



# Scrutiny Committee Report

Committee	<b>POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE</b>
Date	<b>5 DECEMBER 2022</b>
Title	<b>PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP</b>
Report of	<b>DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SIMON BRYANT</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Island's Public Health function is delivered through a formal partnership agreement between Isle of Wight Council (IWC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) covering the period Sept 2019 -Sept 2025
2. The partnership enables a focus on local island issues under the specialist leadership of senior quality public health staff; as well as providing senior public health leadership to the Council, health and social care system and a wide range of statutory and community partners for the benefit of the population
3. In September 2022 a Local Government Association (LGA) peer review was undertaken to ensure the partnership and outcomes continue to meet the needs of the island. The reviewers found clear evidence of significant progress in providing safe, high quality commissioned public health services to the IOW community and strong recognition of the value of the Public Health Partnership with potential moving forwards for development

## RECOMMENDATION

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| 4. That Cabinet agrees to the continuation of the Public Health Partnership in line with the agreement. |
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## BACKGROUND

### **Introduction**

5. In September 2019 a Public Health partnership between Isle of Wight Council (IWC) and Hampshire County Council (HCC) was agreed to run for 5 years. This followed a period of 18 months of review and working together between both Councils as part of this a report that set out the key findings from an analysis of the Public Health function was completed.

6. Prior to the formal partnership in 2018 the Public Health function was not performing well, and recruitment of specialist staff had not been successful leading to the Council not fulfilling its public health duties. A number of recommendations were made under the following themes and at the time of the formal partnership the majority of those critical to the IWC Public Health function had been met, however, further progress has been made to ensure a strong Public Health function leading to a position where the Council can now proudly demonstrate its leadership of public health for the Island. Progress against the remaining recommendations is reviewed here:
  - (a) Public health grant and budget
  - (b) Senior staff time and team capacity
  - (c) Public health intelligence
  - (d) Public health clinical services
7. Since 2018 and the formal partnership the Public Health senior leadership and IWC Corporate Management team worked together to address the keys issues with further developments taking place after the formal partnership started. This relationship has continued, and its success is demonstrated by the strong partnership working between the Director of Public Health (DPH) and Public Health Management Team with members of CMT, Cabinet and partners on the IOW further demonstrated during the pandemic.
8. As a result of the partnership, IWC is now delivering its mandated public health duties and has safe, high quality commissioned public health services in place for residents.
9. Although some public health outcomes still require improvement, the work undertaken through the Public Health Partnership to date has laid firm foundations that I enables and facilitate further work to enable this to happen.
10. Through the partnership the public health team has strengthened relationships with the IOW Trust, Integrated Care System, voluntary sector and has brought benefits to IWC due to more effective joint working with other agencies including strengthening with Police and Fire. Feedback from partners demonstrates the benefits of the public health partnership and has improved the reputation of the Council with regard to Public Health leadership.
11. The partnership enables a focus on local island issues under the specialist leadership of senior quality public health staff; as well as providing senior public health leadership to the ICS for the benefit of the population. Neither of which were possible prior to the partnership due to the challenges being dealt with by the Council with regard to public health.

## **LGA review**

12. In September 2022, the public health work and arrangements were subject to an LGA review to inform Council thinking on policy, prioritisation and budgeting to best deliver an effective public health function for Isle of Wight residents and provider external peer assessment for the council.

13. Led by the LGA Improvement Team, reviewers found clear evidence of significant progress in providing safe, high quality commissioned public health services to the IOW community and strong recognition of the value of the Public Health Partnership with potential moving forwards for development.
14. Importantly, the independent review provided reassurance that the Partnership provided good leadership for public health with
  - (i) clear structures and processes are in place to support the public health function,
  - (b) teams are working well to understand the needs of residents and using intelligence to shape decision making,
  - (c) team skills and capacity have been strengthened to deliver public health corporate priorities
  - (d) Island outcomes are improving through strong public health leadership
15. The report noted that strategic leadership for improving health and tackling health inequalities is provided by the Director of Public Health through engagement with members, partners and through representation at key Island and ICS boards with further work to refresh the role of partners with regard to public health actions.
16. A refresh of the Public Health Strategy, aligned to the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the IOW Health & Care Plan, with system wide goals will help to deliver a unified public health vision for the Island with clear priorities visible to partners
17. The Public Health will continue to promote a culture of quality improvement within service provision by continuous monitoring of the public health service outcomes and working with partners to embed public health approaches in the system.
18. The Public Health Team lead the work of the Island Health Protection Board which undertakes key functions of communicable disease oversight, assurance, and escalation, bringing together partners from across the health protection system. This Board met for the first time, in its new format and with a renewed scope covering a broader range of health protection matters, in September 2022.
19. The Public health team with partners will look to build on community engagement and co-production initiatives to shape council priorities. This includes where appropriate championing place-based health improvement work, for example the PEACH program, underpinned by local engagement strategies to gain insight into local areas of need encouraging delivery of more local outcomes.
20. Staff recruitment and retention across all sectors on the Island comes with significant challenge, with specialist Public Health workforce being no exception. This is being addressed through the Public Health Workforce Development Strategy and aligned work plan provide a platform for strengthening the skills and practice of our public health staff, with developments such as Public Health Apprentices. This plan aligns across the Island and Hampshire to fully realise the potential of the partnership.
21. The review supports the partnership with Hampshire as it enables a focus on local island issues under the specialist leadership of senior quality public health staff; as well as providing senior public health leadership to the Council, health and social

care system and a wide range of statutory and community partners for the benefit of the population.

## CONTEXT

### **Public Health Grant and Budget**

22. The Public Health grant is allocated to Local Authorities (LA) to use to discharge their duty to improve and protect the health of the population and to reduce health inequalities. A Unitary Authority undertakes many activities and has wide reaching opportunities to shape their services in a way that will support delivery of these objectives requiring strong public health leadership.
23. While it is recognised and accepted that in order to deliver this duty, the Public Health grant can be used for activity across the Council. However the Department of Health and Social Care, have a role in assuring that the Public Health local grant is used appropriately, are clear that the first call on the grant must be to deliver the mandated and prescribed Public Health services and services with prime function of public health.
24. The public health ringfenced grant for the IOW has been reviewed and most recently has been aligned to the key areas of public health with an increased budget for smoking cessation, weight management and public mental health. In 2020/21 a longer-term financial plan was developed putting the budget on a stable foundation this includes resolving long term budget disputes and Agenda for Change Pay uplifts
25. A robust Service Level Agreement (SLA) to monitor public health outcomes against use of the Public Health Grant in other areas of the Council has been developed and implemented.
26. The Director of Public Health and the Management Team have clear oversight of all commissioned public health services and robust processes are in place to support commissioning which has taken time to develop and implement. The partnership has enabled rapid transfer of the substance misuse service; mobilisation of a new Specialist Sexual and Reproductive Health service; procurement and mobilisation of Healthy Lifestyles Isle of Wight and mobilisation of the 0-19 Public Health Nursing Service ensuring that safe high quality mandated public health services which align with the conditions of the Public Health grant are now in place.

### **Public Health Leadership**

27. One of the key concerns on development of the partnership was the IOW Council not fulfilling all the statutory and mandatory public health functions. Of particular concern was the requirements to provide public health advice to the NHS and planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to public health. Without a specialist public health this was not possible.
28. The Corporate Plan allows for scrutiny of public health action and review of performance against important indicators. The development of an overall public

health strategy, joint strategic needs assessment and subject specific planning have led to improved policy and service development.

29. During the COVID-19 Pandemic we have seen the benefit of working together and the ability of the IOW Council to provide public health leadership in a public health emergency. The strength of the joint senior team was essential to manage the complexity of the response to this global pandemic. Whilst the pandemic stretched the senior team, the joint working was of benefit to both Councils through increased efficiencies and more focused roles e.g., testing and tracing. During the pandemic the Public Health team led with others in the Council on the rollout of the first COVID-19 app on the Isle of Wight bringing learning to both Councils.
30. The Partnership has provided the Faculty of Public Health approved senior public health leadership to IWC Public Health team members to enable them to contribute productively and safely to the pandemic response including ensuring public health services were able to operate safely, providing robust epidemiological information to partners, supporting the social care and education response to prevention and management of outbreaks, and contributing to impactful communication campaigns.
31. Continued improvement of public health outcomes is very much dependent upon a strong public health function. With public health leadership we are seeing NHS partners other and partner agencies working on the Isle of Wight demonstrating that they are working together on the key outcomes to address the priorities.
32. Through local senior public health leadership further work has developed across the Council including with:
  - The Regeneration team to improve health through place
  - Adult Social Care on infection control and development of the Integrated Care Systems (ICS)
  - Community Safety on Domestic Abuse prevention and implementation of the new Domestic Abuse act
  - Corporate resources on the Health and Wellbeing of Staff
  - Children's Services on early help
  - Emergency Planning on local extreme weather plans
33. A strong Public Health Strategy aligned to the Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy and the IOW Health & Care Plan, will continue inform the Council's Corporate Plan. System wide goals will deliver a unified public health vision for the Island with clear priorities visible to partners.

### **Team Capacity**

34. The partnership has delivered effective senior leadership and specialist staff as set out above which enables the Isle of Wight Council to fulfil its public health duties. In addition, it has benefited positively the Council with the increased capacity of senior staff who are able to focus on key areas of work and embed strongly in the ICS. This has met the technical and leadership capability within the public health function which wasn't present at all levels. This ensured the IWC Public Health team has permanent professionally qualified public health consultant resource which was previously lacking.

