


LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Review

Bury Council

19th – 29th July 2021

Feedback report





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1. Executive summary

Bury Council had a Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2018. This came shortly after the Council had recently appointed a new Chief Executive who had also taken on the role of Accountable Officer for the local CCG. The 2018 report found that following successive years of dealing with significant budget reductions, totalling £65m from 2010 - 2018, the Council were seeing the effects of taking “*a path of least resistance*”. This included a shrinking of corporate support services, a dilution of key processes and a sense of disconnect horizontally and vertically across the officer cohort as well as from the corporate priorities to service delivery. Officers had taken on significant additional responsibilities beyond their experience or skillset and the senior management cohort was almost exclusively appointed on either an interim or acting up basis.

The peer challenge report from November 2018 recommended that the Council take a number of actions including developing a new Corporate Plan and using this to prioritise the activity of the organisation. The Council were encouraged to strengthen financial management and bring support and enabling services together into a ‘Corporate Core’. A new Performance Management Framework was required and the Council were recommended to co-produce a new workforce culture as well as review organisational development. ICT infrastructure required investment following years of underinvestment. Doing so could then help the Council to define the digitisation journey it wished to go on. In 2018, the Council were keen to explore commercialisation so were encouraged to develop a strategy for this based on the agreed political and financial parameters locally. Lastly, it was clear that the Council had positive relationships with partner organisations in Bury – including those in the voluntary, community and faith sector. The Council were asked to review how they could get more benefit for Bury from partnership working and in particular the Team Bury local strategic partnership.

This peer challenge has been able to observe how in many ways, Bury has become a different Council to what it was in 2018. The Council has made progress against a number of the recommendations made in 2018 which are detailed in greater depth throughout this report. In particular, working with partners, the Council has chartered a new 10 year



Borough Strategy for Bury led by the phrase “*Let’s do it*”, which is taken from the work of Victoria Wood, bringing local pertinence. This strategy seeks to build upon a shared sense of local pride and act as a call to arms for progressing the local vision of achieving ‘*faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation*’.


The Council has significantly strengthened and made more permanent the senior officer leadership of the Council by appointing an almost entirely new senior team, many of whom were appointed within the last 18 months. The Council have brought together many of those support and enabling services into a Corporate Core and have made progress in strengthening the approach to financial management since the 2018 review.

Beyond the recommendations from 2018 however, the Council has also made significant progress in more closely aligning the Council with the CCG and has accelerated its work on economic development across the six distinctive townships. This has all been achieved despite the fact that for the last 15 months, the Council has been leading the local response to a global pandemic which has created unprecedented challenges and demands upon the Council. A role which is very much recognised by the partners across Bury. All considered, the pace of activity and organisational improvement seen has been significant.

At the time of the 2018 peer challenge, the team left with a message that the Council has big ambitions and whilst the Council can choose to prioritise whatever it wants, it cannot choose to prioritise everything at once – meaning difficult choices would be required.

Now as the Council moves closer towards what might be termed ‘business as usual’ and in seeking to lead a local recovery and renewal from the effects of COVID-19, there are even more choices and demands to prioritise.

Responding to all of these demands has been tough. Capacity remains stretched. “*Let’s do it*” sends a strong positive and proactive message but the Council should guard against



this being interpreted as *Let's do everything*. The Council made significant improvements in financial management since the 2018 review, but the harsh reality is that a further significant budget challenge must be faced between now and 2024/25.

Much of the feedback contained within this report focusses upon helping the Council to meet this challenge on a sustained basis, whilst delivering on statutory requirements and local member priorities. The Council has demonstrated an ability to take on complex challenges and to be innovative, but key to achieving the next set of priorities is getting to a point where the Council is 'consistently better at the basics'. This includes internal processes and support, as well as the outward facing services experienced by local residents and partners. Doing so will free up capacity and support the alignment between the capacity to deliver and the local priorities.


Alongside further prioritisation, significantly accelerating the work required in terms of organisational development now has a much more pressing role than was the case in 2018.

Done well, this can have a significant multiplier effect. It will help to release more capacity and channel this towards the local priorities. It will help in terms of building on the foundations of locality based public service reform. It will help Council services to both identify and capitalise on the opportunities from digitisation. It will also help the Council to consistently embed a new, corporate approach to community engagement and partnership working. All of which can be key to the next stage of ongoing improvement for the Council and the place.

