

NHS WESTERN ISLES

BOARD MEETING

Meeting date: 26 February 2026

Item: 8.2 (26/011)

Title: Public Health Strategy 2026-2027

Responsible Executive/Non-Executive: Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health

Report Author: Colum Durkan, Director of Public Health and
Elaine MacKay, Public Health Manager

1 Purpose

This is presented to Board Members for:

Assurance	
Awareness	
Decision	X
Discussion	

This report relates to a:

Annual Operating / Delivery Plan	X
Emerging issue	
Government policy/directive	
Legal requirement	
Local policy	
NHS Board / Integration Joint Board Strategy or Direction	X

This aligns to the following NHS Scotland quality ambition(s):

Safe	X
Effective	X
Person Centred	X

Please select the level of assurance you feel this report provides to the Board / Committee and briefly explain why:

Significant	
Moderate	X
Limited	
None	
Not yet assessed	
Comment	
Specify:	

Please indicate which of the Boards Priorities the paper relates to:

Financial Sustainability / Recovery Plan	
Capital	
Hospital Based Services Model – Rural General Hospital / Community	
Workforce Health & Wellbeing	
Health Inequalities	X
Sustainability of Community Health & Social Care Model	
Primary Care Transformation Programme	
Digital Transformation / Digital Health	
Public Protection Priorities	
Women and Children's Services	
Climate Emergency and Sustainability	X
None of the above	
Other – please explain	
Comments:	

The report is directly linked to a Recovery Driver(s) within the Annual Delivery Plan:

RD01	Primary & Community Care - Improved access to primary and community care to enable earlier intervention and more care to be delivered in the community.	
RD02	Urgent & Unscheduled Care – Access to urgent and unscheduled care, including scaling of integrated frailty services to reduce admissions to hospital.	
RD03	Mental Health - Improve the delivery of mental health support and services, reflecting key priorities set out in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.	x
RD04	Planned Care - Recovering and improving the delivery of planned care.	
RD05	Cancer Care - Delivering the National Cancer Action Plan (Spring 2023-2026).	
RD06	Health Inequalities and Population Health - Enhance planning and delivery of the approach to tackling health inequalities and improving population health.	x
RD07	Women and Children's Health - Take forward the actions in the Women's Health Plan and support good child and maternal health, so that all children in Scotland can have the best possible start in life.	x
RD08	Workforce - Implementation of the Workforce Strategy.	
RD09	Digital Services Innovation Adoption - Optimise use of digital & data technologies in the design and delivery of health and care services for improved patient access and fast track the national adoption of proven innovations which could have a transformative impact on efficient and patient outcomes.	
RD10	Climate - Climate Emergency and Environment.	x
RD11	Finance & Sustainability – Approach to achieving financial balance and aligning with S&V financial improvement programme of work.	
RD12	Value Based Health & Care – Approach to embracing and adopting Value Based Health and Care.	x
RD13	Integration & population Need – Boards are asked to set out the key actions to respond to population needs and how you will work in partnership to address and respond to these needs.	x
RD14	Regional & National – Approach to working regionally and nationally across services through collective and collaborative approaches to planning and delivery, where required.	
-	None of the above	

This aligns to the following NHS Western Isles Corporate Objective(s):

CO1	To provide person-centred care, focusing on the evidence based health needs of our increasingly diverse population, identifying and taking every opportunity to improve our patients' health, experience and outcomes	x
CO2	To protect individuals from avoidable harm to continually assessing and managing risk, learning, and improving the reliability and safety in everything we do.	x
CO3	To champion efficiency and effectiveness in our services that delivers minimum possible waiting times.	
CO4	To pro-actively stimulate and intensify our research and application of effective innovation to improve how we care for patients today and into the future.	
CO5	To promote and support people to live longer healthier lives	x
CO6	To specifically target early years, health inequalities, vulnerable and underrepresented and more difficult to engage with groups.	x
CO7	To continually improve and modernise our integrated healthcare services and assurance systems.	
CO8	To value, support the wellbeing of, and develop and sustain a compassionate, confident, competent, flexible and responsive workforce.	
CO9	To deliver our commitment to partnership working to deliver national standards, targets and guarantees.	x
CO10	To have a sustained focus on prevention, anticipation, support self-management and care at home.	x
CO11	To ensure that all resources are deployed to the best effect, achieving desired outcomes, values for money and progressive approach to sustainability.	x
-	None of the above	

2 Report summary

2.1 Situation

The implementation of the new NHS Western Isles Public Health Strategy is due to commence in April 2026. The prior year submission has been provided on progress with implementation.

