



## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report provides the Committee with an update on surveillance data and key areas of development in relation to Wirral's COVID-19 response and delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan.

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

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee are recommended to note the contents of the report, the progress made to date and to support the ongoing COVID-19 response.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

1.1 This report gives an overview of how Wirral Council will work to Keep Wirral Well and protect residents from the impact of COVID-19.

#### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

2.1 The Local Outbreak Management Plan and associated strategic priorities highlighted within this report have been developed to prevent and control COVID-19 in Wirral. Although no other viable options have been considered at this time, it is regularly reviewed to ensure the most appropriate response is in place.

#### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3.1 On 22 May 2020, the government asked all Councils to develop local COVID-19 Outbreak Plans. Wirral published its initial Local Outbreak Management Plan in June 2020, setting out how Wirral will:

- prevent transmission of COVID-19 within the community

- ensure we have an effective and coordinated local approach to managing COVID-19 outbreaks across different settings within the Borough
- ensure vulnerable people are protected
- link with national and regional systems to ensure we get maximum benefit for the population of Wirral.

3.2 Wirral has regularly reviewed and updated this plan, most recently in August 2021, in order to highlight progress that has been made to date along with a revised strategy for how the Council and local partners will continue to protect our communities from the impacts of COVID-19 as well as the wider effects on the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of Wirral residents. The updated plan can be found on the Wirral Council website: [Wirral Local Outbreak Management Plan](#)

3.3 Daily and weekly surveillance is undertaken to understand the local COVID-19 picture – up to date information on COVID-19 in Wirral is available here: [COVID-19 statistics for Wirral | www.wirral.gov.uk](#)

3.4 Details of Current National Guidance in respect of COVID-19, how to stay safe and help prevent the spread is available here: [\(COVID-19\) Coronavirus restrictions: What You Can And Cannot Do](#)

### 3.5 **Wirral Response to COVID-19**

The update to Wirral’s Local Outbreak Management Plan has focused on a revised set of priorities, acknowledging the significant developments across the COVID-19 response system. A summary of key progress against these priority actions outlined within the Local Outbreak Management Plan is provided in the table below;

Priority	Progress to Date and Future Plans
<p><b>1) Effective Surveillance</b></p> <p><i>Ensure access to timely local data and intelligence to inform local activity to prevent and manage outbreaks.</i></p>	<p>We have an established local surveillance system to capture timely local outbreak data and provide support to a variety of settings through Wirral’s COVID-19 Hub. The Microsoft Dynamics case management platform has led to improvements in the collection and reporting of data captured from local settings, as well as proactive identification of exposures and sources of potential outbreaks. The utilisation of this system has enabled closer collaborative working with the Cheshire and Merseyside Hub and the regional Public Health network. Wirral has been one of the first local authorities in the region to roll out and establish use of the system and as a result has been approached by a number of other teams in the area to advise on best practice system use.</p> <p>Daily and weekly multi-agency surveillance meetings continue to be held at local and regional levels to understand the epidemiology of current situations and to appropriately direct prevention and control measures, community engagement activity and target communications. Locally, daily surveillance has been</p>

	<p>improved by the introduction of regular OIRR (Outbreak Identification and Rapid Response) meetings to closely monitor and review current case rates, common exposures, and postcode coincidence data. These meetings are an opportunity to undertake screening and prioritisation, to interrogate data and to carry out a combined risk assessment resulting in direct actions for teams across the Hub. Utilising local intel has also allowed us to identify inequalities in vaccination uptake which has supported operational teams in mobilising the COVID-19 vaccination bus to those key communities that may struggle to access clinics.</p> <p>We plan to further develop our approach to using data and intelligence to deliver specific messages for target audiences, to gain further insight on attitudes and behaviours, which in-turn will support our COVID-19 response and lessons learnt. In addition, we will explore the usage of Public Health England 'wastewater' surveillance system as an indicator of ongoing community transmission requiring further local investigation.</p>
<p><b>2) Engagement and Communication</b>  <b><i>Build trust and participation through effective community engagement and communication.</i></b></p>	<p>Wirral has continued to work closely across the City Region to develop a consistent approach following the easing of restrictions and the reopening of society. The Merseyside Resilience Forum has set out six priorities for Communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage uptake of vaccinations (double dose) – reinforcing the vaccine as a wall of defence</li> <li>• Enable our residents to make informed decisions – deliver the facts, nudge behaviour</li> <li>• Encourage continuation of twice weekly testing – to control the spread and stop individual cases from becoming outbreaks</li> <li>• Continue to clarify when, how etc to self-isolate – Push on the support available (Incl. tracing)</li> <li>• Retain, revisit and refresh contingency plans</li> <li>• Continue to monitor and review data – making informed decisions to flex, adapt and retarget comms messaging</li> </ul> <p>Colleagues across the Council's intelligence, engagement and communications continue to meet fortnightly to plan and review activity, examining data, setting parameters for engagement and feeding back insight to inform local and targeted communications messaging. These meetings are also attended by Wirral CCG and third sector representatives to ensure a whole system approach to community engagement.</p>