2. Key recommendations


There are a number of observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

2.1. In light of the number of competing priorities now facing the Council,



prioritise again those objectives and actions which are the most critical corporately. Further embed an understanding of the corporate priorities and the future ways of working across the organisation through the forthcoming organisational development programme.

- 2.2. Clearly set out and agree the approach and strategy for organisational development that senior leaders can then consistently champion.** This approach is likely to require at different stages and in different instances both high support and high challenge. Further work is required on the modernisation of more fundamental HR processes as part of 'getting the basics right' to help enable this.
- 2.3. Give focus to consistently 'getting the basics right' which will help increase the amount of capacity the Council can put towards the transformation ambitions, delivery of saving requirements and the corporate priorities.** Examples of which include risk management, improvements in customer services, use of internal audit, complaints monitoring, tracking of member enquiries, HR processes and support for procurement.
- 2.4. Continue to improve performance management and consider where further structural alignment of those in these functions is needed.** Judge success by the quality, timing, engagement, and targeted nature of the decisions made possible both at a locality and borough level – rather than the amount of information that can be produced. Especially in more challenging areas. Key to this is both, the ability to challenge service performance as well as monitoring of strategic outcomes. It also includes continuing to support members in their roles by ensuring effective alignment with Cabinet member ambitions, responsibilities and accountability.
- 2.5. Completing the planned structural review of the finance function will help to shift support for managers and budget holders more towards a business partner model.** This can further support service managers to deliver in full the planned savings. Following this with support, training and more timely service level resource information will also help to improve savings delivery over the course of the next MTFS and help to understand early any financial interdependencies, duplications and lag.

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- 2.6. Building on the progress made to develop a 2030 vision for Bury and building of relationships with partners, co-design the actions required to achieving the priorities under the 2030 vision.** Doing this on equal terms will help create a wider sense of shared ownership of this vision.
- 2.7. Work with others to co-design the Community Engagement Strategy. Embed the cultural and workforce requirements of this within the organisational development programme.** This includes giving sufficient consideration to how far the Council (and potentially other partners) are willing to share space and power in the plan, what each will do with defined review stages. Consideration of any risks around this and further building the relationships to work through the challenges of implementing this will be important.

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the 'on-site' peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- **Claire Symonds** (Managing Director – London Borough of Barking and Dagenham)
- **Cllr Doug Taylor** (London Borough of Enfield)
- **Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen** (Leader – Breckland Council)
- **Jessica Crowe** (Corporate Director of People, Policy and Performance – London Borough of Newham).
- LGA Peer Challenge Manager – **Dan Archer** (LGA).



3.1. Scope and focus

As part of this Corporate Peer Challenge review, the team explored progress against each of the recommendations from the original peer challenge, under the below themes. The aim of this work was not to review performance in all service areas at depth (such as adult services, children's services and so forth), but to review progress made against the corporate recommendations made previously.

Corporate prioritisation and informed decision making

This included the following recommendations from the original CPC:

- Develop a new Corporate Plan which states the priorities for the council over the next three years.
- Develop and deliver a single, comprehensive corporate Performance Management Framework.

Financial management and delivery


This included the following recommendations from the original CPC:

- Strengthen financial management and discipline, building on the action plan recently drafted.
- Councillors and officers to co-design a considered, deliverable commercialisation strategy.

The foundations for transformation

This included the following recommendations from the original CPC:

- Co-produce, then consistently live a new workforce culture. This should reflect the cultural requirements of a new 'integrated' organisation and empower all to meet the level of sustainable corporate transformation required.
- Review organisational and workforce development.
- Centralise relevant support and enabling services into a strong 'Corporate Core'.

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- Invest in the ICT infrastructure in its entirety (hardware, software, connectivity and training) based on clear business cases.
 - Define the council's digital journey and the steps that will need to be taken to deliver it.

Leadership of Place

This included the following recommendations from the original CPC:


- Review the role of the strategic 'Team Bury' partnership, the outcomes it can deliver for Bury and the governance arrangements required to do this.
- Refresh the approach to community engagement and look at how the resourcing of the voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sector could have a greater impact on local priorities.

3.2. The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then:

- **Spoke to around 80 members, officers and partners** as well as additional research and reading.
- **Collectively spent around 128 hours to determine our findings.**
- The equivalent of one person spending **over 3 weeks in Bury**



This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members.

