Dear Ian and Jim

Health and Wellbeing Peer Challenge 20th – 23rd January 2015

On behalf of the peer team, I would like to say what a pleasure and privilege it was to be invited into Salford City Council to deliver the health and wellbeing peer challenge as part of the LGA’s Health and Wellbeing System Improvement Programme.

This programme is based on the principles of sector led improvement that:

- Councils are responsible for their own performance and improvement and for leading the delivery of improved outcomes for local people in their area
- Councils are primarily accountable to local communities (not government or the inspectorates) and stronger accountability through increased transparency helps local people drive further improvement
- Councils have a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as a whole (evidenced by sharing best practice, offering member and officer peers, etc.)

Challenge from one’s peers is a proven tool for sector led improvement. Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at Salford City Council were:

- Jane Robinson, Chief Executive, Gateshead Council
- Cllr Joe Caluori, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, LB Islington
- Wendy Meredith, Director of Public Health, Bolton Council (Part)
- Heather Hauschild, Chief Officer, West Hampshire CCG
Dr Glen Mason, Director of People, Communities and Local Government, Department of Health
Satvinder Rana, Programme Manager, LGA

Scope and focus of the peer challenge

The purpose of the health and wellbeing peer challenge is to support councils in implementing their new statutory responsibilities in health from 1st April 2013, by way of a systematic challenge through sector peers in order to improve local practice. It also supports health and wellbeing boards become more confident in their system wide strategic leadership role; have the capability to deliver transformational change; through the development of effective strategies to drive the successful commissioning and provision of services; and to create improvements in the health and wellbeing of the local community.

Our framework for the challenge was five headline questions:

1. Is there a clear, appropriate and achievable approach to improving the health and wellbeing of local residents?
2. Is the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) at the heart of an effective governance system? Does leadership work well across the local system?
3. Are local resources, commitment and skills across the system maximised to achieve local health and wellbeing priorities?
4. Are there effective arrangements for evaluating impacts of the health and wellbeing strategy?
5. Are there effective arrangements for ensuring accountability to the public?

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focused. The peers used their experience and knowledge to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material they read.

This letter provides a summary of the peer team’s findings. It builds on the feedback presentation delivered by the team at the end of their on-site visit. In presenting this feedback, the peer challenge team acted as fellow local government and health officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. We hope this will help provide recognition of the progress Salford City Council and its Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) have made whilst stimulating debate and thinking about future challenges.

1. Headline Messages

Salford is a transforming place. It has moved from being a major industrial town of the 18th and 19th century to a centre for higher education, media and creative industries. It is home to the Lowry, University of Salford, the BBC, ITV Studios and of course Coronation Street! The city is experiencing
population growth among young families as a result of the economic opportunities presented by the huge regeneration that is taking place. However, this transformation is surrounded by high levels of deprivation and poverty in parts of the city which results in extremes of health inequalities. The demographic changes appear to be widening health inequalities further.

The peer challenge team met with a lot of highly motivated people from across the health and wellbeing system in Salford. People have a strong affinity to the place and they understand the big strategic picture. They are ambitious for Salford and want to make a difference in reducing the inequalities that exist. We found there to be strong commitment to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for your communities. We saw that across the piece in all our interviews and discussions with people individually and in focus groups.

It was a privilege to have the opportunity to see some of the work you are doing and we were really impressed with the way you are working together to improve the health and wellbeing of your population. You have strong and visionary leadership of place coupled with trusted relationships and exemplary partnership working across the system. We were impressed with the incredible energy, ambition and pace you demonstrated to address the significant challenges your population face, despite the financial constraints public services are under. It was refreshing to see the impatience people had to get things done to improve the quality of life of local people.

One of the big things we found in Salford was that everyone we spoke to wanted to ‘do good’ for Salford. Their starting point is ‘how can we do things better to meet the needs of local people’. It is not ‘we’ve got a massive hole in our budget and we are going to have to do something to close that gap’. This focus on outcomes is really important and was impressive. As a result, people are putting their energy and effort into delivery and there is ground-breaking and innovative work being delivered across the system.

The other interesting thing we picked up was the highly visible recognition across the system of the wider determinants of health and a shared purpose to reduce health inequalities. Your focus is not just on traditional areas of health and social care but on the wider determinants of health which are so prevalent in Salford. Across the system people spoke about the wider determinants of health and had an understanding of how they can contribute to a holistic wellbeing and health agenda.

