

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**FEEDBACK FROM THE CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider of the outcome of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge Review of the Council and to agree an action plan

Information and Advice

2. In November 2011 the Council invited the Local Government Association to undertake a corporate peer challenge as part of the new sector-led approach to self regulation and improvement. Peer challenge is not an inspection and does not result in an overall judgement or score; instead it provides feedback informed by peers experience and knowledge of local government.
3. The corporate peer challenge took place between the 17th and 20th of July 2012. Unlike an inspection, the focus of each peer challenge is determined locally. The areas we asked the LGA to review were our:
 - § Strategic planning process
 - § Performance management arrangements
 - § Transformation and improvement programme
4. The peer challenge was managed and delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The peers involved in delivering the Nottinghamshire peer challenge were:
 - § Councillor Martin Hill – Leader of Lincolnshire County Council
 - § Carolyn Downs – Chief Executive of the LGA
 - § Sarah Bryant – Assistant Director of Business Efficiency, London Borough of Havering
 - § Pete Rentell – LGA Peer Manager and sector specialist
 - § Vanessa Chagas – LGA Political Assistant (Independent Political Group Office)
5. During their onsite visit the peer team held a number of interviews and focus groups with Members and officers at all levels of the organisation. A feedback letter on the findings of the Peer Challenge has been received and a copy is attached in appendix 1. The feedback letter recognises we are making good progress but that there is still much more for us to do.

6. The feedback highlights that the council enjoys strong political direction; there is an inclusive management style and there is a respectful and constructive relationship between members and officers. The council also has a committed, experienced and capable workforce and that its members are equally committed to both Nottinghamshire and the council.
7. The feedback is also clear that whilst we have made a good start to a significant change programme there is more work to be done at pace, to meet future service efficiencies. Moving forward the improvement programme must focus on what is truly transformational and have significant focus on areas of increasing demand and high spending, such as Children's and Adults Services.
8. The peer team also found that although the council has a strategy; monitors its performance and has a sound budget these processes are not sufficiently integrated. The council needs to integrate its approach to strategic prioritisation and allocate resources based on these priorities. The peer team state that this work should be undertaken with urgency to support the council's political leadership in making the correct strategic choices regarding the future of the County and the council.
9. The feedback letter has identified a number of suggestions for consideration. In response to these a high level action plan has been developed which is attached at appendix 2. This action plan highlights the challenges we face and the activities that are being, and will be undertaken to address these.

Other Options Considered

10. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

11. The peer challenge action plan has been developed to address weaknesses identified in the peer challenge feedback letter. Delivery of the action plan will help to achieve better outcomes and secure future service efficiencies.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

It is recommended that

1. Policy Committee note the peer challenge feedback letter and agree the action plan to respond to the suggestions made in the letter.
2. A progress report on the implementation of the action plan is considered by Policy Committee in six months time.

Councillor Kay Cutts
Leader of the Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Celia Morris, Group Manager Corporate Strategy, Tel (0115) 9772043

Constitutional Comments (SLB 29/08/2012)

13. Policy Committee is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the overall performance of the Council and is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.

Financial Comments (MA 29/08/12)

14. The contents of this report are duly noted. There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of the report, and action plan, at present. Any financial implications that may arise as the action plan is implemented will need to be contained within existing budgets, and/or, be subject to future reports as appropriate.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Taking the Lead – The Local Government Association's peer challenge offer

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All