4. Feedback


4.1. Corporate prioritisation and informed decision making

The Council now shares an up-to-date Corporate Plan with the CCG and is using this at a corporate level to bring consistency to what the Council delivers and how the Council operates. A clear link from the 'Let's do it!' strategy for the borough to the Corporate Plan and MTFP is now in place.

Staff are familiar with the Corporate Plan and the "Let's Do It" strapline in particular, although currently this appears much more familiar to staff, than the specific priorities of the Council and place. Whilst the Council has clearly taken steps forward in terms of aligning corporate decisions behind the corporate priorities, there is not yet the familiarity with the set of corporate priorities and principles coming back from services in the same way. Crucially, there is at times a sense of too many priorities felt by those in services which may be due to the high level of strategic ambition at the Council. Further work is required to embed an understanding of the corporate priorities, set by members. This is key to how middle managers and front line staff plan, react and act when delivering services. There is a clear opportunity to further embed this through the forthcoming work on culture and organisational development.

In addition to the work done to develop a new Corporate Plan and Borough Strategy, the Council has also been able to develop a new Housing Strategy, a refreshed Locality Plan for Health and Social Care, a Strategic Regeneration Framework for Radcliffe, a masterplan for Bury town centre and a town plan for Ramsbottom. The Council has also completed a refresh of the Constitution over this period.

At the time of the November 2018 CPC, the Council had high level data dashboards, but they were not being used to consistently enable suitably targeted, informed, timely or




challenging performance discussions. The Council did not in fact appear to have a major appetite at that time for performance discussions. Progress can now be seen in this regard with an updated approach to performance management now in place. Senior officers appear to be starting to have more strategic performance discussions corporately, a direction of travel which should continue.

Those in performance / business intelligence roles in the Corporate Core feel they are able to start challenging other colleagues more from being in the Corporate Core. Officers working in performance believe the Council, at a corporate level, is starting to develop an increased appreciation for performance management and are starting to use it at a more strategic level. There are still some performance functions sitting outside of the Corporate Core which may benefit from being aligned to the Corporate Core more closely. In particular this helps to remove any potential single points of failure in key service areas.

A large amount of capacity in performance is however still stuck doing tasks from previous service roles, in particular there appears to still be a requirement for data movement/presentation tasks rather than analysis and insight. Freeing up more performance capacity and capability at this end is a stated development priority of the Council, with a commitment to invest in the development needs and resource requirements of this, which can help to realise big benefits across service areas and in terms of demand management, prevention and early intervention.

The reliance upon daily, local COVID analysis and how this has been used to shape the response to the pandemic has created more curiosity across a wider cohort of members, and officers, around the value of performance information and the potential it has more widely. Some members and officers are becoming more familiar with performance management following this. On the back of this, the Council should consider what else can be done to support Cabinet members and Scrutiny in particular, with their specific roles, in this regard and the constructive challenge they can bring to service level performance.

There is a need to continue to progress improvement in performance management. Judge success by the quality, timing, engagement and targeted nature of the decisions made possible both at a locality and borough level – rather than the amount of information that can be produced. Especially in more challenging areas – which includes service performance as well as strategic outcomes. Ensuring an effective alignment with Cabinet




member ambitions, responsibilities and accountability will also remain important.

Effective performance management sits alongside a number of other internal processes which are key to the successful day-to-day management of any council. Having these wider 'basics' in place supports informed decision making, helps manage and mitigate risk as well as identify and avoid issues from escalating. Ensuring the Council gets to a point of being consistently good at the basics will help the Council in continuing its improvement journey further, as well as help the Council in putting more of its capacity behind the corporate priorities. Examples of which include:

- A more robust, comprehensive, considered and effective approach to risk management which includes having a corporate risk register which is used fully and closely monitored to manage the risks effectively.
- An approach to internal audit which is based on the risk register and provides further robust, internal challenge.
- Complaints monitoring which helps identify issues earlier, in a more agile way and continue to paint a picture corporately from the intelligence this generates.
- A system of members enquiries which is appropriately monitored for timely resolution and to inform corporate intelligence.
- Improving the customer experience of accessing the Council and finding the right information and solution in quicker and more streamlined ways. This includes how customers and partners contact the Council and can see their queries addressed more quickly, embracing a more modern digital experience as part of this.

