

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

July 2025

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

SUMMARY

Since spring 2024, alongside the development of the new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Board has undertaken a structured programme of development to review and reflect on its purpose, role, responsibilities, and overall effectiveness.

As part of this work, the Board engaged the Local Government Association (LGA) to provide external support. This included one-to-one interviews with Board members and the facilitation of a dedicated development session in March 2025. The LGA also shared national insights and examples of good practice to inform the process.

The review generated a series of recommendations across four key thematic areas:

- The Board's purpose, role and responsibilities
- Strategy development, priority setting and agenda planning
- Membership and representation
- Ways of working, partnership culture and support arrangements

These recommendations have directly shaped the revised ToR for the Health and Wellbeing Board. The updated ToR incorporate the following key changes:

- **Reaffirmation of the Board's role:** While the Health and Wellbeing Board remains a formal statutory committee, it will operate primarily as a **strategic partnership**.
- **Clarification of purpose:** The Board is not an executive decision-making body, nor does it function as a scrutiny committee.
- **Streamlined membership:** The number of elected members has been reduced to support a more focused, partnership-led model.
- **Introduction of a Vice Chair:** A new Vice Chair role, nominated from a partner organisation, has been created to promote shared leadership across the system.
- **Expanded membership:** The Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth has been added to the Board, strengthening the Board's focus on the wider determinants of health.
- **Place-based focus:** Greater emphasis is placed on developing a strong sense of place and a shared identity across the partnership.
- **Clarity of remit:** The Board's statutory functions and responsibilities are clearly articulated.

- **Defined relationship with other governance structures:** The revised Terms clarify the Board's distinct role in relation to other local groups, partnerships, and committees.
- **Strategic alignment:** The Board will actively support the alignment of local strategies, reduce duplication, and drive greater system integration.
- **Shared ways of working:** A common set of expectations has been agreed to underpin collaborative working and effective partnership behaviors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- Formally endorses the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Board and recommends their submission to Cabinet and Full Council for approval.
- Formally endorses the proposed changes to Board membership and Vice Chair arrangements and recommends their submission to Cabinet and Full Council for approval. These changes include:
 - A reduction in the number of elected members, with the Board now comprising the following five elected members:
 - Cllr Lisa Evans, Leader of the Council
 - Cllr Pauline Beall, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care
 - Cllr Clare Besford, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
 - Cllr Lynn Hall, Shadow Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care
 - Cllr Jack Miller, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
 - The nomination of Karen Hawkins, Director of Delivery, Northeast and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, as Vice Chair of the Board.
 - The inclusion of Tracey Carter, Director of Regeneration and Inclusive Growth, as a new member of the Board.

NEXT STEPS

- Subject to the Board's agreement, the revised Terms of Reference will be submitted to Cabinet and Full Council for formal approval and adoption.
- A communications plan will be developed to support the relaunch and implementation of the revised Terms of Reference. This plan will be brought back to the Board for consideration in September.
- Two additional follow-up reviews are currently in progress and will be reported to the Board in due course:
 - A review of the local governance landscape to clarify the role of the Health and Wellbeing Board in relation to other local platforms, groups, and partnerships.
 - An assessment of the sub-groups or task-and-finish groups required to support the effective delivery of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Board's strategic priorities.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

In developing the revised Terms of Reference for the Health and Wellbeing Board, legal implications have been considered to ensure compliance with relevant legislation. Statutory membership and functions have been maintained, and the revisions uphold transparency and accountability requirements.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

The revision of the Health and Wellbeing Board's ToR presents an opportunity to sharpen the Board's focus, enhance clarity of purpose, and increase its effectiveness in improving population health and reducing health inequalities. The updated ToR is designed to strengthen collaboration across system partners, ensure greater strategic alignment, and reaffirm the Board's leadership role in addressing health inequalities and the wider determinants of health.

In addition, the revised ToR aims to create space to embed a stronger community voice and improve representation, while also enhancing transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to local needs and priorities.

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