



ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

31 January 2023

REPORT TITLE:	HEALTH PROTECTION STRATEGY 2023-2027
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

REPORT SUMMARY

This report updates the Committee on the partnership work undertaken to develop a Wirral Health Protection Strategy. The pandemic has heightened the profile of health protection, and whilst a challenging period it has provided us with significant learning, and important lessons that Wirral's Health Protection Board need to build on moving forward. As we recover and learn to live with COVID-19 now is the right time to refresh our local strategic and collaborative approach to health protection in Wirral.

An effective local approach to health protection is vital to improve health and wellbeing, protect the local economy, and reduce health inequalities. The Strategy sets out our collective approach to ensuring we have a resilient health protection system in Wirral.

The Health Protection Board's Health Protection Strategy will contribute to the Wirral Plan aims, in particular through promoting 'Active and Healthy Lives'. Supporting Wirral residents and communities to live safely with COVID-19 and protect the health of communities from infectious diseases and environmental hazards is aligned to the ambitions set out in Wirral's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

This report is a key decision because it affects all wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee to approve the Wirral Health Protection Strategy 2023-2027 and Delivery Plan and request the Director of Public Health to report back annually to monitor progress.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the Health Protection Strategy and Delivery Plan for Wirral which places collective responsibility for local system partners to align policy, strategy, and resources wherever possible to protect and improve health of local residents.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Strategic planning helps local system partners work together to establish a clear vision, prioritise resources, determine a clear direction of travel, and to set goals and outcome targets. We could have not developed a local strategy; however, the absence of a post-pandemic plan could exacerbate the burden of ill health, impacting negatively on health outcomes, inequalities, system pressures and the local economy.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fundamental importance of a robust and resilient approach to health protection. During a time of great uncertainty, Wirral Council and system partners demonstrated significant commitment and professionalism in delivering a dynamic, flexible, and comprehensive response that focused on protecting our population's health.
- 3.2 The Strategy provides a framework for Wirral that aims to protect residents from all hazards associated with key health protection threats, and not those solely associated with infectious diseases. It has been co-developed by assessing local health protection needs and the strategic aims and priorities have also importantly been aligned with those of system partners, Wirral's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Wirral Plan.

3.3 Strategic vision, aims and objectives

Our vision is to continue protecting people and communities in Wirral from the impact of infectious diseases and environmental hazards in order to improve health and wellbeing, protect the economy, and reduce health inequalities. With the aim Wirral has a high-performing health protection system that works effectively with local, regional, and national partners. The Strategy sets out how through taking a preventative and proactive local approach we will ensure we:

- Are prepared for future hazards
- Save lives and reduce harm through an effective local response
- Collaborate and build local knowledge, skills and capacity

3.4 Health protection priorities for Wirral

Following consultation with a wide range of local and regional partners and reviewing local intelligence, we have agreed priority areas we consider require collective action. These are:

- Ongoing COVID-19 response, including being prepared for new variants;
- Strengthen infection prevention and control;
- Reduce the impact of antimicrobial resistance (AMR);
- Reduce vaccine preventable diseases amongst adults and children;
- Strengthen preparedness, resilience and response to outbreaks, major incidents and emergencies;
- Reduce health harms from climate and environmental hazards;
- Reduce the harmful impact to health of Tuberculosis and blood-borne viruses, including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

3.5 The priorities identified within this strategy are not new and are recognised system challenges for all local partners. Given our strong history of local collaborative work we have been able at this stage to also develop more detailed Delivery Plans for each priority which set out the case for change, current performance, agreed system priorities, how we will measure success (agreed outcomes), and the accountable lead group for delivery. We have a strong existing local partnership approach to build on with established leads from across sector partners and a number of multi-agency steering groups already in existence to drive progress against our agreed priorities. These include, for example, an Air Quality Steering Group, a local Resilience Partnership Group, and a range of Immunisation Steering Groups. Case studies are included within the report to illustrate our collective approach to delivering this Strategy, and the preventative and proactive approach we will be taking locally.

3.5 Underpinning the delivery of our local Strategy are four strategic enablers:

- insight, intelligence, and evaluation.
- workforce development;
- communication and engagement; and
- clear governance and strong multi-agency partnership working.

The enablers are based upon the important lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic we need to ensure we build on moving forward. Health protection priorities whether related to reducing infectious diseases or environmental hazards can be scientific and specialised. We will locally work together to ensure that we engage the right people in the right way, to translate key messages and ensure everyone understands the role they can play across the identified priorities. With a key focus on driving action and improvement in outcomes.