4.2. Financial management and delivery

Since the 2018 CPC, the Council has reviewed its financial framework which has included rewriting the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and updating this regularly to take account of the changing context – not least the challenges presented by COVID-19. Further




to this, the Council completed a review of the Capital programme and has put in place a new Capital strategy which has included establishing a £6m regeneration fund which is used on a pump prime basis for local regeneration schemes, then replenished when sites are disposed of and capital receipts are generated. The first programme this fund was used for being a major regeneration programme within Radcliffe. The Council has also rebalanced budgets over this period and implemented a new reserves strategy to bring more coherence to Council's reserves position. The updates to the Constitution agreed by Full Council in 2020/21 included updated procedure rules and a revised financial scheme of delegation.

The MTFS, capital programme and approach to asset management are now more closely linked to the 2030 strategy. The updated approach to asset management is being used to help further the approach to locality based delivery, as well as being used to support inclusive growth.

The overall improvement in the approach to financial management and control at the Council is recognised by External Audit. These improvements were put in place to avoid the type of reliance on short term savings and non-strategic / unplanned use of reserves, which had become a feature previously.

Despite all of these efforts, the harsh reality of the situation presented by COVID-19 is that further, ongoing savings will now be required. The Council's MTFS presented to Cabinet and Full Council in February 2021 highlights a financial gap of £60.3m. £27.3m of which is considered short term COVID related costs and losses of income which would return to normal and a further £33m which would be required by 2024/25. Savings have been agreed that equate to £21.9m, with a further £11m to be identified for 2023/24 (although these figures may vary as more information becomes available over this period). In order to meet this budget challenge on a sustainable basis, the Council have made a strategic decision to use c£12.3m of reserves in 2021/22 and a further £14.3m in 2022/23. This strategic choice affords the Council a short window of time to meet this budget challenge on a sustained basis, leading into the 2023/24 financial year. Reserves are projected to fall from £70m in 2019/20 to £36m in 2022/23 in the lead up to this, so this time is precious and




must be used to full effect in delivering fully and sustainably on the saving requirements.

The Council is significantly reliant on the delivery of the three pillars of the transformation programme by 2022/23. Managing the delivery of this budget challenge will require sufficient capacity, a clear and consistent read across and understanding of interdependencies as well as any hidden costs and time lag. Verifying that all of the projected savings are attributed solely to one saving and are not included elsewhere is crucial. This includes the recognition of any subsequent additional costs as a result of those changes.

Further-to-this, there are significant wider pressures that also need managing such as £85m across the integrated health and social care system in 2022 and the need to deal with the pressures from the Dedicated Schools Grant by 2024/25, following the £16m of revenue support provided by the Department for Education through 'Project Safety Valve'.

Key to making this work is a consistent culture of robust savings and budget management and monitoring. If savings identified can't/aren't delivered, this needs to be owned by the service and challenged across the corporate team. All members and officers need to be aware of the extent of the wider financial challenge this combined picture presents, which is key to the ownership that is required to make it happen. Afterall, if a saving can't be delivered in one way, it has to be delivered in another.

Support and financial information for all stakeholders (members and officers) needs to be further developed to ensure the new expectations and practices are fully understood with resources trackable (such as an up-to-date establishment list) in what is closer to real time. The Council has committed to a package of training and support to all budget holders and managers to ensure new practices are understood and implemented. Completing the planned structural review of the finance function and shifting more towards a business partner model will also help in supporting service managers and budget holders in owning and realising the necessary savings and income requirements.




One of the recommendations from the 2018 CPC was for the Council to develop a commercialisation strategy. This was on the back of a growing interest from some members and officers at that time to become increasingly commercial as a way of supporting the Council's net revenue budget position. This is not a document that the Council is statutorily required to have but is considered good practice when a Council is looking to become increasingly commercial as a way of setting out some clear political, financial and strategic parameters as well as risk appetite within which the Council may consider being commercial. Work on this strategy has not yet started, although this is an area that some members and officers have been reflecting on again more recently, taking on board the current context in which local government operates which includes the opportunities and challenges in local economies following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the different opportunities available to councils in this regard. There is a commitment from the Council to complete a Commercialisation Strategy over the current financial year.

4.3. The foundations for transformation

Following the recommendation made in the 2018 CPC report, the Council restructured to bring together most of the enabling and support functions into a 'Corporate Core', to support resilience, consistency, promote further efficiency and provide additional corporate grip. Having the Corporate Core in place has also started to see benefits for the Council – for example, the speed at which COVID analysis was able to be produced on a daily basis and shared with senior decision makers.

