



SHROPSHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD Report

Meeting Date	18 th January 2024			
Title of report	Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022/2023 Rural Health in Shropshire			
This report is for (You will have been advised which applies)	Discussion and agreement of recommendations		Approval of recommendations (With discussion by exception)	X Information only (No recommendations)
Reporting Officer & email	Rachel Robinson rachel.robinson@Shropshire.gov.uk			
Which Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities does this report address? Please tick all that apply	Children & Young People	X	Joined up working	X
	Mental Health	X	Improving Population Health	X
	Healthy Weight & Physical Activity	X	Working with and building strong and vibrant communities	X
	Workforce	X	Reduce inequalities (see below)	X
What inequalities does this report address?	The report has rural health and wellbeing inequalities at its core			

1. Executive Summary

This report provides a summary of the content of the Director of Public Health’s Annual Report. Directors of Public Health have a statutory duty to write an annual report on the health of their population and the Local Authority a requirement to publish it. The Director of Public Health’s Annual Report is an evidence-based vehicle for informing local people about the health of their community, as well as providing necessary information for decision makers in local health services, authorities and communities on health gaps and priorities that need to be addressed.

This year’s report includes: an overview of patterns and variation of health and wellbeing of the Shropshire population, the report then has a focus on rural health and wellbeing in Shropshire and particularly the often-hidden inequalities in rural communities. Over the past three years, I have become increasingly aware that we need to more fully understand impact of living in rural areas on the health and wellbeing of our communities if we are to both embrace the strengths and work with communities to tackle some of the real challenges faced on a daily basis. Finally, the report includes a reflection of progress against previous recommendations and throughout emphasises the continued shared responsibility partners, communities and individuals play in improving outcomes for residents.

2. Recommendations

That Board members read this report and support the recommendations which require a concerted joint effort if they are to be achieved to help improve the health and wellbeing of Shropshire people, particularly those living in more rural areas.

3. Report

This report represents my third annual report since becoming Shropshire’s Director of Public Health in 2019. Public Health, working with partners and residents continue to strive towards the ambition articulated in the County’s Motto Floreat Salopia or “May Shropshire Flourish”, that is to achieve improved health and wellbeing for all. This report is set against another challenging 18 months as we emerged from the COVID pandemic into a Cost-of-Living Crisis, alongside ongoing health and care challenges and pressures and yet, progress continues to be achieved.

This report firstly describes the current Patterns of Health and Wellbeing across Shropshire in Chapter one and the priorities for 2023 and beyond. It shows improved and/or positive outcomes in areas such as early preventative mortality and health life expectancy in females, screening and immunisations overall, However, within Shropshire emergency admissions for under 4's remains significantly high, as does excess mortality in those with a serious mental illness. Smoking and alcohol use are leading to significantly high levels of hospital admissions compared to the England average and dementia diagnosis remains lower than national rates. There are areas highlighted also that we will need to continue monitor closely during the next 12 months including obesity, infant mortality and suicide. It is worth noting that considerable variation and inequalities of outcomes persist, including across our 18 place plan areas and within our most vulnerable groups.

Chapter Two, highlights some of the specific strengths and challenges posed by living in one of England's most rural Counties. While recognising the positive opportunities and outcomes from rural living, this section will provide more information about the drivers behind rural inequalities and exclusion which are often more hidden for Shropshire including a focus on employment, housing and fuel poverty, transport and access exclusion, digital exclusion, mental health and wellbeing and rural communities as well as reviewing the impact of the cost of living. Each section highlights the challenges, opportunities, and current/future actions.

Chapter 3 provides an update on the previous recommendations and continued progress to address health and wellbeing concerns with key services collectively. Finally, during 2022 England celebrated 175 years since the first Directors of Public Health came into post and so at the beginning of the report, we have taken the opportunity to review the first "DPH" annual report for the County and draw together experiences of our current Public Health professionals.

The report concludes with five key recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – Rural Proofing

That all partners take account of and assess the Governments rural guidance for policy makers and analysts of the effects of policies on rural areas.

Recommendation 2 - Prioritise and develop community-based interventions

That all statutory partners with health and wellbeing responsibilities, recognise the essential role communities play in delivering improved outcomes across Shropshire and specifically in our rural population. That partners develop a co-ordinated, comprehensive, asset-based and sustainable/resilient approach to wellbeing in our communities, ensuring the voluntary sector is central to this approach. Continuing to develop and mainstream effective tailored interventions to meet the needs of our more rural population including social prescribing, shaping places and farming health checks.

Recommendation 3 - Place Based/Neighbourhood Working

Given the variety and variation of villages, hamlets and towns across Shropshire, partners renew their commitment to Local Place Plan/Neighbourhood Based Working, to improve health and wellbeing. That HWBB partners promote and engage with Local Government assets such as housing and infrastructure to develop a healthy places approach.

Recommendation 4 – Intelligence Led

Improving the evidence base to understand and monitor rural outcomes is essential to underpin all our decision making across HWBB partners. This includes the continued role out and use of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) by all partners as the foundation of that evidence base. In addition, where gaps in the evidence around rural outcomes exist, these should seek to be plugged locally and nationally with the development of more rural sensitive data sets and measures enabling assessment of access rates and consider using rural data into our monitoring dashboards for parity with more urban metrics.

Recommendation 5: Infrastructure solutions

Continue to recognise and support the transport and infrastructure challenges in rural areas and develop innovative solutions to address these needs. To continue to focus on reducing digital exclusion through strong plans and strategies that build up the infrastructure and respond to the challenges of digital connectivity through digital solutions that work in more excluded areas such as low bandwidth solutions.

Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

The Annual Report seeks to address inequalities and rural inequalities in Shropshire. It challenges all our partners to take a Person-Centred approach when working with Shropshire people and highlights the need to come together and work collaboratively to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for local people.

Financial implications

(Any financial implications of note)

None directly associated with this paper.

Climate Change Appraisal as applicable

None directly associated with this paper

Where else has the paper been presented?

System Partnership Boards	
Voluntary Sector	
Other	

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Portfolio holders can be found [here](#) or your organisational lead e.g., Exec lead or Non-Exec/Clinical Lead**

CLr Cecilia Motley – Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Communities

Appendices

Appendix A – Director of Public Health Annual Report 2022/2023