	<p>A comprehensive vaccine communications plan has been developed, focusing on four target groups – younger cohorts, those less engaged or living in deprived communities, younger males aged 24 – 45 and second dose uptake. Engagement activity has also focused on vaccine hesitancy and behaviours around those aged 16-29 as well as staff in the health and social care sector – and links with the Humanitarian Cell group have been maximised in order to gain insight from key stakeholders and partners. Vaccine walk-through videos and updated mobile testing schedules continue to be promoted as part of the COVID-19 communications plan, with nine Black and Minority Ethnic Link Workers recruited to enhance existing engagement with our BAME communities and to maximise participation with testing and vaccination take-up.</p> <p>Wirral’s Community Champions network has now enlisted 700 local people, and a COVID-19 survey was facilitated by Hitch Marketing as part of an evaluation programme for the Community Champions. The survey closed in September 2021; analysis is being conducted on the survey results to support the development of the programme and further interventions. Plan are underway to hold a virtual session with the Community Champions to ensure their views and opinions are at the centre of plans for the programme going forward. The Engagement HQ platform has also been reviewed this month, and developed to improve the two-way flow of information between the Council and the Champions. More information on the Community Champions Programme can be found here: <a href="https://www.wirral.gov.uk/keep-wirral-well-during-covid-19">Keep Wirral Well during COVID-19   www.wirral.gov.uk</a></p>
<p><b>3) Higher-Risk Settings, Communities and Locations</b> <i>Identify and support high risk workplaces, locations and communities to prevent and manage outbreaks.</i></p>	<p>The COVID-19 Hub continues to work closely with local partners to prevent and manage outbreaks in high-risk settings with a robust daily review process and use of local intelligence to proactively target settings at higher risk of outbreaks, with the COVID-19 Hub team in place until September 2022 to continue to prevent and manage outbreaks across the Borough.</p> <p>There is a coordinated health and social care response; overseeing capacity, trends, resources, and updated guidance, leading the partnership across the system including voluntary sector, to respond to emerging pressures and system needs. We will build on learning to date and work in partnership to ensure our health and care system is able to deliver high quality COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 care for Winter 2021, including surge capacity to respond to further surges in COVID-19, the emergence of new COVID-19 variants, and a potential surge in other respiratory viruses.</p>

	<p>The COVID-19 Hub School Support service continues to work with Children’s Services to provide dedicated support for educational settings in managing COVID-19. A 7-day telephone school support line has been put into place, with further guidance available through a monitored mailbox, to complement national support available through the Department for Education helpline. In September 2021, approximately 100 requests were responded to through the Hub School telephone line and inbox; assisting school settings with a range of support measures from additional controls, to helping reduce transmission, to testing advice. Schools have received bespoke support from a multi-agency team led by the local Hub, when experiencing outbreaks.</p> <p>The Hub’s engagement team continue to meet regularly with stakeholders from across the borough, attending Council meetings as well as partner forums such as the Youth Collective Forum and Digital Enablement and Choice Group to gain insight and promote key messages. Regular meetings are held with representatives from across the local business sector, including the Wirral Chamber of Commerce, to support COVID safe organisational settings.</p> <p>We continue to revise and update the Council’s Business Toolkit in line with changes to national policy and frequently monitor it to ensure employers and employees understand their responsibilities and are supported to maintain safe environments and manage COVID cases and outbreaks effectively.</p>
<p><b>4) Supporting vulnerable and underserved communities</b>  <i>Proactively support individuals and communities, ensuring services across test, trace, isolate and support systems are accessible and meet the diverse needs</i></p>	<p>We have maintained excellent community links with over 100 local community groups and organisations through the Humanitarian partnership and regular meetings, working together to support local communities and have ensured targeted communications in areas of high incidence, to over 35,000 properties, highlighting current guidance and support available as well as maintaining regular contact with our clinically extremely vulnerable residents.</p> <p>We continue to work with under-represented and disproportionately impacted groups to promote and ensure ease of access to regular symptom-free testing. The team of Black and Ethnic Minority Link workers are proactively supporting our local BAME communities and working with local leaders to tackle vaccine hesitancy and promote COVID-19 key messages.</p> <p>We plan to maintain communication with our clinically extremely vulnerable residents and continue to ensure that they are able to access a wide range of support where</p>

