Supplementary written evidence submitted by Kate Ardern, Director of Public Health, Wigan Council (PHP0131)

Re: Health Select Committee 24th May 2016

Thank you very much indeed for your very kind letter. I was most honoured to be asked to give evidence both on behalf of Wigan Council and the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities. Please also pass my thanks on to other members of the Committee – as a first time witness it was a valuable and very positive learning experience. If there is anything I can improve on then please let me know.

My reflections on the session are that the lines of enquiry on firstly, trying to identify transferrable learning and secondly, on how new systems and governance post 2013 could respond to new and emerging health protection threats were very timely and extremely pertinent. I’d strongly commend to the Committee the very positive experience of embedding health protection within the existing and well-established national emergency planning and response systems and structures like Local Resilience Forums and Local Health Resilience Partnerships we’ve had in Greater Manchester as I really think that successful resilient health protection requires an equal partnership between scientific expertise and civic leadership. The Greater Manchester Resilience Forum Chair, Paul Argyle is very happy to share our learning with others – we are already starting to do through the LGA Peer Challenge process and the Sector-led Improvement work on outbreak management and response is readily transferrable to other areas. We would be also happy to share our leaning going forward as a Rockefeller Foundation 100 Resilient Cities International Challenge winner 2016 (announced subsequently to my oral evidence session) as our programme develops over the next 12 months. I would also commend to the Committee, the importance of the assurance role of Health and Well-being Boards and all 23 Health and Well-being Boards across the NW of England regularly receive health protection updates which are agreed between PHE NW and Directors of Public Health – testament to excellence of relationships and communications.

My only comments for improvement would be that it would have been helpful to:

1. Consider the role of the wider health and local government workforce in the building skills and capacity for health protection – especially around surge capacity for incidents but also for prevention. This is particularly linked to the quality agenda in social care.
2. Consider the importance of building community resilience and the public’s skills and confidence about health protection matters
3. Have time for a consideration of antimicrobial resistance given the importance of responding to this threat (I’ve appended Greater Manchester’s action plan and the learning from our multi-agency workshop – all part of our Devolution programme to this e-mail)

I hope this is helpful reflection on the session – thank you once again for inviting me to give evidence. The other two attachments are 1. Work on improving screening uptake which my team in Wigan Council has been commissioned to deliver by NHS England and 2. We were delighted to hear Simon Stevens cite Wigan’s work on improving performance on tackling alcohol, drugs and smoking in the evidence session on June 7th (knowing your personal interest in alcohol harm reduction and it’s actually my other Greater Manchester lead DPH
role) so I’ve attached a PDF of a presentation which sets out our current work in these areas which might be helpful.

June 2016