.

FUNCTIONING OF THE BOARD

How well has it worked?

8.	The feeling is that OMAB has worked effectively, with consensus on:-
    - Meetings well chaired
    - Organised
    - Good attendance, engagement and participation from partners
    - An open dioalogue
    - Appropriate content, with presentations that are high quality and germane
    - A sense that partners have pulled together

<u>What needs to change?</u>

9.   No particular areas have been identified.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

10.   Since restrictions were lifted this summer, the number of people who have died because of Covid-19 has, thankfully, not increased markedly. The number of people in Hospital from the virus is at higher levels, although not currently at the upper levels that it has been at previous Covid peaks.

11.   Because of this, a case could be made for reducing the frequency of meetings to, say, bi-monthly. However, cases remain high. It is felt likely, therefore, that the Board will want to continue to be appraised of the situation and the action being taken by partners on a regular basis.

12.   A vaccination booster programme has recently been announced by the Government. North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, who have overseen the vaccination programme in North Yorkshire and York, have helpfully provided an update at each meeting. It is thought probable that OMAB will want to receive a similarly regular update on the booster programme.

13.   It is likely that we will be dealing with some sort of special measures, restrictions, vaccinations, boosters, etc., for at least the next twelve months. Therefore, it would be wise to plan ahead for the next year at least. Most meetings are likely to be fairly brief, but it is likely that there will be issues throughout the year - especially in winter.

14.   For the reasons in paragraphs 11-13, above, it is suggested that the continuance of monthly meetings would be a prudent approach.

MEETING REMOTELY

15.   OMAB has met remotely since its inception. This has not affected the attendance of key players and, indeed, has facilitated it.

16   It is suggested that OMAB continue to meet remotely as a) it is a non-decision making body; and b) there are significant benefits in terms of saved travelling time.

OTHER MATTERS

<u>How much longer will OMAB be required?</u>

17.   The assumption is that, as the Government required Authorities to set up these Boards, OMAB will continue until they instruct the County Council to stand it down.

OUTCOMES

18.   OMAB is asked to agree that meetings continue to be held remotely, via Microsoft Teams and consider whether it:-

   a)   concurs with the summary of what has worked well (paragraph 5);

   b)   feels that there are any areas of the operation of OMAB that need to change; and

   c)   wishes to continue to meet monthly and, if not, at what frequency