

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	7th November 2019	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3173
TITLE:	Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: 1) LGA Corporate Peer Review Final Report 2) Council response to Peer Review and Action Plan		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The corporate LGA Peer Review took place in July 2019. This review was undertaken by a team of Councillors and Senior Officers from local authorities across the UK who examined the four elements of a corporate peer review which looks at the Council's leadership governance, financial planning and capacity to delivery.
- 1.2 The review also examined an area of the Councils choosing to help the Council focus on a local issue. The Council requested the review team to examine the Council's engagement with its communities and how it might further develop and improve its approach.
- 1.3 The Council have agreed with the LGA that the outcomes of the review and the Councils response would be published and that an Action Plan would be developed, monitored and implemented to address the recommendations in the feedback report. This would ensure that the Council were open and transparent with the findings of the Peer Review process and the activity they will be undertaking in progressing the recommendations in the report.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to;

- 2.1 Endorse the recommendations outlined in the LGA Peer Report and agree for the report and action plan to be published on the Councils Website
- 2.2 Agree to receive a six monthly monitoring report on progress against the Action Plan as outlined in Annex B

2.3 Agree to invite the LGA Peer Review team back or a follow up visit in the summer of 2020 to review progress.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The full Peer Review feedback is shown at **Annex A** to this report.

3.2 Corporate Peer reviews 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 focus. The peers use their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they meet, things they see and material that they read.

3.3 The peer team provide feedback as critical friends, not as assessors, consultants or inspectors.

3.4 The scope and brief are a Peer Review cover the core components of all corporate peer challenges :

- Understanding of the local place and priority setting
- Leadership of Place
- Financial planning and viability
- Organisational leadership and governance
- Capacity to deliver

3.5 The Peer review also focus on a Council selected topic and the Council asked the team to review "our engagement with communities and how you could further develop and improve our approach"

3.6 The LGA Peer Team undertook a review of the Council in July 2019, the team consisted off the following Members:-

- Simon Wales, former Deputy Leader - LB Sutton
- Councillor Alan Jarrett, Leader - Medway Council
- Andrew Lewis, Chief Executive - Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Alison Hughes, Assistant Director Strategic ICT Partnership - Wigan and Bolton Councils
- Andrew Hardingham, Director of Finance (S151) - Plymouth City Council
- Susan Attard, Head of Productivity - LGA
- Letitia Holden, Local Government Stewardship - MHCLG
- Paul Clarke, Peer Challenge Manager - LGA

3.7 The Peers reviewed a range of information to ensure we were familiar with the council, the challenges it is facing and its plans for the future.

3.8 They spent 4 days onsite at the Council during which they spoke to more than 170 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders, gathered information and views from more than 45 meetings, visited key sites and additional research and reading and collectively spent more than 300 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending nearly 8 weeks in Bath and North East Somerset

3.9 The peer review report outlined a number of very positive issues including being well led and managed, strong track record and foundation for achievements and some strong processes and a sound financial base. However, the report also highlighted a number of challenges and potential areas of improvement for the Council to consider.

3.10 The Cabinet has now reviewed the contents of the feedback report and reviewed the recommendations and have developed an Action Plan to address the issues. This Action Plan can be found in **Annex B** to this report.

3.11 The implementation of the Action Plan will be monitored on a six monthly basis and reported back to Cabinet for consideration.

3.12 The LGA have requested that the Peer Team is invited back to follow up on the initial review and to check progress against the recommendations in the report.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 None

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The costs of implementing the action plan can be found from existing budgets. Areas that require further scoping will be brought forward once completed for possible funding within the budget proposals for 2020/21.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 The Action Plan will ensure that all aspects of the Climate Change policy are implemented where appropriate, as part of the delivery of the Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy as part of the overarching Policy and Strategy framework of the Council.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

This report has been brought to the attention of the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer of the Council.

9.1 The formal report and action plan will be published by the Council and copies of the reports made available to any interested parties.

Contact person	Steve Harman, Head of Business Support, Programme and Performance Directorate of Partnerships and Corporate Services.
Background papers	.
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	