

CABINET**30 SEPTEMBER 2019****PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2019 – CREATIVE COMMUNITIES**

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

“We want all of our residents to have a good quality of life however, we know some of our communities face multiple challenges.

It is our responsibility to lead the way and develop key relationships that will allow us, together with our partners, to work closely with local people to support them to take control over their health and wellbeing, and build environments in which healthy choices are the easy choices.

As an authority we must continue to demonstrate our commitment to encouraging healthier lives. One way of doing this is the production of a Public Health Annual Report. This year’s report focusses on the role of culture as a means of improving health and wellbeing, and was fully based on work with residents and partners within our communities.

This report sets out our initial plans and recommendations for ways in which the influence of creativity and culture can be embedded into health messages and interventions, so as to have a positive impact on both the physical and mental health of residents of all ages.”

REPORT SUMMARY

The Public Health Annual Report (PHAR) 2019 is the independent annual report of the Director of Public Health and is a statutory requirement.

The 2019 Report, *Creative Communities*, explores the role of culture as a means of improving health and wellbeing, presents local examples of these benefits and calls for everyone in Wirral to be part of a Borough of Culture legacy that leaves us happier and healthier.

The Public Health Annual Report is an important vehicle to identify key issues, flag up problems, report progress and inform local inter agency action. The purpose of the PHAR is to draw attention to local issues of importance which have an impact on population health. Since the Council took back responsibility for Public Health in 2013 we have published five reports on:

- Social isolation
- Healthy schools and children
- Domestic violence
- The roles of the Council and NHS in promoting health and wellbeing

- Problem gambling

These reports have led to action in the reduction of people smoking in the borough to levels below the national average; increased support for people who were feeling socially isolated plus significant activity across a range of partners to highlight and reduce the damage caused to our communities from alcohol abuse and gambling.

The 2019 Report seeks to influence the developing narrative around social prescribing and how we engage and work with local people to support them to live healthier lives.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough; it is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is requested to endorse the recommendations of the Public Health Annual Report 2019 and support its publication.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The 2019 Public Health Annual Report focuses on the role of cultural activities to improve health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 Engaging with cultural activities is good for everyone; it helps people to recover from illness, both physical and mental and protects against it; preventing illness and keeping us well no matter how young or old we are.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The publication of the Public Health Annual Report is a legal requirement, no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Wirral's year as Borough of Culture has provided some unforgettable and spectacular arts and sporting events for locals and visitors to experience. It has brought communities together and provided opportunities for people of all ages to experience arts and culture in lots of different ways.
- 3.2 According to National Alliance for Arts, Health and Wellbeing, "*over recent years, there has been a growing understanding of the impact that taking part in the arts can have on health and wellbeing. By supplementing medicine and care, the arts can improve the health of people who experience mental and/or physical health problems. Engaging in the arts can promote prevention of disease and build wellbeing*"¹
- 3.3 This year's Public Health Annual Report looks at what is known about what works to improve health through arts and cultural activities; the experiences of local people interacting with culture and its impact upon them and makes recommendations about how we can all use cultural activities to improve our health and wellbeing.
- 3.4 A review of the evidence² about what works to improve health through culture, identified a positive impact on both physical and mental health across the life course and identified those activities which are beneficial. The findings from this review informed the development of the PHAR recommendations.
- 3.5 Across Wirral there are lots of great examples of arts and cultural activities which are having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local people. In the report we showcase this work which is engaging with residents of all ages.
- 3.6 The Public Health Annual Report is aimed at lay audiences, a key feature of the report must be its accessibility to the public which offers an opportunity for the Director of Public Health to focus on the key impact messages they want to convey. This year we

¹ All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing. *Inquiry Report. Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing. July 2017*

² Wirral Intelligence Service (2019) *The impact of art and culture on health and wellbeing – a literature review. May 2019.*

focused on using the PHAR as a way of engaging people to discuss their health and wellbeing actively employing arts and culture, not only as the topic for the report, but as a vehicle to engage local people in the development of the report.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. The Public Health Annual Report is a statutory duty on Directors of Public Health.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 This report has been financed from within existing resource and the main inputs have been staff time of officers in Public Health, Culture, Communications and Graphics teams.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 To mitigate the potential lack of engagement with the report it has been co-produced with partners, through two workshops, and with residents through an extensive arts project (see 8.0 Engagement/Consultation).

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 To inform the PHAR we spent time listening to the stories and experiences of residents. An immersive community arts project, known as 'The Sofa Sessions', travelled across the borough inviting residents to rest, relax and discuss how their life has been influenced by culture and creativity whilst also taking part in cultural activities. Over 1000 people interacted with the travelling arts project during August 2019, supported by Involve North West and local artists. Each 'Sofa Session' was attended by Community Connectors from Involve North West who were available to assist any residents looking for support; providing information about local services available to them in Wirral. The work, a large-scale tapestry, produced by residents through 'The Sofa Sessions' will be displayed in various places across Wirral including the Williamson Art Gallery and Birkenhead Central Library.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken on the report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Creative Communities 2019 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

BACKGROUND PAPERS

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date