<p><b><i>of our local communities.</i></b></p>	<p>required. In addition to this, we will be conducting a comprehensive asset mapping exercise of all local areas to ensure that Wirral Infobank contains most relevant and up to date information for residents to access for support.</p>
<p><b>5) Vaccination Support the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine programme, identifying and tackling inequalities in vaccine coverage.</b></p>	<p>Wirral Council, in partnership with Wirral CCG and Primary Care Networks, continue to ensure an effective delivery model to support the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme in Wirral. Our first COVID-19 vaccination was administered in Wirral on 8th December 2020, and since then considerable progress has been made with the local rollout. As of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021, 84% of the eligible population of Wirral had received the 1st dose of the vaccine, with 78.9% having received both doses.</p> <p>There are still variations in vaccine uptake across the Borough, and further work is planned to analyse the data, to inform future local engagement and communications work. Mobile vaccination sites have been deployed in the community in areas where vaccine uptake has been lower and a schedule of fixed and mobile vaccine provision continues to be rolled out, targeting those communities with lower uptake. This includes use of the regional ‘vaccination bus’ providing residents with an alternative and convenient way to access the vaccine, without the need to make an appointment. Since being made operational in June 2021, over 3,170 people have accessed a vaccine through a targeted ‘outreach’ offers e.g., vaccination bus or community site. Throughout summer months we provided bus vouchers to enable travel, where needed.</p> <p>Collaboration will continue with key partners to continue to offer first dose vaccination to all eligible residents over 16 years old. Broader efforts to increase overall uptake across all cohorts will include walk in appointments and targeted communications as part of the NHS ‘Evergreen’ offer. The vaccination booster programme has commenced in Wirral, including visits to care homes. The vaccination of 12–15-year-olds has also started this month.</p> <p><u>Vaccination and Health and Social Care Workers</u></p> <p>Collaborative work between the Council, health colleagues and partners has taken place to promote uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine amongst our health and social care workforce. Concerns around pregnancy and fertility treatment are a common theme, and resources to support</p>

concerned staff have been made available. Engagement and communications activities include:

- The COVID-19 Hub Engagement Officers have been attending Supported Living & Domiciliary Care Forums and have facilitated some vaccine hesitancy discussions. They have also been proactive in sharing and signposting to resources.
- The Hub Engagement Officers distributed a survey in April 2021 to all health and social care staff (102 returned) that explored reasons for vaccine hesitancy. The main issues reported for vaccine hesitancy included fertility, side effects, false information/fake news, and social media influence.
- A questions and answers COVID-19 vaccine session was held on 12th May 2021 for health and social care staff. The session was supported by clinicians and was attended by 21 health and social care staff. A clinical panel consisting of two GP's, a pharmacist and a representative from the Maternity Team supported the session and many questions were around pregnancy and fertility treatment.
- We have locally shared the available FAQ's and fertility resources including Live Facebook blog from Dr Angela Kerrigan, Public Health Consultant Midwife, at WUTH. Resources have also been shared via the Council and the CCG communications platforms, and through targeted campaigns via the care sector platforms.
- Blog from Julie Webster, Director of Public Health, focus on pregnant women and the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccination.

Using the intelligence and feedback from our local engagement activities, a targeted vaccination outreach offer was developed to further drive uptake. The Council and health colleagues worked in collaboration to set-up a pop-up vaccination clinic in Seacombe Children's Centre on 23rd July 2021, working with the local maternity team. The clinic was a success, and the outcome was an additional 152 people received their first vaccine.

During WUTH patient safety week in September 2021, there was a focus on maternal and new-born health and the team were promoting the benefits of the COVID-19 vaccination. A Facebook Live session on 13th September

started a week of activities, which included holding further pop-up vaccination clinics at Arrowe Park Hospital and Seacombe Children’s Centre.