3.6 Progress against the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be monitored by the Health Protection Board. The Health Protection Board is chaired by the Wirral Director of Public Health and is a sub-group of the Health and Wellbeing Board, consisting of partners from UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Integrated Care Board (ICB), Environmental Health, NHS England (NHSE), Local NHS Trusts, Health and Social Care, Emergency Planning and Public Health. We recognise that how we work together will be crucial to delivering this Strategy. Wirral Health Protection Board partners have agreed guiding principles for collective action which are included within the Strategy.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Strategy places collective responsibility for local system partners to align policy, strategy, and resources wherever possible in protecting and improving health. Oversight and support for the delivery of the local strategy will be provided by existing resources and part funded by the public health grant. Where opportunities arise, we will work with Liverpool City Region, Cheshire and Merseyside and regional partners to provide greater economies to deliver the strategy.
- 4.2 The UKHSA is the responsible national agency for protecting every member of every community from the impact of infectious diseases, and environmental health threats. The UKHSA is currently finalising their three-year strategy and undertaking a review of UKHSA Northwest Health Protection Services. We will engage with this process and identify and jointly support the UKHSA in making a case for adequate Health Protection resources to be deployed across the Northwest and more locally within Wirral.
- 4.3 The Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership five-year strategy includes health protection as a key priority and outlines a commitment that the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System will work closely with local partners to ensure robust health protection arrangements are in place in local areas. We will work with local NHS colleagues to identify appropriate local resource to support the delivery of this strategy.
- 4.4 The Wirral Health Protection Service (funded until March 2024 by the public health grant) will support the delivery of the Strategy. The service is not solely responsible for the delivery of the strategy, as outlined this relies on a collaborative approach across all system partners. Whilst the capacity of the service was reduced September 2022 by more than 50% due to short term COMF funding expiring, the streamlined service provides additional capacity alongside system partners to enable a more proactive approach to delivery of agreed local priorities. Future proposals related to public health funding towards the delivery of this Strategy post March 2024 will be included within a planned review of public health expenditure to be undertaken during 2023.
- 4.5 To support the delivery of the strategy an annual implementation plan will be developed and monitored by the Wirral Health Protection Board. This will include the identification of financial resources and financial risk to delivery. Actions outlined within the strategy are cost savings through the prevention of avoidable harm, for example immunisation to prevent cases, outbreaks and hospitalisations.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Strategy places collective responsibility for local system partners to align policy, strategy, and resources wherever possible in protecting and improving health. There

are no additional resource requirements identified at this time in relation to this decision. Leads from across sector partners and a number of multi-agency steering groups already exists to drive progress against priorities. As outlined the Wirral Health Protection Service (funded until March 2024) will support the delivery of the strategy. Resource requirements and implications will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Wirral Health Protection Board.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 By not identifying and taking action to address local health protection priorities there are a range of direct and indirect risks that impact on individuals, communities, health services and the economy. Local system partners will support honest and open discussions regarding system risk and risk mitigation. These include risk of:

- poor individual and population health outcomes such as ill health, premature mortality or negative impact on quality of life
- insufficient system resilience to support the prevention and management of outbreaks of infectious disease or incidents that affect health
- excessive pressure on emergency, health and social care services and related opportunity cost of ill health
- personal, societal and business economic impact of ill health
- lowered community resilience
- impact on system partners' business continuity measures

7.2 The Wirral Health Protection Service is funded until March 2024 currently, there is a risk that post this date we will not have sufficient local capacity to deliver a proactive and preventative approach. This risk will be managed by system partners and ensuring clear roles and responsibilities and a shared approach to strategy delivery. Future proposals related to public health funding towards the delivery of this Strategy post March 2024 will be included within a planned review of public health expenditure to be undertaken during 2023.

7.3 A risk register will be held, managed and reviewed on a quarterly basis by Wirral's Health Protection Board. Health Protection Board Partners will record relevant risks within their own established processes. Wirral Council's Public Health / Health Protection risks will be recorded within the Directorate Risk Register and where appropriate, within the Corporate Risk Register.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Protecting the health of the people of Wirral from infectious diseases and environmental hazards requires collaborative action therefore this Strategy has been developed following wide consultation and outlines how local partners will work effectively together to achieve our collectively agreed vision, aims and objectives.

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. The Strategy and Delivery Plan seek to positively address equality implications, providing focus on those most vulnerable and at risk.

- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment for the Health Protection Strategy is available at: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Environmental hazards such as air pollution and climate change pose a significant current and future threat to the health of local people. The Strategy and Delivery Plan seek to address these challenges through collective action, with a focus on those most exposed and at risk in order to reduce inequalities in impact.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Health protection interventions not only help to reduce morbidity and premature mortality and improve quality of life, but are cost-saving, both to health services and the wider economy. Protecting people and communities in Wirral from the impact of infectious diseases and environmental hazards will not only improve health and wellbeing but also protect local business and the economy. Many infectious diseases and environmental hazards disproportionately affect our most vulnerable residents, children and older people, and those living in less affluent areas; therefore, a robust and effective local health protection response will be vital in order to reduce health inequalities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Wirral Health Protection Strategy 2023-27 and Delivery Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-27
<https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/strategies-and-plans/wirral-health-wellbeing-strategy-2022-27/>

Wirral Intelligence Service – Health Protection
<https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/strategies-and-plans/health-protection/>

Wirral Plan 2021-26
<https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/strategies-and-plans/wirral-plan-2021-2026/>

Living safely with respiratory infections including COVID-19

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-safely-with-respiratory-infections-including-covid-19>

Wirral Health Protection Challenges: A call to action

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50056549/Wirral%20Health%20Protection%20Challenges.pdf>

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee
Terms of Reference

c) all Public Health functions (in co-ordination with those functions reserved to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's statutory health functions).

e) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:

(i) furthering public health objectives through the development of partnerships with other public bodies, community, voluntary and charitable groups and through the improvement and integration of health and social care services.

g) in respect of the Health and Social Care Act 2006, the functions to:

(iii) investigate major health issues identified by, or of concern to, the local population.

(v) scrutinise the impact of interventions on the health of local inhabitants, particularly socially excluded and other minority groups, with the aim of reducing health inequalities.

(vi) maintain an overview of health service delivery against national and local targets, particularly those that improve the public's health.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date