

CABINET**27 JULY 2020****OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT**

Councillor Chris Jones, Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Wellbeing, said:

“Wirral has very much been a frontrunner in terms of our local response to the Coronavirus pandemic, which has seen health and care partners, community organisations, residents and more combine forces with the local authority to keep our communities safe.

“This Outbreak Management Plan is no different. I would urge everyone to take note of the plan and the actions we are asking them to take to keep themselves, their families and neighbourhoods free from COVID-19.

“The virus has not gone away and the plan will be crucial to protecting our most vulnerable and ourselves. We need to work together to ensure that the measures laid out in it are embraced by the borough, to protect our communities and to Keep Wirral Well.”

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to recommend the local structure and governance of Outbreak Management for all outbreaks, but specifically in relation to COVID-19.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to agree the terms of reference of the Health Protection Board and Outbreak Management Board detailed in appendix 1, along with related governance structure summarised in appendix 2 of the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 HM Government has asked Local Authorities and Directors of Public Health to undertake a number of actions as part of an outbreak management framework. This includes the establishment of a local Outbreak Management Plan, Outbreak Management Board and Health Protection Board.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 It is intended by HM Government that cross-party and cross-sector working will be strongly encouraged, and all tiers of government are intended to be engaged in a joint endeavour to contain the virus, including Local Resilience Forums, NHS Integrated Care Systems and Mayoral Combined Authorities. Councils are to be free to work at wider geographic levels if they so choose.
- 2.2 Wirral Council will partner and attend regional outbreak management groups/boards across Merseyside and Cheshire, and to support the arrangements across Wirral, it is recommended to initiate a local Outbreak Management Board and Health Protection Board.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Government has stated that the test and trace objectives will require a co-ordinated effort from local and national government, the NHS, GPs, businesses and employers, voluntary organisations and other community partners, and the public. Local planning and response will be an essential part of the Test and Trace service. Local government is stated to have a central role to play in the identification and management of infection. Local government, NHS and other relevant local organisations are at the heart of the national programme as HM Government will support upper tier local authorities to develop local outbreak control plans to reduce the spread of the virus in their area.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 Local Directors of Public Health will be responsible for defining these measures and producing the plans, working through Covid-19 Health Protection Boards. They will be supported by and work in collaboration with Strategic Co-ordination Groups ('Gold command' emergency planning forums or SCG) and a public-facing Board led by elected Members to communicate openly with the public.
- 3.4 Outbreak management and contact tracing are part of Health Protection Action which starts from surveillance and epidemiology through evidence of what is effective, the rapid formulation of actions, their implementation, assurance and evaluation and finally iteration as needed to prevent, suppress and reduce outbreaks of infection. This cycle remains the same regardless of setting. Each of these actions are necessary to manage outbreaks, even if they are extremely rapid in execution in practice. Contact

tracing can be both a part of surveillance/epidemiology on local outbreaks and a tool for implementing outbreak control. In the context of COVID-19 for Wirral this means:

- Prevent - the single most effective method of reducing transmission and outbreaks of COVID-19, through information, preparation advice and a communication programme
- Control - supporting all settings when there is a confirmed or suspected case
- Manage - specialist support when there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

3.5 Wirral Council published the local outbreak management plan on 30th June 2020, which is located on the Council website to be accessible to residents and local businesses across the Borough (Appendix 3).

Webpage: www.wirral.gov.uk/covid19outbreak

3.5.1 The Local Outbreak Plan covers seven themes, as detailed below:

- Planning for local outbreaks in care homes and schools (e.g. defining monitoring arrangements, identifying potential scenarios and planning the required response).
- Identifying and planning how to manage other high-risk places, locations and communities of interest including sheltered housing, dormitories for workers, transport access points (e.g., ports), detained settings, rough sleepers etc (e.g. defining preventative measures and outbreak management strategies).
- 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).
- 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).
- 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).
- 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.
- Establishing governance structures led by existing Covid-19 Health Protection Boards and supported by existing strategic co-ordination groups (gold command forums) and a new member-led Board to communicate with the general public, both locally and at the Combined Authority (Merseyside Resilience Forum) level.

- 3.6 The objective of an Outbreak Management Board is to provide political ownership and public-facing engagement and communication for outbreak response. The expectation is that the Board would bring together the key participants and consultees, in a member led environment, regarding decisions that may be required in seeking to control further outbreaks, including the decision to close down a school, multiple premises or even an area of the community.
- 3.6.1 Decisions on steps to be taken by the Authority in respect of local incidences are an executive decision (prior to the Annual Meeting). These decisions are likely to be taken in urgent response to advice from the Director of Public Health and information provided by the test and trace service, Health Protection Board and NHS linkages.

Such decisions will be:

- (a) Decisions taken by the Director of Public Health or other responsible officers of the authority, with immediate effect and in consultation with the Group Leaders and other consultee bodies present.
- (b) Prior to the Annual Meeting of Council, an individual executive member decision similarly in consultation with others present. Given these circumstances, any decision would be taken by the Leader (or nominee Cabinet member) and, as a likely case of special urgency, this would require waiving of prior notification rules by the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or the Mayor in their absence).
- (c) A decision to be taken by a partner body in consultation with, or informing, members of the Outbreak Management Board.
- (d) A decision that will lead to a strategic change that may be made on notice and therefore a recommendation of the Outbreak Management Board to Cabinet/Committee or a partner body.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Local authorities across England have been allocated a share of £300 million to support the new Test and Trace service. Funding will help local communities develop and action plans to reduce the spread of coronavirus in their area.
- 4.2 The Minister of State determines which local authorities the grant is to be paid to and the amount of grant to be paid. The amount of grant to be paid was decided upon using the 2020/21 Public Health Grant allocations as a basis for proportionately distributing the funding. The Department of Health and Social Care has allocated funding to upper tier local authorities in England, working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on the allocation formula. The funding is ring-fenced for this specific purpose. Funding has been allocated to councils based on need, with additional funding provided for communities with lower incomes and higher demand for local healthcare settings.
- 4.3 The purpose of the grant is to provide support to local authorities in England towards expenditure lawfully incurred or to be incurred in relation to the mitigation against and management of local outbreaks of COVID-19. The funding will support the joint

endeavour between NHS Test and Trace, local government, and local partners to stop the spread of the virus. It will help to reduce the risk of widespread outbreaks in our schools, businesses, hospitals, and communities.

