

Cheltenham Borough Council
Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21 September 2015
LGA Peer Review action plan – progress update

Accountable member	Councillor Jordan, Leader of the Council
Accountable officer	Andrew North, Chief Executive
Ward(s) affected	None
Key/Significant Decision	No
Executive summary	<p>In September 2014 an LGA peer challenge review was undertaken. The peers used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.</p> <p>The team were very positive about the council saying that we have clear ambitions for place and are driven by the needs of the customer and community. They recognised that there is a clear demonstration of community leadership by members and an empowered organisational culture with a dedicated, passionate, focused and motivated workforce.</p> <p>They did however make a number of suggestions as to how we could improve our performance and in response Officers devised an action plan. The action plan was approved by Cabinet in November 2014 and they asked that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review progress. In January 2015 the committee decided that they would review progress in approximately 6 months.</p> <p>Appendix 2 sets out progress against the actions which were agreed and the committee should review progress, as well as deciding whether they consider there to be any value in inviting the peer team back to carry out a follow-up to the original review.</p>
Recommendations	<p>The committee are recommended to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note progress as set out on the LGA Peer Review action plan update and comment as necessary 2. Decide whether they consider there to be any value in inviting the Peer Review Team to undertake a follow-up review.
Financial implications	<p>There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.</p> <p>Contact officer: Nina Philippidis, Business Partner Accountant nina.philippidis@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264121</p>

Legal implications	There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Contact officer: Peter Lewis, peter.lewis@teWKesbury.gov.uk
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	Significant progress has been made against the action plan detailed at Appendix 1 however a small number of actions are yet to be completed. Capacity to undertake these outstanding action will need to be carefully monitored Contact officer: Julie McCarthy, julie.mccarthy@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264355
Key risks	There are no significant risks associated with this decision which need to be included on the corporate risk register. Specific actions will be picked up by relevant service managers and any associated risks in ensuring that actions are progressed will be monitored through service risk registers.
Corporate and community plan Implications	The suggested areas for improvement will assist the council in meeting its corporate and community plan objectives.
Environmental and climate change implications	n/a
Property/Asset Implications	n/a

1. Background

- 1.1** In September 2014 the council invited a peer challenge team led by LGA to visit the council for 3.5 days to provide an external 'health-check' of the organisation. The peer challenge team were asked specifically to look at the effectiveness of the council's governance arrangements and scrutiny.
- 1.2** In carrying out their review they spoke to members of the Cabinet, O&S, partners, service managers, the Executive Board and other officers so they got a cross section of views. They also examined documents relating to O&S such as the annual report and workplan.
- 1.3** The peers used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material they read. The team provide feedback as critical friends, not as assessors, consultants or inspectors. They were very positive about the council saying that we have clear ambitions for place and are driven by the needs of the customer and community. They recognised that there is a clear demonstration of community leadership by members and an empowered organisational culture with a dedicated, passionate, focused and motivated workforce.
- 1.4** They did however make a number of suggestions as to how we could improve our performance and in response, officers devised an action plan. The action plan was approved by Cabinet in November 2014 and they asked that Overview and Scrutiny review progress. In January 2015 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that they would review progress in 6 months, but given that the focus of their June meeting had been external visitors (Sandford Lido and the Police and Crime Commissioner) the committee deferred the review of progress until the September meeting.

- 1.5 Appendix 2 sets out progress against the actions which were agreed by Cabinet in November 2014 and the committee should consider this and comment as necessary.
- 1.6 The agreed plan identified 14 actions which would address the suggestions made by the peer team. 10 (71.5%) of these actions had been completed and the remaining 4 (28.5%) were amber, as work was ongoing.
- 1.7 In view of the progress that has been made, the committee should decide whether they consider there to be any value in inviting the peer team to carry out a follow-up review. When making this decision members should be mindful of the resources that are required to support such a review.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 The committee agreed in January 2015 that they would review progress against the action plan and decide whether there was any value in inviting the peer team to undertake a follow-up review.

3. Alternative options considered

- 3.1 It may be that the committee are satisfied with the progress that has and is being made and decide that there would be little or no value in the peer team being asked to undertake a follow-up review.

4. Consultation and feedback

- 4.1 The Accountable Member (the Leader) and Officer (the Chief Executive) have reviewed the action plan update and are satisfied with the progress that has been made. They are both of the opinion that there would be little or no value to a follow-up review by the peer team, noting the resource implications of doing so.

5. Performance management –monitoring and review

- 5.1 The committee should consider if, how and when they want to review progress again.

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Appendices	1. Risk Assessment 2. LGA peer review action plan – progress summary
Background information	1. Overview and Scrutiny Committee minutes of the 12 January 2015 meeting

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
	If members do not monitor the actions resulting from the peer review there is a risk that the momentum may be lost	Andrew North	13/08/15	2	2	4	Reduce	Report to O&S and set follow up date if required	21/09/2015	Rosalind Reeves	No
<p>Explanatory notes</p> <p>Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p>Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p>Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											