The Council and health partners are working with residential and nursing providers, monitoring the local uptake, and reasons for vaccine hesitancy amongst the workforce.

The following table summarises the COVID-19 vaccination uptake across staff working in Wirral’s CQC registered care homes, as of 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Work is ongoing to continue to increase uptake for this cohort.

Total Staff <b>3,949</b>		Total Agency/Bank Staff <b>103</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> Dose <b>3,749</b> <b>(94.9%)</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Dose <b>2,484</b> <b>(84.8%)</b>	1st Dose <b>91</b> <b>(88.3%)</b>	2nd Dose <b>82</b> <b>(79.6%)</b>

**6) Testing  
Identify cases  
of COVID-19 by  
ensuring  
access to  
testing for  
those  
with and  
without  
symptoms and  
for outbreak  
management.**

We received confirmation in September 2021 of the plan to extend the Targeted Community Testing programme for a further 3 months, until 31 December 2021.

Wirral’s Testing Strategy and Operational delivery plans have been reviewed for the Autumn/Winter period, aligned to the national plans, maintaining accessible testing for people with or without symptoms, and testing in outbreak situations.

From July 2021, local authorities were asked to focus symptom-free testing offer for local under-represented groups and disproportionately impacted groups, and therefore Wirral’s Testing Team have been focussing efforts working closely with local organisations to develop clear pathways and ensure symptom free testing is easily accessible, encouraging uptake amongst those target cohorts.

As we approach the Autumn/Winter period, delivery of our symptom-free testing offer will change, aligned to the weather conditions and to ensure that we are optimising access to testing for our local communities. The mobile testing offer which has been in place across high footfall and coastal areas over the summer months will be replaced by outreach testing at ‘pop-up’ locations, maintaining symptom and sympto-free testing at fixed site locations.

The Council’s Testing Service has continued to work closely with Children’s Services and Education Teams, to support those secondary schools with identified need for on-site support with testing throughout September.

	<p>We will continue to promote and, where possible, support testing within settings and workplaces for high risks occupations, highlighting testing can help prevent outbreaks and maintain business continuity. Discussion around testing provision, as well as vaccination uptake, is an established part of our prevention and control work and outbreak management process.</p>
<p><b>7) Contact Tracing</b>  <b><i>Effectively  deploy local  contact tracing  to reduce the  onward  transmission of  COVID-19.</i></b></p>	<p>Wirral employs a local contact tracing service within the COVID-19 Hub, with a skilled and fully trained dedicated team in place. Earlier in the Summer, local cases were redirected to the national team in response to the rapid upturn in case numbers, as a result of the Delta variant, in order to enable Wirral’s local contact tracing team to prioritise our focus on managing outbreaks, clusters, and cases in high-risk locations and to continue to offer targeted local support to the most vulnerable.</p> <p>On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021, the ‘Local-4’ programme commenced – this is a national programme for local teams to identify specific postcode areas to focus local contact tracing resources, particularly in areas where the case numbers are high and there is a low take up of vaccines. Wirral’s local contact tracing team are now managing all cases within the Birkenhead and Tranmere, and Bidston &amp; St James wards as part of the gradual plans to reintroduce local contact tracing across the Borough for all cases and contacts. The Local-4 programme was recently expanded to include Seacombe and Rock Ferry, alongside the initial two wards.</p> <p>We have worked collaboratively with the Cheshire and Merseyside Hub, Public Health England and the Department of Health and Social Care Local Tracing Partnership forums, to influence and strengthen the local contact tracing system, enabling us to reach people who the national system has been unable to contact and to prioritise and respond to high-risk complex cases and settings. We have also supported national and regional workshops in developing improved processes for contact tracing.</p> <p>We have continued to support health and social care, schools, local businesses, and other settings through intelligence led contact tracing and where a focused outbreak response is appropriate. Wirral’s COVID-19 Hub also continues to provide formal support to local NHS Trusts, helping where contacts of positive inpatients or recently discharged residents are identified and making them known to the national system so that they are eligible to access all support available.</p>

