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# Establishment of a Berkshire West Health Protection & Resilience Partnership Board (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading)

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<b>Report being considered by:</b>	Health and Wellbeing Board
<b>On:</b>	2 May 2024
<b>Report Author:</b>	Charlotte Pavitt, Interim Consultant in Public Health
<b>Report Sponsor:</b>	John Ashton, Interim Director of Public Health
<b>Item for:</b>	Decision

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## 1. Purpose of the Report

This report proposes the establishment of a Berkshire West Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board to provide assurance that robust arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).

## 2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to endorse the establish a Berkshire West Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board (HPRPB) to provide assurance that robust arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).
- 2.2 The Board are asked to accept the drafted Terms of Reference for the Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board (Appendix A).

## 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Health protection includes activities that seek to prevent, or reduce the harm caused by, communicable (infectious) diseases and minimise the health impact from environmental hazards such as chemicals and radiation.
- 3.2 Local Authorities were given an additional health protection duty under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2013, made under section 6C of the National Health Service Act 2006. This was in addition to the existing health protection functions and three statutory powers delegated to local authorities under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act (1984), the Health and Social Care Act (2008), the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and the Food Safety Act (1990). Local Authorities are also a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and responsible for coordinating and agreeing plans and strategies in Emergency Planning Resilience and Response.
- 3.3 The additional mandatory duty given to local authorities is to ensure that there are plans in place to protect the health of the population. Directors of Public Health, acting on behalf of their Local Authorities, and working in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, have a critical role in protecting the health of their population, both in

terms of helping to prevent threats arising and in ensuring appropriate responses when things do go wrong. It is expected that Local Authorities and partners across Berkshire West work to ensure that threats to health are understood, prepared for, and (when necessary) responded to.

- 3.4 Temporary working arrangements were established in Berkshire West during the pandemic, which provided a mechanism for delivering against national guidance on health protection (with a focus on COVID-19). There is now a need to establish a permanent governance structure to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West.

## **4. Supporting Information**

### **Aims**

- 4.1 The aim of the Berkshire West Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board is to provide assurance to the three Health & Wellbeing Boards (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading), the Unified Executive (Strategic Board of the Berkshire West Place Based Partnership) and the Berkshire Resilience Group that robust arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West

### **Objectives**

- 4.2 The objectives of the Board are to:
- be assured, through a reporting framework submitted by each organisation, that partners are undertaking effective and efficient discharge of duties under the Health and Social
  - Care Act 2021, to protect the health of the population; provide strategic direction for health protection in Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading);
  - horizon scan for emerging risks and then advise and/or escalate to partner organisations to mitigate risks;
  - provide a forum for the scrutiny of the provision of all health protection duties across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).

### **Work programme**

- 4.3 To deliver these aims and objectives, the Board will produce an annual work programme. Further details of the work programme are included in the proposed Terms of Reference (Appendix A).

### **Ways of Working**

- 4.4 The Board will ensure that effective consultation and engagement takes place as part of its work programme and assurance role.
- 4.5 The Board will work to ensure coordination of strategic and operational response across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).
- 4.6 The Board will ensure that there is a focus on reducing health inequalities and that health protection issues of underserved groups are addressed.

## 5. Options Considered

- 5.1 Establish a Berkshire West Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board (HPRPB) to provide assurance that robust arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).
- 5.2 Do nothing and keep temporary arrangements in place
- 5.3 No other options were considered

## 6. Proposal(s)

- 6.1 It is recommended that a Berkshire West Health Protection & Resilience Partnership Board (HPRPB) should be established to exercise the strategic and mandatory assurance functions related to Health Protection (as outlined above).

## 7. Conclusion(s)

- 7.1 Health protection covers a broad range of activities (see Appendix A). There is a need to establish a permanent governance structure to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading) from a range of risks to health.
- 7.2 The Director(s) of Public Health in Berkshire West are responsible for the strategic leadership of health protection across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading). The Director(s) of Public Health, on behalf of the Local Authorities and partnership organisations, must be assured that the arrangements to protect the health of the local community are robust and are implemented appropriately.

## 8. Consultation and Engagement

A key role for the Health Protection Board will be to ensure that effective consultation and engagement takes place as part of its work programmes and assurance role.

## 9. Appendices

Appendix A – Terms of Reference

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### Background Papers:

N/A

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### Health and Wellbeing Priorities Supported:

The proposals will support the following Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities:

- Reduce the differences in health between different groups of people
- Support individuals at high risk of bad health outcomes to live healthy lives
- Help families and young children in early years
- Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all children and young people
- Promote good mental health and wellbeing for all adults

The impact of Covid 19 is still very much being realised today. The Health Protection board will provide the necessary infrastructure to assure the HWBB that threats to health are understood, prepared for, and (when necessary) responded to. In addition, the proposals contained in this report will support the above Health and Wellbeing Strategy priorities in

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reducing health inequalities in relation to health protection risk and support individuals at risk of poor health outcomes through vaccination and screening programmes for example.

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