

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY 21 JUNE 2016**

**RISK FOCUS REPORT – HEALTH PROTECTION**

Author: Joel Bonnet, Deputy Director of Public Health [01992 556876]

Executive Member: Teresa Heritage

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide further information regarding the health protection emergency risk (PHD0014) and controls recorded on the Hertfordshire County Council Corporate Risk Register. This is relating to the potential of the County Council being unable to meet its statutory duty to adequately assure multi-agency health protection arrangements in the event of a health protection emergency.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Audit Committee has requested a report on the above risk, the assessment and rating of this risk and the controls in place to minimise or avoid their occurrence.
- 2.2 It should be noted that this risk relates to health protection emergencies only and not to other health protection activities which are covered in service level risks.
- 2.3 The current controls provide a very high level of assurance that appropriate health protection arrangements are in place in case of an emergency and the likelihood that we would be unable to respond appropriately in such a situation is extremely small.
- 2.4 Whilst the risk is well managed and very unlikely to occur, if it were to happen then the impact could potentially be very high in terms of morbidity and mortality. As a result, the risk score remains significant.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Audit Committee is invited to note and comment on the information provided within this report.

**4. Background**

- 4.1 This risk was recognised in April 2013 when, following the Health and Social Care Act 2012, public health services and responsibilities were transferred

from the NHS to local authorities.

- 4.2 Health protection seeks to prevent or reduce the harm caused by communicable disease and minimise the health impact from environmental hazards (such as chemicals and radiation) and extreme weather events.
- 4.3 The Director of Public Health (DPH) is responsible for the local authority's contribution to health protection matters, including the local authority's roles in planning for, and responding to incidents that present a threat to the public's health as well as being assured that effective and tested plans are in place for the wider health sector to protect the local population from risks to its health.
- 4.4 Public Health England (PHE) which was formed in April 2013 is responsible for delivering specialist health protection advice and response including the response to outbreaks and incidents and in practice there must be early and ongoing communication between the DPH and PHE regarding health protection issues.
- 4.5 There is also a need to work collaboratively with the local NHS (Clinical Commissioning Groups, and hospital and community and mental health trusts as they have an important role in Emergency Planning and Resilience.

## 5. Hertfordshire position

- 5.1. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to provide assurance that health protection arrangements are in place rather than to actually provide them.
- 5.2. Within the County Council public health team the DPH is supported by the Deputy DPH and Assistant Director (Health Protection) who are all named as contacts on the HCC incident response plan.
- 5.2 The DPH, together with NHS England (Midlands and East) co-chairs the Local Health Resilience Partnership which is a strategic forum for organisations in the local health sector to facilitate health sector preparedness and planning for emergencies at a local level.
- 5.3 The Hertfordshire Health Protection committee meets every quarter to review and discuss issues of health protection arrangements.

## 6. Corporate Risk Register

<b>CORPORATE RISK REGISTER</b>		
<b>Risk Number</b>	<b>Risk Owner</b>	<b>Department</b>
PHD0014	Joel Bonnet	Public Health
<b>Date risk first included on risk register</b>	<b>Risk treatment (response) to manage the risk</b>	<b>Executive Member</b>
17/7/2015	Accept	Teresa Heritage

**Short description of the risk**

In the event of a Health Protection emergency such as a communicable disease epidemic, radiological, chemical or biological agent exposure, or extreme weather conditions, there is a risk that the authority may be unable to meet its statutory duty to adequately assure multi-agency health protection arrangements and as a result there are high rates of morbidity or mortality of Hertfordshire residents

**Consequences of the risk**

High numbers of Hertfordshire residents are affected and suffer high rates of avoidable morbidity or mortality from communicable disease, radiological, chemical or biological agent exposure, or extreme weather conditions.

**Current controls****PHD0014/001**

The HCC Health Protection Committee meets quarterly to review and discuss issues of health protection and [plan health protection arrangements](#).

**PHD0014/002**

The [Local Health Resilience Partnership](#) (co-chaired by the Director of Public Health and NHS England) meets quarterly.

**PHD0014/003**

The [HCC Multi Agency Emergency Response Plan](#) describes Hertfordshire's approach to emergency situations.

**PHD0014/004**

Structures, processes and people are in place to allow communication between key partners for review and monitoring of the emergency.

**PHD0014/005**

Hertfordshire follows the national guidance on [management of infectious outbreaks](#) and [pandemic flu](#)

**Current Risk score based on effectiveness of current controls**

<b>Probability score:</b>	<b>Impact score:</b>	<b>Overall score:</b>
1 - Rare	16 – Very High	16 - Significant

**Reason for inclusion on Corporate Register**

Risk added to support monitoring and control of risk as health protection is a statutory duty and has significant implications.

**Direction of travel (overall risk score for previous three quarters)**

16	16	16
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<b>Target risk score</b>		
<b><i>Probability score:</i></b>	<b><i>Impact score:</i></b>	<b><i>Overall score:</i></b>
1 – Rare	16 – Very High	16 – Significant