

Name of meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 4 November 2019

Title of report: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Purpose of report

To seek input from OSMC on the approach to the development of an action plan that responds to the recommendations from the LGA Corporate Peer challenge.

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarises the format of the corporate peer challenge that was undertaken in Summer 2019, and sets out the approach to the development of action plan to address the subsequent recommendations shared by the peer challenge team.
- 1.2 The action plan will be presented to Cabinet, and subsequently considered by Council on 13 November.

2. Information required to take a decision

- 2.1 Peer challenges are improvement focused and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals.
- 2.2 The Kirklees corporate peer challenge took place from 9 - 12 July 2019. It involved substantial input from a wide range of staff, elected members and stakeholders.
- 2.3 The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components covered by all Corporate Peer Challenges. These are the areas the LGA believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:
 1. *Understanding of the local place and priority setting:* Does the Council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
 2. *Leadership of Place:* Does the Council provide effective leadership of place through its elected Members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
 3. *Organisational leadership and governance:* Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
 4. *Financial planning and viability:* Does the Council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
 5. *Capacity to deliver:* Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the Council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

- 2.4 In addition, the Council asked the peer team to take a sense check of whether the Council has the right focus, how the Council's 'journey' might be speeded up and what more the Council could do.
- 2.5 The peer team have shared their feedback report. The report identified key strengths including:
- Strong communities with strong identities.
 - Incredibly dedicated and committed staff.
 - An ambitious investment budget.
- 2.6 It also set out a series of key recommendations to the Council.
- 2.7 The recommendations have been discussed at a meeting of cross party Leaders in October, and the full feedback report will be discussed at Cabinet on 12 November. The action plan that will address how the Council will respond to the peer team's recommendations will be considered by Council on 13 November.
- 2.8 The action plan will form an addendum to the [Corporate Plan](#). Progress against it will be reported on a quarterly basis, aligned with Corporate Plan progress reports.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People Partners and Place

The peer challenge team saw much evidence of the "We're Kirklees" journey and its focus on people, partners and place during their time in Kirklees. The direction of travel it represents is supported in the recommendations in the feedback report, particularly around place-based working.

3.2 Improving outcomes for children

There are no recommendations specifically focused on outcomes for children, though the action plan will ensure that children and young people are considered in follow up actions including communication and engagement.

3.3 Other (e.g. Legal/Financial or Human Resources)

The peer challenge is not a statutory requirement and the recommendations made by the peer team are recommendations rather than requirements. The action plan being developed will form an addendum to the Corporate Plan which is part of the Council's Article 4 Policy Framework.

Workstreams within the action plan which require more detailed consideration will be subject to further decisions.

4. Consultees and their opinions

During the peer challenge period the peer team:

- Spoke to more than 300 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 50 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 280 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 7 weeks in Kirklees Council.

5. Next steps and timelines

Cabinet – 12 November
Council – 13 November

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

To note the approach to the peer challenge and associated action plan.

Contact officer

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