In moving forward and making further improvements across your health and wellbeing system, we felt that the ‘golden thread’ from strategy to action to impact could be more visible; and that monitoring, evaluating and managing performance across the system should be strengthened. It would be good to see a much clearer link between the City Plan and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS), and how the two fit together so that people see and understand those linkages. Equally, there is need to think about monitoring, evaluation and managing performance to drive delivery, deploy resources in the most effective way possible, and to demonstrate impact.
Whilst you have solid and well developed partnership arrangements in place they do appear overly complex and resource intensive. We heard conversations from people who said there are too many meetings and that sometimes ‘you see the same presentation two or three times’. This means there is a lot going on with some levels of duplication and sometimes blurred lines of accountability.

You rightly recognise the need to further strengthen your wider community engagement, communication and accountability arrangements to the public. We think there is a real opportunity for you to work across your system to devise something that is pioneering and moves you to the next stage of development. Putting in place meaningful community engagement, communication and public accountability arrangements across the piece is a ‘tough nut to crack’ but we think Salford has the ability to do this.

There is evidence of services joined up and integrated at both the strategic and operational levels; and your programmes on health and social care are starting to make a real impact on the ground and in the community. For example, the Integrated Care Programme, Community Risk Intervention Teams, and Gateways - offering integrated frontline services through shared buildings were all impressive. We think you can build on the experience and significant progress you have made on adult social care and transfer this into other service areas, including children’s services, housing, transport, regeneration and employment to ensure a strategic and holistic approach to health and wellbeing. This would accelerate your ambitions to reduce health inequalities by addressing the wider determinants of health through prevention and early intervention.

Partners across the system had already identified these areas as requiring further development, so there is a lot of self-awareness across the health and wellbeing system in Salford. We would now urge you to take these issues one by one and make the necessary changes and improvements so that you are better placed to deal with the massive health and wellbeing challenges of your population.

In summary therefore, we think you should celebrate and promote the excellent work you are doing – become a ‘centre of excellence’ and share your innovations and the good practice you are developing around, for example, the proposed Integrated Care Organisation, the Alliance Board, the Integrated Commissioning Board, and your community asset work. Be very positive about what is being delivered across the health and wellbeing system in Salford and make the necessary changes so you can go further and faster.

2. Is there a clear, appropriate and achievable approach to improving the health and wellbeing of local residents?

You have a comprehensive Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) in place and this is accessible and easy to read. There was evidence of good member involvement and engagement in the development of the JSNA. It
provides a good picture of Salford and the health and wellbeing needs of the local population. The needs identified in the JSNA are prioritised in the JHWS and the actions to be taken are clearly articulated. However, in order to understand whether what the JHWS is saying is actually having the impact the system wants there is an absolute need to have a single and integrated performance management framework to inform and serve the HWB, scrutiny committee and other partners.

We noted the strong commitment to addressing health inequalities and the wider determinants of health as demonstrated so clearly in the City Plan. The City Plan highlights the fact that one part of the city can have an 11 year differential in the life expectancy than another. It is important therefore that these differentials are fully reflected in the JHWS and its delivery. The JHWS has those crosscutting themes in it but what is less clear is how they are being translated into actions against those bigger and wider determinants of health to reflect the priorities in the City Plan. We would suggest that when the JHWS is next reviewed you develop a much clearer shared narrative on what Salford should look like in health and wellbeing terms in 2022, crystalise that vision and then develop a strategy across the health and wellbeing system to make the vision come alive.

There is real evidence of a strong intelligence-led approach and a willingness to try new ideas, to take some risks and to experiment with the public in improving health and wellbeing of local residents. We saw some really good examples of that, including the proposals to set up an Integrated Care Organisation. We were also told that public health data is enriching other services across the council to address issues of public health. The Planning department uses this data to plan healthy spaces, for example. This is helped by having the Public Health team co-located and working closely with the Strategy and Change team.

There is a commitment to reducing health inequalities through clear and collective prioritisation of early intervention and prevention. A number of partners we spoke to said ‘our job is about moving this upstream, it’s about prevention and it’s about early intervention and how we work together on that’. This focus and determination on prevention and early intervention should reap rewards in the long term, both for the health and wellbeing system in Salford as well as the public at large.