2.2 Background

The strategy aligns with the Scottish Population Health Framework recognising that health is shaped by a wide range of factors, including social, economic, environmental, and cultural influences. The strategy emphasises that most influences on health occur outside traditional health services and require joined-up action across communities, businesses, and the voluntary sector to create environments that support health and wellbeing for all.

The strategy has been developed by the NHS Western Isles Public Health team. It lists the public health priorities for NHS Western Isles from April 2026 – March 2027, within the five pillars of the Population Health Framework for Scotland –

1. Prevention-Focused System
2. Social and Economic Factors
3. Places and Communities
4. Enabling Healthy Living
5. Equitable Access to Health and Care

2.3 Assessment

A separate workplan detailing the operational aspects of the strategy will be developed, and reporting and oversight will be through the corporate governance processes in NHS Western Isles.

2.3.1 Quality/ Patient Care

The strategy improves the quality of care by focusing on prevention and early intervention, which helps reduce illness and long-term demand on services. It looks to support consistent, evidence-based practice and encourage partnership working across services, leading to more coordinated and effective care. It targets resources toward priority needs and reduce health inequalities, improving overall health outcomes and patient experience.

2.3.2 Workforce

Sufficient workforce within the public health team will be in place to deliver the strategy, subject to the successful recruitment to current vacancies.

2.3.3 Financial

Describe the financial impact (capital, revenue and efficiencies) and how this will be managed. **Please ensure that the Finance Manager has obtained review of the paper before submitting to the Committee.**

Name – Director of Finance / Finance Manager	Signature
Comment from the Director of Finance / Finance Manager	
There is no stated financial requirement within the report, however as the Strategy develops any financial need will be subject to approval.	

2.3.4 Risk Assessment/Management

The strategy will help reduce risk across several areas at a population level, including the prevention of communicable diseases, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, the reduction of health inequalities, and the improvement of mental health and wellbeing.

2.3.5 Equality and Diversity, including health inequalities

The strategy ensures that health improvement initiatives are designed to address the diverse needs of the population and reduce health inequalities. By targeting resources and interventions toward groups experiencing the greatest disadvantage, such as those facing socio-economic deprivation, minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, and those with poor access to healthcare, the strategy promotes equitable access to services and opportunities for better health outcomes. This will be achieved by:

- Reducing inequalities: Implementing programmes that specifically address gaps in health outcomes across different socio-economic or demographic groups.
- Inclusive service design: Ensuring that public health messaging, interventions, and support are accessible and culturally appropriate for all communities.
- Data-driven targeting: Using population health data to identify at-risk groups and prioritise interventions where they are most needed.
- Community engagement: Involving communities in planning and decision-making to ensure services meet local needs.
- Monitoring and accountability: Measuring outcomes to track progress against equalities objectives and ensure continuous improvement.

2.3.6 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Development

State how this report will support or impact on the Scottish Government's policy on Global Climate Emergency and Sustainability Development DL(2021)38, against the 5 themes:

1	Sustainable Buildings & Land	
2	Sustainable Travel	
3	Sustainable Goods and Services	
4	Sustainable Care	
5	Sustainable Communities	
Describe other relevant impacts: None		

2.3.7 Other impacts

No other relevant impacts.

2.3.8 Communication, involvement, engagement and consultation

The Board has carried out its duties to involve and engage external stakeholders where appropriate: State how this has been carried out and note any meetings that have taken place.

The strategy is underpinned by the Western Isles Health Needs Assessment, which incorporated a comprehensive stakeholder engagement exercise. It has been developed by the Public Health Team following a series of scoping and planning meetings and discussions. Further stakeholder engagement with primary care and hospital services, to ensure alignment. Advocacy groups, including Lewis Youth Council, also contributed to its development.

2.3.9 Route to the Meeting

This has been previously considered by the following groups as part of its development. The groups have either supported the content, or their feedback has informed the development of the content presented in this report.

Public Health team meeting, 3rd December 2025.

Individual team member meetings, 10th – 22nd December 2025.

Public Health strategy development session with input from Associate Medical Director and Lewis Youth Council, 13th January 2026.

Communication by email to public health team for review, 26th January 2026.

Individual team member meetings, 9th February 2026.

Corporate Management Team 17th February 2026 – Approved.

2.4 Recommendation

- **Decision** – Reaching a conclusion after the consideration of options.

3 List of appendices

The following appendices are included with this report:

Item 8.2.1 (26/011) – Appendix 1 - Public Health Strategy 2026-2027

END