	<p>Once the local contact tracing of all contacts and cases resumes, we will look to gain a better understanding of reasons for failure to engage and utilise this insight to shape communications and support, as well as developing adaptable systems and suitable delivery models for focused contact tracing for areas with high transmission, exploring contact tracing via home visits in specific circumstances.</p> <p>A promotional video was developed this month in partnership with the Council Hub and Community Connectors to promote local contact tracing, and the support available to those who need to self-isolate. The video can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><b>8) Support for Self-Isolation</b>  <b><i>Ensure access to support, including where appropriate financial support, to ensure people who need to self-isolate can do so.</i></b></p>	<p>We have information available on the Council website, Wirral InfoBank and in leaflets distributed by Community Connectors, on self-isolation for a range of target audience cohorts. This includes advice and guidance on accessing the self-isolation payment scheme, wider welfare support and non- financial support available, as well as working with Wirral Chamber and local businesses to support awareness of employer responsibilities in supporting staff to self-isolate when required.</p> <p>Self-isolation support is aligned to local contact tracing, with support needs identified during the customer journey and referrals for practical support managed by a commissioned team of Community Connectors. Wirral continues to process applications for both discretionary and eligibility Test &amp; Trace payments, with guidance and help with applications completed via the dedicated COVID-19 helpline.</p> <p>The national test and trace grant scheme was extended in September to March 2022. As of August 2021, Wirral Council has supported 2,192 residents and families to self-isolate, through provision of financial and/or practical support.</p> <p>We have increased capacity in our local information and advice service to allow better access and support for individuals financially impacted by COVID-19, as well as expanding the Community Connector service to ensure there is improved capacity within our local communities to address the non-direct impacts of COVID-19.</p> <p>Changes from 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021 have meant a reduction in numbers of close contacts obliged to self-isolate, however we have continued to engage with local communities to further our understanding of the breadth and extent of the barriers for self-isolation across our population. Early evaluation of support referrals pre and post 16<sup>th</sup> August</p>

	<p>changes have indicated that the number of people successfully contacted who have declared a support need has remained consistent at around 10%. The COVID-19 Hub, Involve Northwest, Welfare and Food Team, Helpline and Intelligence Service will continue to work together to identify any barriers to self-isolation and opportunities to improve the support offer locally.</p>
<p><b>9) Responding to Variants of Concern (VOC)</b>  <i>Develop robust plans and working with local, regional and national partners to enable surge capacity, to respond to local outbreaks and VOC.</i></p>	<p>Wirral has developed local plans outlining how we would enable surge responses related to testing and enhanced contact tracing within a specific geographical area or targeted at specific common exposures for a select time.</p> <p>Local outbreak and consequence management processes continue to reflect the increased transmissibility of the current dominant variant by triggering immediate outbreak control meetings with input from Public Health England, Testing and Communications to put actions into place as quickly as possible to control and manage the virus.</p> <p>A key part of our response to a VOC is effective communication and community engagement to ensure local communities understand the purpose of the VOC response, and what people need to do to contain the spread of the virus. We will continue to work closely with the National Institute for Health Protection (formerly Public Health England), the Department of Health and Social Care and North-west local authority colleagues to ensure we have agreed local processes in place for managing outbreaks linked to a VOC.</p>
<p><b>10) Compliance, Enforcement and Living with COVID-19 (COVID secure) Work</b>  <i>collaboratively to guide, inform and support local compliance with regulations and restrictions, support local enforcement where necessary, and plan for gradual re-opening of wider society.</i></p>	<p>We have an established system in place to ensure effective partnership working and communication between the COVID-19 Hub and local Environmental Health and Enforcement teams, to promote and support COVID-safe practice across Wirral.</p> <p>We have monitored the operations and compliance of local businesses including responding to reports of non-compliance, conducting over 2,618 visits to local businesses to date; across hospitality, close contact services, supermarkets, retail, and other premises.</p> <p>As legislation changes move to increased emphasis on personal responsibility and health and safety requirements, we will promote the use of the NHS COVID-19 App, to support individuals making informed choices, as well as emphasising to businesses the continued importance of a risk-based approach to learning to live and operate safely during COVID-19 and being prepared to adjust plans if necessary. We will also continue to support local businesses in investigating cases of COVID-19 to identify</p>

