

COUNCIL

15 JULY 2020 (02 JULY 2020 – Item 17)

Report of the Chief Executive

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - ACTION PLAN

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the Draft Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan for consideration and approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan be approved.

WARDS AFFECTED

All

STRATEGIC LINK

The Corporate Plan sets out the District Council's priorities and areas for improvement and identifies targets to be achieved. Service Plans, policies and strategies supplement the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Peer Challenge has informed the formulation of the Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2024).

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The final feedback report following the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken 22nd – 24th October was received and circulated to all Members on 21st January 2020. A copy of the feedback report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Leaders Advisory Group held on 11th February 2020, Leaders' were informed that, in response to the feedback report, the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) would commence work on the drafting of an Action Plan which would outline the proposed actions to be taken in response to the CPC recommendations, together with a timescale for implementation.
- 1.3 A draft Action Plan was presented to, and considered by, the meeting of the Leaders Advisory Group held on 18th May 2020. In light of comments received, this has been further revised and is attached at Appendix 2.

2. ACTION PLAN

- 2.1 As part of their final presentation, the LGA team reported that the district council has a good understanding and appreciation of its local context and is focussing on continually improving local community relationships. The Council is also regarded as an effective leader of the district by partners who attest to the authority being a good partner to work with. Underpinning all of our activities is a consistent record of good financial management. The Council therefore has a very strong foundation despite the ongoing long term financial uncertainty that exists.

2.2 However, the key recommendations outlined to the Council as part of the LGA Peer Challenge presentation also offer a series of constructive challenges on the Council's need to:-

- Develop a strong narrative and vision for the area that is owned and understood by members, officers and key stakeholders;
- Ensure the new Corporate Plan is forward looking and takes account of the potential for a fresh approach which is collectively owned and resourced;
- Ensure that our commercialisation approach is sufficiently clear, ambitious and realistic;
- Consider its own skills base and investment capability to promote jobs and business growth;
- Engage with strategic and local organisations to build trust and community capacity to advocate for and deliver on important initiatives.

2.3 The Action Plan outlined at Appendix 2, seeks to respond positively to the challenges identified and identifies a series of specific, measurable, achievable and time-bound (SMART) actions over the coming months to deliver sustained improvement.

2.4 The Action Plan was agreed by the Leaders Advisory Group and is now presented to Council for formal approval.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Legal

There is no legal obligation for the Council to undertake a Peer Review, however, a Peer Review is a useful tool to ensure that the Council is complying with all its legal duties in the most efficient manner.

3.2 Financial

There are no direct costs of undertaking a Peer Review, other than staff time that has been met from existing budgets. Some of the items in the Action Plan have financial implications but, where these cannot be contained within existing budgets, further reports will be presented to Members for approval of additional spending. The financial risk is assessed as low.

The review of financial planning and viability, which formed part of the peer challenge, has provided a useful assessment of the Council's arrangements for financial management and financial sustainability.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

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6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Position Statement (September 2019)
Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report (January 2020)

7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report
Appendix 2 : Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan