

# CUMBRIA HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

**Meeting date: 10 March 2023**

**From: Director of Public Health**

## **CUMBRIA PUBLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE UPDATE**

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 *This report gives the Health and Wellbeing Board an update on the development of the Cumbria Public Health Alliance (PHA), its links to the Locality Forums and the mechanisms for ensuring two-way influence and dialogue between the Board and each locality through agreed strategic aims and locally identified priorities.*
- 1.2 *This report updates members on the recent meetings of the Public Health Alliance, held on 19 December 2022 via Microsoft Teams and was the first meeting of the alliance since the responsibility for outbreak engagement board function ended.*
- 1.3 *Members are asked to note the Alliance agenda which had the following items, which were discussed together:*
- *Future shape and function of Public Health Alliance – Options;*
  - *Parish and Town Councils.*

### **2.0 LINKS TO THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY**

- 2.1 The LGA review of the Health and Wellbeing System clearly identifies the PHA role in respect of influencing the preventative elements of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 2.2 The PHA has had significant input into the Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Strategy and is an integral part of the overall delivery plan.
- 2.3 The PHA is now receiving regular performance updates in respect of assigned outcomes in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy Delivery Plan.

### 3.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 ***That the Board notes this update from the Cumbria Public Health Alliance and any identified plans for future activity.***

3.2 ***That the Board notes that each item in this report relates to the pertinent section of the Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy.***

### 4.0 **BACKGROUND AND KEY MESSAGES FROM THE PUBLIC HEALTH ALLIANCE**

#### **Future shape and function of Public Health Alliance – Options / Parish and Town Councils**

4.1 Members undertook a discussion on the future possible shape and function of the Alliance, following local government reorganisation. An accompanying discussion was around the contribution Parish and Town Councils could make in future.

4.2 With LGR just over 3 months away, members noted that local government in Cumbria was shifting, with potentially big differences in partnership structures. The dissolution of the 6 District Authorities meant that the bulk of the Alliance's membership was from organisations that would cease to exist from April 2023.

4.3 Discussions elsewhere had pointed to the likelihood of two separate Health and Wellbeing Boards in Cumbria and would likely have a more *public health* focus, which again would have implications for the Alliance in its current format.

4.4 The 3 options were likely to be:

- Keep the Alliance as a *public health team professional network* comprised mainly of officers to work on a pan-Cumbria basis;
- Each authority establish its own Alliance to complement its health and Wellbeing Boards;
- A more formal joint approach between the 2 new councils and external partners.

An important question was also where the Third Sector and Voluntary Organisations would sit within any new arrangements and how they might ensure continuity of their presence and influence within the Health and Wellbeing realm. Uncertainty around what partnership working would look like in future and the issue of boundaries for individual organisations were key unknowns. Smaller organisations, like charities, potentially faced capacity issues, and there was concern that Third Sector and Voluntary/Charitable organisations did not lose influence under the new arrangements, particularly as it was not currently a statutory requirement for the Third Sector to have a place on either of the new Health and Wellbeing Boards.

4.5 In discussion members noted that many organisations would continue to work on a countywide basis. For organisations continuing to work across Cumbria, they could face issues of duplication in discussions and meetings they would need to attend to maintain their countywide knowledge and input.

- 4.6 For Parish and Town Councils, there was the question of ensuring engagement across both authorities and with increased responsibility being devolved down to Parish and Town levels from around 2024 onwards. With regard to their input into the public health agenda, there was a need to discuss what they currently did and what they could do in future. There had been an ambition for some time now to better engage Parish and Town Councils in supporting the public health agenda, particularly in developing their work on resilience activities, so this was a good time to initiate those discussions.
- 4.7 It was important that Third Sector continued to have a voice in the new Health and Wellbeing Boards, particularly with the number of different partnership groups. It was suggested that an *asset map of strategic groups* would be extremely useful, to promote a clear understanding of what was out there and how it all related.
- 4.8 Key questions for the Alliance were:
- What are the Alliance's new objectives and what was it setting out to achieve?
  - How would the Alliance fit with the existing and emerging strategic groups in Cumbria?
  - What were the impacts that the Alliance wanted to affect and where would it have power to influence change in future?
- 4.9 Suggestions included maintaining a countywide Alliance for at least the first 6 to 12 months after transition to the new authorities. For some areas of work, it was not clear where these might sit in future and the Alliance would be useful in working out where the connections with that work might be.
- 4.10 There was hope from some members that as the new authorities worked with organisations that had different and crossed partnership boundaries, the wider determinants of health would continue to be a key issue for the public health agenda and the 2 Health and Wellbeing Boards.
- 4.11 Overall, members saw the Alliance as a useful source of discussion and information for all involved partners. Discussions as to its future shape and function were ongoing and a central question was whether the Alliance would become an officer group, or part of the formal government arrangement for getting public health work done.

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*February 2023*

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**APPENDICES:**

None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No background papers

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