



WIRRAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

23 March 2023

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

REPORT SUMMARY

This report updates the Wirral Health and Wellbeing Board 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 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.

Wirral's Health Protection Strategy will contribute to the Wirral Plan aims, in particular '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.

The Health Protection Strategy supports the delivery of Wirral's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, particularly the priorities to 'Strengthen health and care action to address differences in health outcomes' and to 'Create safe and healthy places for people to live that protect health and promote a good standard of living'.

This is not a key decision and relates to all Wards.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to endorse the Wirral Health Protection Strategy 2023-2027 and Delivery Plan. An annual report will provide the Board with an update on 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 in protecting and improving health of 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 health 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, demonstrating its role as an essential element of a quality healthcare system. 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;
- Help to 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 Delivery Plans for each priority are included which sets out the case for change, current performance, agreed system priorities, how we will measure success (agreed outcomes), and the accountable lead group for delivery. A number of steering groups have been identified as already existing or will be established 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.

3.6 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.

3.7 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.

3.8 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.

3.9 Progress against the Strategy and Delivery Plan will be monitored by the Health Protection Board. The Health Protection Board is chaired by Wirral's Director of Public Health, 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. There are no direct financial implications in relation to this decision. Taking action to identify and address health protection priorities aims to help reduce the financial and economic implications of ill health on the local system.

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. Wirral's Health Protection Service (funded until March 2024) will work with system partners to support the delivery of the Strategy.

6.2 There are no additional resource requirements identified at this time in relation to this decision.

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 Health and Wellbeing Board in accordance with Sections (a, b, c) of its Terms of Reference:

The Health and Wellbeing Board will not be responsible for directly commissioning services, but will provide oversight, strategic direction and coordination of the following activities:

- a) To develop a shared understanding of the needs of the local community through the development of an agreed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
- b) To seek to meet those needs through leading on the ongoing development of a Health & Wellbeing Strategy
- c) To provide a local governance structure for local planning and accountability of health and wellbeing related outcomes

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Wirral Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee	31 January 2023