The additional grip brought by the Corporate Core is recognised by services but for some, can feel like an additional requirement to meet. Continuing to evolve the role that the Corporate Core takes should remain in focus and be alive to the wider organisational development and culture work that is due to take place.

There are other emerging priority areas which will be a feature of how the organisation develops which the role that the Corporate Core might be considered in light of, such as increased community engagement as a way of working corporately. To do this well a sense of empowerment and consistency will be important. A balanced, gradual move more



towards a Business Partner model, might in this context become more of a feature moving forward. Within the Corporate Core, there may also be an opportunity to reflect on the service areas and processes which may need to alter their level of performance to support senior managers and middle managers differently – better meeting the needs of the Council and part of a movement towards being consistently strong on ‘the basics’. Examples of which may include some HR processes and support for procurement.

The Council now has a stronger, more permanent senior management team than was the case at the time of the last CPC in November 2018, a team which operates as single and joint team across the Council and CCG. The team structure now gives the Council a stronger basis to progress the Council’s vision and priorities. Given the scale of the council’s ambitions, the strength of the *overall* Council team is going to be key – including how senior managers work with, support and challenge middle managers.


Across the Council in response to open questions, staff consistently offered words around ‘changing’ as a current descriptor of the Council in 2021. This is welcomed by many, many want to see more of this happen, and a number want to help more with this.

An increased level of communication continues to be a feature compared to 2018, something that has been a feature of the last 6 months or so especially and is now in a more regular state than was the case in early 2018. The Council have established a Senior Leader’s Group, Senior Management Forum and a network of volunteer staff change agents. In addition to this, there are weekly staff webinars and weekly email briefings which are all examples of this.

Where functions have been aligned with the CCG – relationships appear very strong, positive, proactive and outcomes focussed (for example, across business intelligence).

Below senior management team level, some of the workforce challenges seen in November 2018 remain and beyond the high level principles set out in the Corporate Plan, the Council has not yet significantly embedded a new, whole organisation workforce culture.

Closely aligning the new workforce culture to how the Council wishes to work with local communities and partners more closely, as well as increasingly orientating public services



around/through locality models of delivery can help to bring corporate consistency and create new opportunities and delivery approaches.

To further the Council's work in terms of organisational development and culture, a Director of People and Inclusion has been appointed, who started with the Council only 9 weeks before the peer team were on site. With this additional capacity and capability which signals the Council's intentions in this regard, the need for organisational development is clearly recognised and welcomed by senior officers.


The Council are now recommended to clearly set out and agree the approach and strategy for organisational development that senior leaders can then consistently support. This approach is likely to require at different stages and in different instances both high support and high challenge. Further work is required on the modernisation of more fundamental HR processes as part of 'getting the basics right' to help enable this.

Beyond this, the Leader and CEX speak with enthusiasm about the opportunity to be part of something genuinely special in Bury, particularly given work being done to reform public services around places. Refining a succinct and consistent way of telling the story of why providing public service in Bury is different and changing, why people will want to work, stay or come to Bury and why that time is now, has a role also in the work on organisational development and developing this new identity and culture. There is clear evidence in some service areas across the sector as to the impact this can have on outcomes and the financial benefits this can also present back to the Council in terms of reduced HR and agency costs.

A further aspect to include within this wider programme of organisational and workforce development are the skills to spot and capitalise on new digital opportunities available to the Council.

Since the 2018 CPC, some investments have been made in ICT infrastructure including the upgrade of unsupported servers and the roll out of new devices although further work is required to provide fit for purpose ICT infrastructure which drives a digital first strategy. There have been a number of successes to date, including over the last year:

- Successfully managing an increase in the number of staff who work remotely from



around 100 per day to around 1,000 per day.

- Implementation of a new telephony system – switching all call centres to a new contact management system.
- Moving the Council's HR system from on-premises servers to cloud based systems.

Although a great deal of further work is required which reflects a historical under investment in ICT seen at the Council for a number of years. This includes completing the roll out of Microsoft Office 365 to all members and staff as well as going further with the device replacement programme.

Over this period, the shift to agile working has been received well by many staff and creates further possibilities for how ways of working could be modernised and supported moving forwards. As put by one officer - *“we’ve found that agile works. But how could we make it work better for us?”*.

There are some basics that would assist with this, for example making it much easier to find the email and phone contact details for colleagues as well as their availability. Another might be in supporting staff from the Council to see the intranet of those in the CCG (and vica-versa).