The transformational regeneration of Salford is well regarded and we saw the regeneration of the Salford Quays - which is phenomenal. We were told about some excellent examples of how you are maximising opportunities presented by this regeneration to benefit local people; and reduce poverty and inequality. The ‘Bridges to MediaCityUK’ partnership, ‘Inspired to Aspire’ programme, ‘Transformations’, ‘Salford Television Workshops’ etc. have all brokered opportunities for local young people to access training and employment in these emerging industries. We would encourage you to continue developing these innovative programmes to ensure that the economic impact is felt, and is seen to be felt, by local people. The figures we heard around economic growth, population growth and the changing
demography and what all that means suggest that whilst there is a huge opportunity, there is also a potential risk of widening inequalities if the impact of regeneration does not continue to benefit all in the longer term. This means there is a risk around health inequalities widening even further. But we know this is something you are well aware of and you will make sure connections continue to be strengthened between local people and those wider opportunities.

There is also recognition of the need to build greater community resilience to meet needs in a sustainable way, within the context of reduced public resources. There simply are not the resources for public services to continue delivering services in the way they have previously. This means there is a need to build that community resilience so that people are not as dependent on public services as they may be currently. We heard this from a number of people and this is something that is definitely recognised across the partnership.

The Salford health and wellbeing system is considered to be one of the higher performing systems across Greater Manchester. There is evidence of your active engagement in the wider discussions about health and wellbeing across the sub region. Your focus on integration, prevention and wider public service reforms with strong links to work at Greater Manchester level through the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) is recognised. But there is more you can do and we would encourage you to maintain your position and lead the discussions on public service reforms.

We heard a lot about prevention and early intervention being the way forward to reducing health inequalities in the long term. We would strongly encourage you to accelerate your planned integrated approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the 0-25 age group. Again there are real opportunities here because the aspiration is shared across the health and wellbeing system and you can make significant headway.

As mentioned previously you have some impressive programmes and projects in place on the ground that are impacting on individual lives, such as the ‘Loaves and Fishes/Thomas Project’, ‘Salford Dadz’, ‘Start in Salford’, ‘Being Well Salford’ ‘Unicef Baby Friendly Group’ etc. We think by focusing in on these projects and seeing whether they can be scaled up and delivered in neighbourhoods with the most need across the city can make a real impact in the community.

3. **Is the HWB at the heart of an effective governance system? Does leadership work well across the local system?**

Salford has very strong and deeply embedded partnership working backed up with trusted relationships and a collegiate style of working. This is reflected in the way the HWB has been developed and is functioning. There are very strong, committed and visionary system leaders in Salford, with an engaging style of leadership. Systems leaders are seen as accessible and committed to achieving a sea-change in the quality of life of local people.
The HWB has been a good relationship builder and is now leading the health and wellbeing agenda. It has a very strong emphasis on the wellbeing of people as the precursor to good health. There is widespread recognition of the importance of the HWB and its system leadership role. We were particularly impressed by the commitment of the HWB to its own development and this idea of alternating between a business meeting and then a development session is exemplary. We heard how the HWB is constantly thinking about improving and constantly questioning whether it is doing the right things.

In moving forward, we think it is very important for the HWB to ensure that everyone is clear about its role and remit; and that it can consistently hold all partners to account and not just partners external to the council. The HWB should also agree a set of SMART ambitious targets for the outcomes it wants to achieve around reducing health inequalities and manage performance against these targets. The HWB should have a dashboard aligned to its delivery plan to help it manage performance against its priorities and the JHWS. Performance should be managed through an integrated performance management framework that is shared across the health and wellbeing system.

You have already recognised the need to review the wider partnership arrangements. It is important to accelerate this planned review and try and streamline the partnership landscape so that it can better support key priorities and recognise the new ways of working that are being developed through this work. It is also important to find creative ways for all partners, statutory and non-statutory, to remain fully engaged and be part of the strategic debate and discussion on health and wellbeing matters.

4. Are local resources, commitment and skills across the system maximised to achieve local health and wellbeing priorities?

Salford has a very motivated and focused leadership across the piece with a strong sense of collective purpose. The leadership is supported by a committed workforce that has a strong sense of purpose, pride and ambition for the area. We were impressed with the commitment they showed to delivering the highest quality public services and improving the quality of life of local people. In particular, we noted that the Public Health team is confident and effectively networking across the system to deliver impressive projects and that your health protection system is strong, integrated and effective.

