



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

**3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022**

|                      |                                  |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|
| <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, as well as the Wirral Plan 2021 - 2026.

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

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee is 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 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 plan can be found on the Wirral Council website: [Wirral Local Outbreak Management Plan](#). A summary of key progress against these priority actions outlined within the Local Outbreak Management Plan is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

- 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 COVID-19 Response: Living with COVID-19:**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> February the Government set out how England will move into a new phase of managing COVID-19 through the [Living with COVID-19 plan](#).

The Plan covers four main pillars:

- a. Removing domestic restrictions while encouraging safer behaviours through public health advice, in common with longstanding ways of managing other infectious illnesses
- b. Protecting the vulnerable through pharmaceutical interventions and testing, in line with other viruses

- c. Maintaining resilience against future variants, including through ongoing surveillance, contingency planning and the ability to reintroduce key capabilities such as mass vaccination and testing in an emergency
- d. Securing innovations and opportunities from the COVID-19 response, including investment in life sciences

3.5 The Government will shortly publish revised COVID-19 outbreak management advice and frameworks, setting out the support that local authorities can expect from regional and national stakeholders and the core policy and tools for contingency response. Local work is already underway to review and update our Wirral Local Outbreak Management Plan. This review will:

- Shift the focus from breaking every chain of transmission to protecting those most vulnerable and at risk.
- Manage COVID-19 locally as part of a wider all hazards approach, using existing health protection frameworks.
- Ensure we retain local capacity and contingency capabilities to deal future uncertainty and a range of possible scenarios for the pandemic.

### 3.6 **Disparities in the risk and outcomes from COVID-19 in Wirral**

The impacts of COVID-19 have not been felt equally – the pandemic has both exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities in Wirral. A [review of the impact of COVID-19 in Wirral](#) found that people living in deprived areas had higher case rates, hospital admissions and mortality from COVID-19 than those living in less deprived areas. While vaccination rates followed the opposite trend with those living in the most deprived areas having the lowest vaccination uptake.

3.7 [National research](#) into COVID-19 related mortality reinforces the fact that the impact of the Covid- 19 pandemic on the most deprived areas in England and Wales has been higher than less deprived areas. The research reviewed “Years of life lost” as a strong measure of premature mortality. There were almost twice as many years of life lost in the very poorest areas of the country compared with the wealthiest. As a region the North-West was the worst affected with the highest excess years of life lost.

3.8 Our ongoing local COVID-19 response must be built on an understanding of local health inequalities and the disparity in impact of COVID-19 upon our local population. This will ensure we are doing all we can locally to mitigate not exacerbate such differences. In addition, through system work to reduce local inequalities we can ensure our local communities are more resilient to manage future pandemics.

## 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 (COMF). 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, and a COMF working group was established in late 2021 to steer further investment to support local communities.

In late December 2021, it was announced that previously received Contain Outbreak Management Funding could be carried forward to be used in the subsequent financial year of 2022-2023.

| <b>Outbreak Management Support Area</b>      | <b>Planned spend</b> |
|--|----------------------|
| Hub operations                               | £3,873,119           |
| Community engagement                         | £2,935,244           |
| Outbreak Support                             | £1,137,434           |
| Vaccination-Testing Support                  | £410,000             |
| Infection Prevention Control service         | £471,590             |
| Communications                               | £492,424             |
| Supporting Educational Settings              | £500,000             |
| Cheshire and Merseyside regional testing hub | £389,833             |
| Housing and Homelessness services            | £279,887             |
| Intelligence                                 | £201,135             |
| Renewal and Resilience                       | £4,093,366           |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>£14,784,032</b>   |

- 4.2 The Renewal and Resilience resource is in the process of being incurred and committed against the following areas below:

| <b>Renewal &amp; Resilience Areas</b> | <b>Planned spend</b> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 0-19 Programme                        | £195,112             |
| Mental Health in Schools              | £75,000              |
| Mental Health                         | £500,000             |
| Charity, Voluntary and Faith (CVF)    | £750,000             |
| Digital Inclusion                     | £1,000,000           |
| Winter Resilience                     | £500,000             |
| Recovery & Renewal Resources          | £373,254             |
| Community Support and Advice          | £700,000             |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>£4,093,366</b>    |

- 4.3 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 Department of Health and Social Care 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. An additional DHSC extension for the programme to March 2022 was agreed in December 2021. On the

21<sup>st</sup> February the Government announced that the Community Testing programme will come to an end on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 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, sits 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.

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

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

## **5.0 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.

## **6.0 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.

## **7.0 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.

## 11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The success of the health and care system in meeting the health and care needs of the community depends on many factors, but the response to the Covid-19 pandemic clearly demonstrates the importance of joined up approaches to strategy development and decision-making across the system and communities. During the pandemic, we saw the brilliance and dedication of the health and care workforce enhanced by the strengthening of existing, and development of new, partnerships.
- 11.2 The case for Community Wealth Building is stronger than ever, with the pandemic having a clear and significant impact on our residents, communities, and businesses. It is vital that everything we do at the Council contributes to the recovery and the development of a resilient and inclusive economy for Wirral.
- 11.3 Community Wealth Building in Wirral focuses on partnerships and collaboration, both within the Council and with external partners and stakeholders, including residents. The Council will work together with partners and residents to develop the place-based partnership arrangements in Wirral that meet the needs of the population, with a focus on reducing health inequalities.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Wirral Response to COVID-19

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Local Outbreak Management Plan (Revised August 2021)

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

| Council Meeting                               | Date                            |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2020   |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 19 <sup>th</sup> November 2020  |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2021   |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2021      |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 7 <sup>th</sup> June 2021       |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 29 <sup>th</sup> July 2021      |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2021 |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2021   |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 16 <sup>th</sup> November 2021  |
| Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee | 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2022   |