- 4.4 Wirral allocation of funding is - £2,733,018. The grant is paid in one instalment in June 2020.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Authority and partner bodies have a set of existing powers to call upon. The legal context for managing outbreaks of communicable disease that present a risk to the health of the public requiring urgent investigation and management sits:

- With Public Health England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Directors of Public Health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Chief Environmental Health Officers under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
- With NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups to collaborate with Directors of Public Health and Public Health England to take local action e.g. testing and tracing to assist the management of outbreaks under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With other responders' specific responsibilities to respond to major incidents as part of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- In the context of COVID-19 there is also the Coronavirus Act 2020 and the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations are currently in force and reviewed every 28 days.

- 5.2 This gives the Authority (Public Health and Environmental Health) and Public Health England the primary responsibility for the delivery and management of public health actions to be taken in relation to outbreaks of communicable disease through the local Health Protection Partnerships (sometimes these are Local Health Resilience Partnerships) and local Memoranda of Understanding. These arrangements are clarified in the 2013 guidance Health Protection in Local Government.

- 5.3 Public Health England (PHE) is mandated to fulfil the Secretary of State's duty to protect the public's health from infectious diseases, working with the NHS, local government and other partners. This includes providing surveillance; specialist services, such as diagnostic and reference microbiology; investigation and management of outbreaks of infectious diseases; ensuring effective emergency preparedness, resilience and response for health emergencies. At a local level PHE's health protection teams and field services work in partnership with Directors of Public Health, playing strategic and operational leadership roles both in the development and implementation of outbreak control plans and in the identification and management of outbreaks.

- 5.4 The Director of Public Health has, and retains, primary responsibility for the health of their communities. This includes being assured that the arrangements to protect the health of the communities that they serve are robust and are implemented. The primary foundation of developing and deploying local outbreak management plans is the public health expertise of the local Director of Public Health.

- 5.5 This legal context for Health Protection is designed to underpin the foundational leadership of the Director of Public Health in a local area, working closely with other professionals and sectors.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Terms of Reference for Outbreak Management Board and Health Protection Board (Appendix 1), Outbreak Management Governance Structure Chart (Appendix 2), and Outbreak Management Plan (Appendix 3) provide an overview of how we will work to keep Wirral well.
- 6.2 Wirral received £2,733,018 Test and Trace Funding which will support the investment required to develop a regional and local infrastructure for outbreak management.
- 6.3 The local and regional outbreak management hubs are still in their infancy and the design of the outbreak multi agency service will continue to evolve throughout July to August 2020.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council will be at risk of failure to comply with guidance set out by HM Government to initiate Outbreak Management Board and Health Protection Boards to support the implementation of local outbreak management plans. Cabinet is recommended to agree the terms of reference of the Health Protection Board and Outbreak Management Board along with related governance structures to ensure that appropriate structure, oversight and scrutiny is in place in Wirral to prevent transmission of COVID-19 within the community and ensure an effective and coordinated approach to a COVID-19 outbreak.
- 7.2 Wirral received £2,733,018 Test and Trace Funding, and there is a risk that the cost of implementing the local and regional infrastructure for outbreak management may exceed the budgeted amount allocated. There is a governance process in place to oversee the spend of the Test and Trace Funding. The Outbreak Management Board will have regular oversight of how the fund is allocated. The Chief Executive and Chief Internal Auditor will have regular oversight of how the fund is administered to ensure the grant conditions are met.

8. ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Council has engaged with partners in the development of the Terms of Reference, Outbreak Management Governance Structure Chart and Outbreak Management Plan.
- 8.2 Wirral Council is committed to working in partnership with residents, local health providers, businesses, community and religious groups, schools and charities, to build on the continued efforts of our communities to respond to the pandemic locally.
- 8.3 The Council has set up a dedicated COVID-19 email address, internet page and telephone number to support engagement and enquiries from residents and businesses:

Email: covid19enquiries@wirral.gov.uk
Webpage: www.wirral.gov.uk/covid19outbreak
Helpline: Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm on 0151 666 5050

8.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is available to view at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental and climate implications generated by the recommendation within this report. Any recommendations from the Outbreak Management Board or Health Protection Board will ensure that all steps are taken to take a positive approach to Wirral's environment and climate.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference for Outbreak Management Board and Health Protection Board.

Appendix 2 – Outbreak Management Governance Structure Chart

Appendix 3 – Outbreak Management Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Coronavirus Act 2020
- Local Outbreak Control Plans – Department of Health 22 May Guidance
- Local Authority Test and Trace Service Support Grant Determination 2020-21
- Cheshire and Merseyside Test and Trace Hub Mobilisation Team Meeting Notes
- Public Health Leadership, Multi-Agency Capability: Guiding Principles for Effective Management of COVID-19 at a Local Level - June 2020

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date