

READING HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Date of Meeting	15 March 2024
Title	Establishment of a Berkshire West Health Protection & Resilience Partnership Board (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading)
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report author	Martin White
Job title	Consultant in Public Health
Organisation	Berkshire West Public Health/ Reading Borough Council
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a Berkshire West Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board (HPRPB) is established to provide assurance that robust arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West that is West Berkshire Council, Wokingham Borough Council and Reading Borough Council. 2. That the Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board should report quarterly to each of the three Health & Wellbeing Boards across Berkshire West and produce an annual report to both these boards and the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership's Unified Executive to provide a clear analysis of risk, mitigation, and incidents. 3. That a Director of Public Health should chair the proposed Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board. 4. That the drafted Terms of Reference for the Health Protection and Resilience Partnership Board attached in Appendix A are accepted.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. During the COVID-19 pandemic temporary working arrangements were established across the three councils of Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading) which provided a mechanism for delivering against national guidance on health protection with a focus on COVID-19.
- 1.2. There is now a need to establish a permanent governance structure to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading). This paper describes the board and outlines recommendations for the governance structure.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Health Protection includes activities that seek to prevent, or reduce the harm caused by infectious diseases and minimise the health impact from environmental hazards such as chemicals and radiation.

- 2.2. 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.
- 2.3. 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 their partners across Berkshire West will co-operate effectively to ensure that threats to health are understood, prepared for, and when necessary, responded to.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. In view of these duties there is a need to establish a Berkshire West Health Protection & Resilience Partnership Board (HPRPB) to exercise the strategic and mandatory assurance functions related to the Public Health Protection function.
- 3.2. The aim of the HPRPB is to provide assurance to the three Health & Wellbeing Boards for West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading and to the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership's Unified Executive and the Berkshire Resilience Group that robust arrangements are in place to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West.
- 3.3. The objectives of the HPRPB 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 action across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).
 - horizon scan for emerging risks and then advise and/or escalate to partner organisations to mitigate risks to health.
 - provide a forum for the scrutiny of the provision of all health protection duties across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).
- 3.4. 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 which are attached in Appendix A.
- 3.5. The HPRPB will ensure that effective consultation and engagement takes place as part of its work programme and assurance role.
- 3.6. The HPRPB will work to ensure coordination of strategic and operational response across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).
- 3.7. The HPRPB will ensure that there is a focus on reducing health inequalities and that health protection issues of underserved groups are addressed.

- 3.8. The HPRPB itself will not hold a budget. However, its role in bringing key partners together and overseeing the health protection agenda across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading) will ensure effectiveness and value for money of work programmes.
- 3.9. The HPRPB will report on a quarterly basis to the three Health & Wellbeing Boards (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading). It will also produce an annual report to the three Health & Wellbeing Boards and to the Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership's Unified Executive and the Berkshire Resilience Group to provide a clear analysis of risk, mitigation, and incidents.
- 3.10. It is proposed that a Director of Public Health should chair the Board. This Director of Public Health will also sit on the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Executive Group and co-chair the Thames Valley Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP), to provide a strong strategic link to other key statutory organisations within the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response system.
- 3.11. Health protection covers a broad range of activities as can be seen in the proposed workplan set out in section 10 of the Terms of Reference attached as Appendix A. There is a need to establish a permanent governance structure for this programme to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading) from a range of risks to health.
- 3.12. The Directors of Public Health in Berkshire West are responsible for the strategic leadership of health protection across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading). The Directors of Public Health, on behalf of their 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.

4. Contribution to Reading's Health and Wellbeing Strategic Aims

- 4.1. The work of the Berkshire West Health Protection and Resilience Board contributes to all of the priorities in the Berkshire West Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2021-30 by ensuring the protection of health for all the groups identified in the strategy.

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

- 5.1. There are no environmental or climate implications arising from the decision because it does not relate to mitigation or adaptation to climate change.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. Not applicable

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. Not applicable.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

- 8.1. Not applicable.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The statutory duties and legal implications are set out in the report above under Section 2 paragraphs 2.1 to 2.3.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1. The Director of Public Health from Wokingham Borough Council will be the Chair of the Board and the Terms of Reference state that Wokingham will also provide the secretariat which will be covered from within existing budgets.