35. The development of the IOW public health plan has enabled clear team and personal objectives to be developed and has resulted in good progress across a number of domains of public health including development of Early Help, development and publication of the Physical Activity Strategy with Energise Me and a resumed focus on partnership working to take forward other important work including smoking cessation in pregnancy, Partnership Education Attainment and Children's Health (PEACH) programme and work to support people challenged by co-occurring mental health conditions and substance misuse. There has been a renewed focus on mental health which will be increasingly important to maintain in the recovery from COVID-19.
36. The Island Public Health team has stabilised and developed since the staff restructure which took place in August 2019. Work is ongoing, led by the Workforce Development Group, to further develop individual skillsets using a strength-based approach with recognition of the importance of forging a collective team culture.
37. Due to the challenge of recruitment to specialist posts on the IOW some of the staff have been jointly based in Hampshire, for example, specialist health protection practitioners and consultants in public health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, remote working has facilitated the way that staff based in different geographical locations work together effectively. The LGA review supports this approach and suggests further close working together of both teams.
38. Further work has been undertaken as part of the workforce development programme to develop excellent public health leadership skills to ensure delivery of the public health agenda. This includes additional study and continuing professional development in line with skills expected from public health professionals.
39. Risk management and business processes have improved with an effective public health risk register now in place and monitored by the joint Management Team. The Isle of Wight Public Health Strategy was published in 2020 and progress against objectives is monitored through monthly team meetings and reported to Public Health Management Team on a quarterly basis.
40. Through the partnership investment from Health Education England, we have been able to increase the hours of the public health Workforce Development lead for the Isle of Wight working with the council workforce team. This is enabling the team to be supported to develop and progress professionally in line with public health need and IWC corporate needs.

### **Public Health Intelligence**

41. Many of the challenges regarding the IOW public health intelligence function, including skills development, have been resolved. Matrix working with Hampshire analysts has improved the productivity of the Public Health intelligence function on the Island. The two Isle of Wight Council Public Health Intelligence analysts have increased their specialist skill working together in a public health intelligence team.
42. Priority will continue to be placed on using Intelligence to shape thinking and drive action with an updated core JSNA which has been delivered in 2022.

43. By working together within the partnership, access to insight work has supported the IOW public health team. Increased use of targeted social media to reach specific communities on the Island presents a further opportunity to deliver impactful public health behaviour change campaigns.

### **Risks and mitigations**

44. Whilst there are still a range of Public Health outcomes that need to improve for the Isle of Wight population including male life expectancy, smoking related deaths, low childhood immunisation rates the increased oversight by the strategy work programme, together with safe and high quality commissioned public health services will enable these to be addressed, however this will be a long-term ambition.
45. As with other areas, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and widened existing inequalities in physical and mental health for residents of the Isle of Wight. It will be important to continue to work at system level to influence and support improvements in these outcomes.
46. Continued success is fundamentally a shared responsibility with NHS partners but is very much dependent upon a strong Public Health function over time. Since the development of the Public Health Strategy, NHS partners and other partner agencies working on the Isle of Wight have begun to demonstrate that they are working together on the key outcomes to address the priorities.
47. Work is ongoing to refresh and test partner responsibilities to take account of changes to planning and accountability brought about by the new ICS governance structures. Relationships with ICS partners are being fostered which will embed public health thinking across the wider system.

### **System benefits**

48. The Partnership between Hampshire County Council and Isle of Wight Council has brought a wider benefit to the Isle of Wight and the system. With the majority of the Pan Hampshire area being led by one Director of Public Health and his team has meant an increased influence with partners and for issues of importance to the Isle of Wight.
49. When considering the work required with NHS England and UKHSA (UK Health Security Agency - successor body to PHE) and the Integrated Care System regarding public health matters including health protection, screening and immunisations and population health management there have been considerable benefits to leading this at scale for the benefit of the population in line with the Council's responsibilities.
50. When commissioning public health services as a team we have been able to align services and bring cost efficiencies to areas with the same service provider whilst also retaining the ability to meet the needs of Isle of Wight residents. This has improved outcomes for the whole population.

### **CONCLUSION**

51. The Public Health function on the Isle of Wight is in a markedly stronger position in 2022 than in October 2018 and has continued to improve following the inception of the formal Public Health Partnership. The LGA review gives evidence that Public

Health mandated functions are being effectively delivered through a range of commissioned services with robust monitoring of activity, outcomes and risks. The public health budget is being used appropriately and the team have good support from IWC finance colleagues.

52. The Public Health team has stabilised, and morale has improved. The Workforce Development team continue to support staff to develop professionally and as a team.
53. Continuation of the Public Health Partnership will facilitate further progress and support the further improvement of public health outcomes for Isle of Wight residents.

#### APPENDICES ATTACHED

54. Appendix 1 - Since the inception of the partnership there has been a focus on ensuring safe, high quality public health services. The service provision was very challenged and needed focused attention and forensic action to improve quality, safety and outcomes. All mandated services are now in place as described in Appendix 1.

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

55. Cabinet was presented with a report on 11 July 2019: Strategic Partnership – Public Health Services.  
<https://iow.moderngov.co.uk/Data/Cabinet/20190711/Agenda/PAPER%20E.pdf>

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