

Cheltenham Borough Council

Corporate peer challenge – 16 to 19 September 2014

Action plan – update as at end of December 2014

Key suggestion and ideas for consideration	Management Comments	Proposed action/Update	Lead officer
Align strategies and plans in line with your new corporate plan and then effectively communicate to all	The corporate strategy for 2015/18 is currently being developed.	In developing the new corporate strategy ensure alignment to existing strategies and plans. Once strategy is drafted and approved ensure that it is communicated clearly to stakeholders and employees. Looking to develop linkages between corporate strategy and procurement strategy	Richard Gibson Strategy and engagement strategy.
Consider longer term financial planning, greater level of sensitivity analysis and scenario planning	The council currently produces a three year plan on the basis that it is hard to estimate beyond this period. Production of a plan for a longer period which could cut across several borough and general election periods would be significant work. However the proposal is an interesting one which will be considered.	Obtain copy of the MTFS produced by Sevenoaks DC to ascertain the level of detail and to talk to the finance team to ascertain how it is prepared. BTG group to consider how scenario plans and sensitivity analysis can be used on the strategy to ensure that options are fully tested and understood. Contact has been made with the Chief Finance Officer at Sevenoaks District council with a view to discussing their approach to longer term forecasting of the MTFS in early 2015.	Mark Sheldon Director of resources
Reflect how to use the considerable talents that members bring	There is a wealth of talent within the member pool and they bring a range of skills and	Ask members to complete an audit of skills Cabinet to use this when setting up working	Rosalind Reeves Democratic

	<p>knowledge. Members are engaged in working groups both cabinet and scrutiny. Overview and scrutiny committee to consider what actions they feel are appropriate.</p>	<p>groups. Cabinet and managers to consider how members could be engaged on an informal basis through workshops to help support policy development Democratic Services have drafted a member skills questionnaire and are planning to pilot it with some members in the New Year.</p>	<p>services manager</p>
<p>Consider how scrutiny might reappraise its work programme with particular reference to the opportunity to play a part in scrutinising the progress of critical projects</p>	<p>The committee are considering the report at their meeting on 3 November and will consider the proposal</p>	<p>Discussions have taken place between officers from Democratic Services and the Business Development team and a report is being brought back to O&S in January on how O&S might get more involved in key projects.</p>	<p>Rosalind Reeves Democratic services manager</p>
<p>Clarify and communicate the purposes, accountabilities and key personnel for your range of delivery vehicles</p>	<p>This had already been identified by members and managers are taking steps to ensure that members are aware of the roles and accountabilities.</p>	<p>Appropriate member seminars and through useful information leaflets. A revised structure chart is being prepared by Democratic Services at the request of Members.</p>	<p>Pat Pratley Deputy CEX</p>
<p>Consider a fundamental review of project management, risk management and procurement</p>	<p>There have been reviews undertaken on both the AG&M project and the cemetery and crematorium – both of which provide useful lessons learnt as to whether it is the process, culture or application. The peer review team are right to suggest that given the direction of travel it is important to ensure that our risk management, procurement and project management processes are able to support the pace of change.</p>	<p>SLT/SM to have a session considering the lessons learnt from both the cemetery and crematorium project and the AG&M project and consider what lessons learnt mean for existing processes. Risk management training is already planned for all managers at the end of October. Consideration should be given to separate risk sub groups for key programmes and projects. 20 officers attended the risk management training in October 2014.</p>	<p>Mark Sheldon Director of resources</p>

		The Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Resources and the council's Business Development Manager have met with Gloucestershire County council to discuss their approach to project management with a view to sharing knowledge and experience and the potential for an officer workshop.	
Reassess how you manage the interface between priorities and capacity	The senior leadership team undertake a resource management process which reviews capacity and priorities. Given the pace of change and the reduction in capacity within the organisation it is agreed that it is important to undertake a review of our approach.	Reassess the approach to resource management to ensure that it is appropriate. The review to be aligned to the development of the new corporate strategy and to be in place by 31 March 2015. Work is underway to complete a resource review of the emerging corporate strategy. Ken Dale is also undertaking a review of the current resource management process with regard to major projects.	Ken Dale Business improvement manager
Consider ways to engage and consult more widely the public and customer through consultation	Consultation is undertaken on specific issues rather than a blanket approach on all services. This has been found to be more effective as it targets specific issues and is a more cost effective way of engaging with the public.	As part of the development of the corporate strategy for 2015/18 undertake a consultation exercise to ensure that there is wider engagement on the strategic direction of travel for the council. Residents' forum meeting for January to coincide with the budget consultation	Richard Gibson Strategy and engagement strategy.
Consider a staff survey and keep focus on staff morale through change	GO shared services have recently appointed a new head of HR. This will be discussed with her as to how best this could be achieved in an effective and meaningful way. Employees do have the ability to post comments on the intranet and this is a useful way of testing opinion on specific matters.	Employee sessions to be held in November and the idea of regular staff surveys or other means of engagement to be tested out with them at these sessions. Employee's sessions completed in November/December with a presentation from the Chief Executive on 2020 Vision and	Andrew North Chief Executive

		<p>REST and separate sessions on commitments and the new appraisal process where staff were encouraged to give their views.</p> <p>The council will be undertaking an employee engagement survey in the new year</p>	
Keep your IT requirements and plans front and centre	<p>Since the peer review was undertaken further work has been undertaken on the infrastructure of the network which has helped to stabilise the current systems.</p> <p>Support has been provided through our GO partners to assist the shared service in helping to improve the current infrastructure.</p>	<p>IT Business relationship manager post created for period of six months to support the shared service with service redesign and transformation.</p> <p>Rachel McKinnon seconded to this post till May 2015.</p> <p>The ICT restructure has been agreed and is now being implemented.</p> <p>More regular updates to users are being issued</p> <p>Infrastructure upgrades to stabilize the system has taken place with a major upgrade of the network planned for early 2015.</p> <p>Regular updates to SLT on progress</p>	Mark Sheldon Director of resources

Key messages from staff focus group	Management comments	Proposed action	Lead officer
Greater visibility of the senior team	As there are now fewer direct employees nearly all of which are based in the municipal offices this will be easier to manage	Employee sessions to be held in November and exec board to test out with employees as to what they want via visibility Employee sessions held in November/December 2014	Andrew North Chief Executive
Ensuring appraisals are effective and	Appraisal process has been updated. Session	Employee focus group to be set up to	Pat Pratley

make a difference to staff	held with service managers to get feedback on the process	ascertain how the process worked this year and what other improvements are required. Employee engagement on the revised appraisal process has been obtained through the November/December Cheltenham Futures employee sessions. Feedback is being collated and will be reviewed in the new year.	Deputy Chief Executive
Promote more effective working with members	Member/officer relationships are key to a successful organisation.	Training sessions have already been organised for employees on report writing, O&S and working with members Good feedback was received on the 6 sessions that were run for officers in October/December and some members attended as well.	Rosalind Reeves Democratic services manager
Develop a communication plan for change (you said...we did)	There is already the Cheltenham Futures programme which has a communication strand, and work is ongoing to develop an engagement and communication plan for 2020 Vision	Develop appropriate communication strategies for key change programmes	Pat Pratley Deputy Chief Executive