



To - Health & Social Care Scrutiny Panel

Date of meeting - 12th January, 2016

Notes of - Committee Administrator

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

Background

1. As part of their 'sector led improvement' support to local government, the Local Government Association (LGA) offers the delivery of a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC).
2. The CPC is conducted by a Peer Team comprising Officers and Councillors from other local authorities who are selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and is designed to help Councils improve their performance.
3. Following agreement by the Executive, the Council was subject to a CPC on 3rd to 5th November, 2015.
4. Prior to their time onsite, the Peer Team were provided with a Position Statement on the Council (covering a range of matters such as Pendle's geography, demography, political make-up, structures, financial position, organisational capacity etc.) along with a range of documents and information to ensure they were familiar with the Council.
5. During their time onsite, the Team interviewed around 90 people including a range of Council staff, Councillors, external partners and other stakeholders. The Team also visited key regeneration sites in the area to see the outcome of some of the Council's work in this area.
6. As part of the process, a meeting was held to discuss health and wellbeing issues at which Councillor representatives and officers of the Council were present.
7. A number of issues were discussed, including the difficulties associated with cross county working; the partnership arrangements currently in place to address Pendle priorities; and how the Council fed into the East Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Partnership and ultimately the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board.
8. The Council's work to support the Dementia Friends campaign and the role of member Champions was also discussed.

9. At the conclusion of their time onsite, the Peer Team provided their initial feedback in the form of a presentation to many of those people interviewed over the three days onsite. Since then, the Peer Team has prepared a more detailed report setting out their findings and recommendations.
10. With regard to health and social care related issues, it was noted that –
- “...Officers are held in high regard by strategic partners including Police, County Council, College, Health and the voluntary sector.”
 - “...PBC has continued to invest in the Pendle Health and Wellbeing Group after the decision was made to stop resourcing it by Lancashire County Council. It still reports into the East Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board and is attended by the county council. As a result of this the council has completed impressive and sensitive work around child mortality with specific parts of its communities again demonstrating its understanding of local need and its commitment to residents.”
 - “...There is also an awareness across the borough of the issues around land supply and housing viability both of which are barriers to growth in the district. The housing issues facing the council are based on quality rather than affordability. If the council address this it could lead to better health and educational attainment as well as attracting greater investment.”
 - “...From a sustainable position the council will be able to continue and expand work with partners, who have indicated that they are keen for more joint working and the exploration of wider opportunities to bring development and investment to Pendle. This would mean higher quality housing built in the borough and in turn greater investment to lead to better educational attainment for residents and a more skilled workforce.”
 - “...There is strong local decision making within Pendle which is firmly embedded within the way the council works and delivers services. The council has a solid position within the Pennine Lancashire cluster and is well placed to benefit from the opportunities that will arise from the combined authority plans if it increases its strategic capacity and decision making. PBC have proved that area-based work makes valuable contributions to the local communities but it is equally important for the council to now create and utilise capacity for strategic work. The peer team consider that if this focus is not made then PBC will be at risk of missing opportunities for joint working and further investment in the borough, risking future quality of housing and more jobs in the borough.”
 - “...the Leader has appointed an Executive with portfolios and has champions for specific areas e.g. disability and mental health. This is seen as positive by members and encourages a Pendle-wide focus on a number of issues.”
11. When considering the council's financial planning and viability the Team suggested that –

“...A comprehensive review to rationalise leisure centre provision and examine the financial relationship with Pendle Leisure Trust could provide opportunities for further savings.”

12. It was also stated that –

“...Historically, the approach in PBC has been to equalise resources for every local area. This means that each locality receives the same blanket service, for example there are three swimming pools across the borough, one for each of the main towns. The cost of providing this duplicated service does mean that the Trust is vulnerable to low-cost providers undercutting its operations with offerings such as fitness centres which could make some of its facilities uneconomic. The peer team consider that by not applying a holistic and co-ordinated approach it is possible the council might have missed out on specific solutions for your localities.”

13. Further details can be found in the final report which can be accessed on the Council's website at item 10 via the following link

<http://www.pendle.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/2105/council/attachment/18251>

14. The findings and recommendations of the Peer Team are to be reviewed by a Task and Finish Group of six Councillors (two from each of the main political groups), with a view to developing an Action Plan which would deal with the issues raised.

15. The implementation of the Action Plan will then be the subject of regular reports to the Council's Executive along with a six-monthly update to the Council.

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