There is a strong commitment to wellbeing, prevention and reducing health inequalities across the system. It is clear from your approach to integration that there is some pioneering and ambitious work being done. In particular, we would point to the way in which those collective resources of the partners have come together around the Integrated Care Programme, Integrated Care Organisation and the Alliance Board. They provide a strong and positive example of how you really work together.
This idea of the ‘Salford £’ was brought up on a number of occasions and we noted with particular interest the focus partners have on the ‘Salford £’ rather than the resources of individual organisations and their ‘piece of the pie’. This focus on utilising the collective resources of the system to achieve the outcomes you need for local people is refreshing to see in the current climate. We were also encouraged by the general consensus you have that resources now need to be shifted to prevention and early intervention in order to reduce health inequalities.

Bearing in mind that there is so much going on in Salford; that health and wellbeing is such a broad agenda, particularly when you take on board your focus on the wider determinants of health and wellbeing; and that money will be tight in the future, we think you should take the opportunity to hone in on two or three big determinants of health and wellbeing where you can really make an impact on a city-wide scale. In doing this you can accelerate your work on building community resilience by developing social capital at local levels through targeted support, good communication, community engagement and empowerment.

With the sort of approach you are taking in Salford, the pace you are working at, the innovation and the ambition you have demonstrated, the external pressures around future health and social care reorganisation, and further financial constraints are all likely to put pressure on your relationships across the system. It is really important therefore that there are robust risk management processes in place. Furthermore, you should ensure that your ambitious and innovative programmes are also underpinned by robust risk management.

Linked to that, you should also consider issues of workforce planning because some of your innovations and the new ways of delivering services you might be considering will mean thinking through what that may mean for your workforce. Similarly, you have strong system leaders and it is clear that the ‘can-do’ approach is strongly embedded across the system, so it is important to put in place effective succession planning arrangements by investing in future leaders to make sure that the momentum is continued and that there is resilience across the system.

That also provides the opportunity to consider current structures and further integrate the way health inequalities are tackled and wellbeing promoted across the whole council as well as wider city partners. We understand there is a planned review of neighbourhood working and it is absolutely right to identify that as a key area to make improvements. There is an opportunity to take neighbourhood working forward and maximise shrinking resources. You can use some of the good data and intelligence partners have about health inequalities to make sure that resources are targeted to communities and areas of most need.
5. Are there effective arrangements for evaluating impacts of the health and wellbeing strategy?

We have seen from the JHWS that some indicators are in place for measuring performance against the key priorities. However, we do think there is more work to be done in developing your arrangements for evaluating impacts of your JHWS through an integrated performance management system.

You now need to consider putting in place a dashboard and delivery plan to help the HWB to manage performance against the JHWS. As part of this you need to develop comprehensive and shared metrics against each of the key priorities to help evaluate impacts. This should make it easier for everyone to understand what you are trying achieve; what you are measuring; what people need to look for in the data and understand; and what needs to develop and change as a result of it. This system should be aligned with your corporate performance management system and draw in and share performance information with partners across the health and wellbeing system.

We have noted the interesting ways in which the system has used independent external advice and expertise to develop programmes. We think there are opportunities for building on that model further to help in evaluating the impacts of the JHWS and individual programmes and projects. Clearly you have very good working relationships with Salford University and other academic partners. You should continue nurturing these.

You have real capacity within your Public Health team to build on your intelligence and analysis. You can use this capacity to move further and faster with your intelligence-led approach to targeting services in neighbourhood and communities with the most need. We also picked up that there is shared ambition to build on Salford Integrated Record to bring together data across public services. This presents a huge opportunity to do some ground-breaking work in terms of bringing together data across all public services. This will enable you to build greater understanding and knowledge and apply it to help develop further support on health and wellbeing.

In the short time we were in Salford, we could not find strong enough evidence on how you involve citizens in evaluating the effectiveness of your services and strategies. Clearly you have the base structures in place through your community committees, neighbourhood working and community engagement processes to engage with your communities. You should use these to reach out to your diverse communities and feed the information back into the system. In addition you should think about building a method to allow the citizens’ voice to be heard to evaluate the effectiveness of your services and strategies.

There has been some good work done by Healthwatch in trying to engage with hard to reach groups of people. Although this work is very much in the early stages we think you have something in this to develop further. We
would suggest you consider working closely with Healthwatch and utilise it
and its networks to support the evaluation of impact of your JHWS by
providing an independent voice back to you.