11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. The board started meeting informally on a regularly basis as an officer led group from September 2023 and is currently in the process of formally instituting the meetings with papers currently submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Boards for Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix A – draft Terms of Reference

Appendix A

Berkshire West Health Protection & Resilience Partnership Board (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading)

Draft Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Health and Social Care Act 2012 states that upper tier and unitary local authorities have planned duties to protect the health of the population. Directors of Public Health 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. Directors of Public Health need to have the appropriate specialist health protection skills available to them to carry out these functions.
- 1.2 In the paper “Health Protection in Local Government” published in August 2012, the Department of Health suggested that Local Authorities establish a local forum/partnership for health protection issues, chaired by the Director of Public Health, to review plans and issues that need escalation.
- 1.3 The definition of health protection refers to the protection of the public from hazards which damage their health and limiting impact where exposure cannot be avoided. Health protection includes weather events, infectious diseases, conflict, terrorism and state security, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incidents, and cyber security.
- 1.4 The Berkshire West Health Protection & Resilience Partnership Board (HPRPB) will provide a forum for the Director(s) of Public Health and partner agencies to undertake the duties referred to above to protect the health of the population.
- 1.5 Topics covered will include:
 - Infection prevention and control including healthcare associated infections
 - Pandemic Influenza
 - New and emerging infections, including zoonoses, but not animal health
 - Immunisation programmes
 - Environmental hazards and control, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear
 - Emergency preparedness and response
 - Communicable disease control including the management of outbreaks
 - Infectious disease related to sexual health
 - Tuberculosis (TB)
 - Blood borne viruses including Hepatitis
 - NHS & Public Health Emergency preparedness, response and resilience
 - Screening programmes – cancer, infectious disease and others
 - Climate change and emergency preparedness

2. Constitution

2.1 The Board is established as a partnership body of both the three Health and Wellbeing Boards (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading), the Unified Executive (Strategic Board of the Berkshire West Place Based Partnership) and the Berkshire Resilience Group.

3. Membership

3.1 Core membership of the Board will comprise:

- Director(s) of Public Health representing West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham local authorities
- Consultant(s) in Public Health, from each local authority (or agreed substitute where positions are not filled)
- Head of Emergency Planning Unit, from each local authority
- Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) Partnership Manager
- Environmental Health Manager, from each local authority
- Consultant in Communicable Disease Control/Consultant in Health Protection, UKHSA
- Integrated Place Based Partnership Board Representative
- ICB Berkshire West Infection Control Lead
- South East Area Team NHSE Board Emergency Planning Resilience and Response Manager
- South East Area Team NHSE Immunisation & Screening Manager/Consultant

4. Appointments

4.1 Appointments to the Board will be approved by the Partnership through the authority delegated to individual members from their host partner organisations.

5. Chair Person

5.1 The Chair of the Board will be a Director of Public Health from the Berkshire West area. The Vice Chair will be a nominated Consultant in Public Health.

6. Arrangements for the Conduct of Business

Chairing the meetings

6.1 The Director of Public Health will act as Chair. In the Chair's absence, the Vice Chair will take on this role.

Quorum

6.2 A quorum will be the Chair or Vice Chair and at least three other members from across a range of organisations.

Frequency of meetings

6.3 Meetings will be held quarterly as routine, with additional meetings called if demand dictates.

Frequency of attendance by core members

6.4 Core members are expected to attend all meetings where reasonably possible. Where a member cannot attend, a nominated deputy with delegated authority should attend on behalf of that member.

Co-option of members

6.5 Members may be elected to the Board on an ad hoc basis as agreed by the Board.

Declarations of Interest

6.6 If any member has an interest, pecuniary or otherwise, in any matter and is present at the meeting at which the matter is under discussion, he/she will declare that interest as early as possible and shall not participate in the discussion. The Chair will have the power to request that member to withdraw until the group have given due consideration to the matter. All declarations of interest will be included in the minutes.

Urgent matters

6.7 Any urgent matters arising between meetings will be dealt with by Chair's action after agreement from three other members of the group.

Secretariat support

6.8 Secretarial support will be provided by the office of the Chair.

7. Conduct of business

7.1 Agendas and papers will be circulated to members at least seven days before the meeting.

7.2 Minutes of the meeting will be circulated as soon as possible after the meeting.

8. Authority

8.1 The Board is endorsed by 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 to ensure a coordinated approach to the health protection duties of the Director(s) of Public Health covering the Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading) area. All decisions made within the Board are through the authority delegated to individual members of the Board from their host partner organisations, and the governance of such decisions is through the mechanisms of these organisations.

9. Aim and objectives

Aim

9.1 The aim of the 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, in line with the duties under the Health and Social Care Act 2021, to protect the health of residents across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).

Objectives

9.2 The objectives of the Board are to:

- 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;
- 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 a forum for the scrutiny of the provision of all health protection duties across Berkshire West (West Berkshire, Wokingham, Reading).

10. Work Programme

10.1 To deliver their aims and objectives, the Board will produce an annual work programme which will include work:

- To ensure effective health protection surveillance information is obtained, assessed and used appropriately so that appropriate action can be taken where necessary.
- To coordinate and agree plans and strategies in Emergency Planning Resilience and Response for public health responsibilities, within Berkshire West Councils, as a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- To gain assurance that plans and strategies in Emergency Planning Resilience and Response for both NHS and public health responsibilities, are in place and appropriately tested.
- To support partners in delivering the strategies for the commissioning and implementation of national immunisation programmes, infection prevention and control and national screening programmes.
- Across partnerships to gain assurance of standards in the commissioning of national immunisation programmes, infection prevention and control and national screening programmes. These standards will be based on national standards, whenever feasible, and be applied to the Berkshire West context.
- To monitor the performance of each provider, commissioner and stakeholder in respect of;
 - National immunisation programmes
 - Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response
 - Health Care Associated Infections (incidence, incidents and action being taken to address)
 - Infection prevention and control compliance to relevant standards, including sexually transmitted infection
 - National screening programmes
 - Prevention and control of environmental hazards and communicable diseases
 - Public Health National Outcomes Framework
- To manage emerging risks including delivering effective commissioning and provision of health and social care for;
 - Infection Prevention and Control failure in compliance with Health and Social Care Act 2008 Code of Practice
 - Immunisations: failure to attain targets
 - Screening: failure to attain targets
 - Sexually Transmitted Infection: failure to attain targets
 - Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response: failure to plan or respond adequately
 - Environmental hazards and communicable disease control: failure to contain incidents
 - Health Care Associated Infections: overview and assurance through reporting from partnership groups

10.2 The Board will gain assurance that plans are in place to ensure prompt and effective cascade of major health protection alerts (including Chief Medical Officer cascade, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) alerts, and other major alerts) to appropriate audiences and to confirm that systems are in place for responding to such alerts.

10.3 The Board will contribute, where appropriate, to the Berkshire West Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy.

- 10.4 The Board will escalate risk to either the relevant Council(s), partner organisations, Unified Executive (Strategic Board of the Berkshire West Place Based Partnership) and/or the Health and Wellbeing Board(s), as appropriate and dependent on the risk, for resolution and assurance that appropriate action has been taken.

11. Relationships and Reporting

- 11.1 Minutes and recommendations of any Sub-Committees/Groups of the Board will be formally recorded and submitted to the Board.
- 11.2 The Board will produce formal minutes of meetings and a copy of those minutes will be available to the Health & Wellbeing Boards upon request.
- 11.3 The Chair, either directly or via a Director colleague, will provide verbal updates as appropriate to the Health & Wellbeing Boards.
- 11.4 The board will provide assurance to the South East UKHSA representative in relation to Emergency Planning Resilience and Response.

12. Monitoring of Compliance

- 12.1 Compliance is monitored by submission of an annual Health Protection Report to the Unified Executive (Strategic Board of the Berkshire West Place Based Partnership) and the Health & Wellbeing Boards (West Berkshire, Wokingham and Reading).

13. Review of Terms of Reference

- 13.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.