

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 October 2018
Subject:	Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge		
Report Of:	Leader of the Council		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Leader of the Council		
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Appendices:	1. Corporate Peer Challenge, Action Plan		

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present progress made in implementing the recommendations from the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2017 and to sign off the action plan as complete.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the Council's progress in implementing the recommendations in the feedback report be noted
- (2) the Action Plan be signed off as complete and made available to the LGA, staff and the public via the Council's website

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Since the abolition of the Audit Commission in 2009, the local government sector has assumed responsibility for continuous improvement. The LGA is managing a system of 'sector led improvement' on behalf of the local government sector in England. Key principles of sector led improvement are that:
- councils are responsible for their own performance
 - stronger local accountability leads to further improvement
 - councils have a sense of collective responsibility for performance in the sector as a whole.

Corporate Peer challenges are an important aspect of this.

- 3.2 Corporate peer challenges involve a team of senior officers and councillors from other councils who come together for a short period of time to review and challenge practice of the host authority. The process is not an inspection; rather it is about continuous improvement. Although not a requirement, councils are invited to share

the feedback report widely to demonstrate openness and transparency about how they are led and managed.

3.3 Gloucester City Council invited a team of eight peers between 14-17 November 2017.

3.4 The brief for the peer team included five core questions that are critical to council's improvement and performance:

1. How well do we understand the local context and how do we use this to inform a clear vision and priorities?
2. Do we provide effective leadership of place through our elected members and officers; and do we have constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Do we have 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. Do we have a financial plan in place to ensure long-term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
5. Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and do we influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

The brief also included a review of progress since the last corporate peer challenge in 2013.

3.7 The team compared Gloucester City Council in 2017 with the council peers visited back in 2013 and they said that it was like comparing 'chalk and cheese'. The improvement over that period is the result of sustained hard work from council officers and members with the support of the LGA.

3.8 The peer team made issued 10 recommendations to the Council which we were approved by Cabinet in April 2018, together with proposed actions, timescales and lead officers.

3.9 A progress report is attached in Appendix A. It shows that all actions have been implemented and that the action plan can be signed off as complete.

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

None directly

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 N/A

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 Monitoring and formal sign off of the recommendations of the peer challenge team demonstrate effective corporate governance arrangements.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 For accountability and transparency purposes, we will share the completed action plan with staff, members and partners who had direct involvement in the peer challenge. It will also be made available to the public via the council's website.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 None directly.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 None

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 Effective engagement with sector led improvement is an important part of good corporate governance. The findings of the peer challenge have provided us with assurance and its recommendations will enable further improvement of the council's processes, practice and service delivery.

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

N/A

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

N/A

Background Documents: None