6. **Are there effective arrangements for ensuring accountability to the public?**

You have the building blocks in place to ensure accountability to the public
and these can be built upon to make further improvements. We have heard
what is being proposed around the Integrated Engagement Board and that
seems like a very positive focus. We observed the HWB meeting and noted
that they are open to the public and members of the public are encouraged to
raise issues at meetings. You now need to think how the HWB can work with
the wider partnerships to ensure that engagement is as effective as possible
and that the processes and systems to hear the voices of patients and
citizens are both robust and effective.

As you move to the next level of your development you need more pro-active
and coordinated communications and engagement to share the HWB’s
priorities and work programme. The work of the HWB needs to be more
visible so that projects and programmes on the ground can be easily aligned
with the priorities of the HWB. The HWB’s communications strategy should
be further developed around engagement arrangements to enable it to
communicate key messages internally and externally with other partners and
the public. There is recognition of the importance and usefulness of deploying
appropriate channels, including social media, to get key messages to the
public at a neighbourhood level. Different people and different groups will
respond differently to how you engage with them. You will need to consider a
multitude of engagement channels and systematically start linking all the
community engagement that is going on across the city.

Scrutiny has a role in both engaging with citizens and demonstrating
accountability back to the public. A significant proportion of the work of
scrutiny needs to be externally focussed so that its purpose is to make
healthcare organisations more accountable to local communities. We were
told that the health scrutiny committee in Salford is being renewed and
refocused so that it can conduct its scrutiny work through commissions and
depth-dives around key work programme areas. We were impressed with the
approach you are thinking of developing as it has the potential for Salford to
have much deeper and meaningful scrutiny arrangements in place. We would
eourage you to proceed ahead with this approach and use health scrutiny
to demonstrate accountability to the public. In doing this you will need to
ensure that the scrutiny committee is supported with the necessary data and
performance information for it to scrutinise effectively.

Furthermore, we would urge you to ensure that performance data is visible
and accessible to the public, through your websites for example, for potential
public scrutiny and accountability.
7. **Moving forward**

In moving forward our key recommendations are:

1. Show a strong ‘golden thread’ from strategy to action to impact. Be able to show the linkage between the City Plan, the JHWS and the corporate plans of other partner organisations. Put in place robust and integrated monitoring, evaluating and performance management arrangements across the system with safe sharing of data and intelligence.

2. Accelerate your planned integrated approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the 0-25 age group. Capitalise on the momentum within the system to develop approaches that will deliver real impacts in the community and learn from the work you are doing around adult social care.

3. Simplify your partnership arrangements across the council to reduce duplication and ensure there are visible linkages with your strategic objectives, well understood roles and remits and clear lines of accountability.

4. Strengthen wider community engagement, communication and accountability to the public by making better use of your existing channels and developing new ones. Ensuring you make use of scrutiny, Healthwatch, and your wider CVS to connect with ‘hard to reach’ groups.

5. Develop approach to neighbourhood working, using intelligence to targeting resources to where they are most needed. Understanding where to make those interventions to have the maximum impact on addressing health inequalities. By honing in on particular neighbourhoods you should be able to make a noticeable impact on addressing issues such as the ‘toxic trio’ of smoking, alcohol and obesity.

6. Capitalise on your position in the wider discussions about health and wellbeing across the sub region and push for public service reforms that will enable you to achieve your ambitions for integration, prevention and early intervention. Related to this, consider new approaches to developing the workforce across the system and continue supporting system leaders of the future.

7. Celebrate and promote the excellent work you are doing – become a ‘centre of excellence’ and share your innovations and best practice on the sub-regional, regional and national stage.

8. **Next steps**

The council’s political leadership, senior management and members of the HWB will undoubtedly wish to reflect on these findings and suggestions before determining how the council wishes to take things forward. As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of continued activity to support
this. If you wish to take this up then I look forward to finalising the detail of that activity as soon as possible.

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with you and colleagues through the peer challenge to date. Gill Taylor, Principal Adviser for North West, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Gill can be contacted at gill.taylor@local.gov.uk (or tel. 07789 512173) and can provide access to our resources and any further support.

In the meantime, all of us connected with the peer challenge would like to wish the council every success going forward. Once again, many thanks for inviting the peer challenge and to everyone involved for their participation.

Yours sincerely,

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On behalf of the peer challenge team