The Council were challenged previously to establish a roadmap for its digital modernisation. Progress in this regard can now be seen through the transformation programme presented to Cabinet in July 2021. Ensuring the implications of this work are fully understood by all stakeholders will remain important throughout this work and the newly established board should now have a clear role in this.

There are clearly capacity requirements to fully realise the benefits of this but seeing this programme through makes a key contribution to how the Council addresses the wider budget challenge and can then further modernise and innovate on the back of this.

4.4. Leadership of Place

“COVID has been a real rollercoaster and relationship builder with our partners”


The Council appears to have built up more credit and trust with the community over the course of the last year in leading the local response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council stated an intention to establish a new relationship with communities based on meaningful voice, co-design and collaboration as part of its position statement leading into this peer challenge. Given that trust is often hard to gain but easy to lose, how this evolving approach is developed and implemented with consistency will be important and should be closely linked to both the work on organisational development and a locality led approach to wider public service reform.

Key to which will be how officers of the Council work with and demonstrate an understanding of the local voluntary, community and faith sector.

Given a Community Engagement Strategy is due to be developed in 2021/22, considering in detail how far the Council and others are willing to go in this relationship will be important as a way of being clear about expectations and then being consistent with the commitments made as part of this strategy. This includes how much space and control in each of the plan, do and review stages the Council is happy to share or let go of. This should be based on a considered assessment of the opportunities and risks this might present, when it would be appropriate and the conditions in which it would not as well as the relationships required of this – which includes being able to work through any challenges this presents.

When looking at partnership working at a local strategic partnership level through Team Bury, the work done to develop the 2030 strategy is recognised by partners. Team Bury now meets more regularly than was the case when the peer team were in Bury in 2018. The Council is recognised as being a different type of partner now than was the case in




2018 with the level of engagement from the Leader and CEX in particular recognised by partners. With some partners, the Council is now seen as being more ‘business friendly’ in how it operates at this level and there is a recognition for the steps the Council took to set up a Business Leader’s Group, with business leaders now also involved in some Council recruitment.

The next stage in, embedding and implementing the 2030 strategy will be key. Some partners see the 2030 strategy as a document they jointly own, however some see it as a Council document about the place which they have seen. The next planned stage will involve the co-design of the actions that sit underneath the current priorities specified in this document. This presents a test for partnership working locally – and requires exploring ‘the art of the possible’, requiring mutual openness to either taking on different roles or co-designing new solutions, rather than listing what each partner is already committed to doing.

Many partners are open to working in new ways - *“we want the Council to tell us what we can do to help”*, which in some ways is a great opportunity. To embed partnership working more deeply, the design of delivery plans needs to be truly shared on more equal terms. It is not about the Council telling people what they want from them – rather sharing the design space around these priorities.

Suitable governance arrangements based on delivery can then follow on from this – the pace of communication and at which decisions can be made being particularly important to partners. Looking at who is around the ‘Team Bury’ table and who could be is also a part of this – an action the partnership have already committed to.

Significant progress has been made in terms of locality and neighbourhood working since 2018, with this way of working now much more embedded across the social care system. There are opportunities to continue to grow this further with all of the potential benefits for health, social care and education. This can have a big impact on local outcomes – as well as the use of public sector spend on these issues in Bury. Reflecting on the roles of ward



members within the localities model, as well as how they interface with officers (and vice-versa - including front line and middle managers) will continue to be an important consideration as this model continues to develop. This relationship, at a locality level might also be a feature of the organisational development programme.


Stronger, more collaborative relationships are seen with partners around Health and Social Care on the back of the work done to date, which public and community organisations locally can continue to build upon. Given the changes presented by the ICS White Paper, the Council has shown strong place leadership by taking steps to ensure this change does not have a derailing effect on the work done to prioritise a locality focussed approach to public service delivery which are so central to the local vision for public services in Bury and the delivery of the 2030 vision.

The presence that Bury has in Greater Manchester will continue to have a significant role in realising the ambitions of the 2030 vision. How the Council is able to act as a place leader for Bury in Greater Manchester will therefore have ongoing capacity requirements. Continuing to define and then resource the relationship Bury wants with Greater Manchester (and beyond) longer term will remain a challenge for the Council.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a six month check-in meeting. This will be a short, facilitated session which creates space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps.



In the meantime, Claire Hogan, LGA Principal Adviser for the North West, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Claire is available to discuss any further support the council requires; her email address is Claire.Hogan@local.gov.uk