	<p>transmission and support workplaces to develop the appropriate control measures to prevent and manage outbreaks, empowering them with best practice guidance.</p> <p>Wirral's Event Safety Advisory Group continues working closely alongside the Public Health team to take a pragmatic approach to safely managing events in Wirral. Guidance from the Public Health team is being used alongside the national guidance, as part of the approach to considering applications for events, with resident safety the utmost priority. Wirral also continues to work across the wider Merseyside Resilience Forum to help ensure that there is a consistency of approach for all event applications across that geographical landscape.</p> <p>Council enforcement, licensing and communications teams will be working with the Hub to promote awareness for businesses, community groups and residents, around the importance of maintaining up to date risk assessments that are regularly reviewed, particularly in preparation for any changes the Autumn/Winter period may bring with ensuring COVID-safe environments.</p>
<p><b>11) Governance, accountability, and resourcing</b>  <i>Establish robust governance structures for decision making with clear accountability and effective resource use.</i></p>	<p>We have adapted the robust emergency response governance system established in March 2020, revising the local COVID-19 governance structure recently to continue to hold organisations to account, taking decisions and agreeing necessary actions to manage and respond effectively to COVID-19.</p> <p>We will continue to actively participate across the Liverpool City Region and Cheshire &amp; Merseyside forums to work collaboratively, and share learning and best practice, as requirements of the COVID-19 response have evolved.</p> <p>The Wirral COVID-19 Hub will be retained until September 2022 to build resilience in our experienced and established local teams. We have developed a resilient team for the Autumn/Winter period through further recruitment during Summer months across the Hub and Health Protection teams.</p> <p>We plan to keep our local capacity and capabilities under constant review, as well as continuing daily intelligence monitoring and taking a flexible and agile approach, to ensure we have a sustainable local system throughout the Autumn/Winter period.</p>

#### 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan is funded via national grant funding with the prime funding source being the Contain Outbreak Management Fund. For the period of June 2020 to March 2022, Wirral has been allocated a total of £14,784,032 - £6,817,546 of which was received after March 2021. Scrutiny of the funding takes place at the COVID-19 Outbreak Strategic Control Cell.

<b>Outbreak Management Support Area</b>	<b>Planned spend to 30 Sept 2022</b>
Hub operations	£3,706,871
Community engagement	£2,119,210
Outbreak Support	£1,383,280
Vaccination-Testing Support	£750,000
Infection Prevention Control service	£690,802
Strategic recovery	£623,366
Communications	£517,535
Supporting Educational Settings	£500,000
Cheshire and Merseyside regional testing hub	£442,762
Intelligence	£208,615
Additional COMF budget for COVID-19 public health activities during 2021/22: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic renewal programmes</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Winter preparedness</li> </ul>	£3,841,592
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,784,033</b>

- 4.2 In addition to COMF, Wirral receives funding for Community Testing. Testing was initially agreed as part of the approved Liverpool City Region Business case in December 2020, covering costs up to 11th April 2021. The national Community Testing programme was then funded from 12th April until 30th June 2021, with a focus on outreach testing. In June 2021, the national programme was extended until 30th September 2021, with the Council being reimbursed by DHSC for incurred costs, capped depending on the agreed delivery model. In September 2021, DHSC confirmed the extension of the Targeted Community Testing programme, and funding until 31 December 2021. Wirral has extended Testing Staff contracts to end of January 2022, as we await national update on plans beyond December.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.
- 5.2 A duty for the management of communicable diseases that present a risk to the health of the public requiring urgent investigation and management by the Council, in conjunction with Public Health England, sit with:
1. The Director of Public Health under the National Health Service Act 2006; and

2. The Chief Environmental Health Officer under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984

5.3 The Director of Public Health has primary responsibility for the health of the local community. This includes being assured that the arrangements to protect the health of the communities that they serve are robust and are implemented through developing and deploying local outbreak management plans. Each authority must make available the necessary resources to investigate and control any outbreak at the request of the Outbreak Control Team. The Council's Local Outbreak Management Plan has been developed in accordance with the Authority's statutory duties and Public Health England guidance.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS**

6.1 This report is for information to Members and as a result there are no resource implications.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 It should be noted that data relating to case rates, hospitalisation and operational management of the COVID-19 response is frequently changing and as a result, some of the information contained within this report is likely to be outdated by the time of publication.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 No direct public consultation or engagement has been undertaken in relation to this report. However, community engagement is a key priority in ensuring an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity. Equality considerations were a key component of the actions noted in 3.5 of this report, however there are no further direct equality implications arising.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct environment and climate implications arising from this report.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** **Julie Webster**  
Director of Public Health  
Wirral Council  
[juliewebster@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:juliewebster@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

None

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Wirral Local Outbreak Management Plan (Revised August 2021)

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> October 2020</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> July 2021</b>
<b>Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee</b>	<b>23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021</b>