



REPORT OF: STRATEGIC DIRECTOR

TO: COUNCIL

DATES: 23RD MARCH 2016

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CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the draft Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan to deal with the issues raised by the Peer Team.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council approve the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan provided at Appendix B.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Corporate Peer Challenge will form part of the Council's continuous improvement work.

ISSUE

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). The Peer Challenge is designed to help Councils improve their performance.
2. In view of the recent changes in the political and senior officer leadership of the Council, it was felt that a CPC was an ideal opportunity for the Council to have an external assessment of its present position as well as consider opportunities for any improvements that may be necessary given the challenges faced by the Council.
3. Following agreement from the Executive, the Council was subject to a CPC during the 3rd–5th November 2015. The Peer Team comprised the following people:-
 - John Sellgren – Chief Executive, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
 - Bryony Rudkin – Deputy Leader, Ipswich Borough Council (Labour)
 - Keith House – Leader, Eastleigh Borough Council (Liberal Democrat)
 - Tom FitzPatrick – Leader, North Norfolk District Council (Conservative)

- Vic Allison – Deputy Managing Director, Wychavon District Council
- Ami Beeton – Programme Manager, LGA

4. The Peer Team provided their initial findings in the form of a presentation on the 5th November 2015 which concluded the review on site. Following this the Peer Team provided a more detailed report setting out their findings and recommendations.

Current Position

5. This detailed report was presented to Council at their 17th December 2015 meeting. This is attached at Appendix A for your information.
6. It was agreed that a cross-party task and finish group of 6 Councillors (2 from each Group) be established. In setting up the group the Council recognised that the roles of Members and of political groups are pivotal in addressing the issues highlighted by the Peer Team and taking its recommendations forward. Support will be provided primarily by the Strategic Director and the Corporate Director.
7. The Corporate Peer Challenge Task & Finish Group comprised the following Members:
 - Cllr M Iqbal
 - Cllr A Mahmood
 - Cllr J Cooney
 - Cllr J Starkie
 - Cllr A Greaves
 - Cllr K Hartley
8. The Corporate Peer Challenge Task & Finish Group met on the 12th February 2016. They were asked to consider the findings and recommendations in the Peer Team report and to develop an action plan to address the issues highlighted and to report on this to the Council. The draft action plan is provided at Appendix B for Members consideration.
9. Subject to approval of the action plan, and as agreed by Council at their meeting on 17th December 2015, the Executive are then to take it forward with 6 monthly progress reports to Council.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy

There are no policy implications arising from the contents of this report.

Financial

The Council is currently a subscriber to the LGA. The Corporate Peer Challenge is provided by the LGA at no additional cost to the Council.

Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

There are no risk management implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

Health and Safety:

There are no Health and Safety implications arising from this report.

Climate Change:

As with health and safety implications, there are no climate change implications arising directly from this report.

Community Safety:

There are no community safety issues arising directly from the contents of this report.

Equality and Diversity:

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the contents of this report.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Report of the Peer Review Team – Corporate Peer Challenge

Appendix B – Draft Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None