

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

**Report of Chief Executive & Town Clerk
to
Cabinet
on
5 January 2016**

Report prepared by: Lysanne Eddy; Group Manager: Policy,
Engagement & Communication

Corporate Peer Challenge

Executive Councillor – Councillor Woodley

A Part 1 Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet the Corporate Peer Challenge final Feedback Letter and proposed action plan.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the report and appendix.

3. Background

The Chief Executive invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a peer challenge of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council during October 2015.

The main purpose for this challenge was to help provide an external reality check and aide thinking around the future of the council given the nature and scale of the challenges facing Southend on Sea.

The LGA's challenge model has five core components that are used to assess peers:

1. Understanding of local context and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and has it established a clear set of priorities?
2. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
3. Political and managerial leadership: Does the council have effective political and managerial leadership and is it a constructive partnership?
4. Governance and decision-making: Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place to respond to key challenges and manage change, transformation and disinvestment?
5. Organisational capacity: Are organisational capacity and resources focused in the right areas in order to deliver the agreed priorities?

The challenge team comprised of the following colleagues and were based in the Civic Centre for four days, commencing Tuesday 13th October 2015, accommodated on the fifth floor:

- Tracey Lee, Chief Executive of Plymouth City Council
- Clyde Loakes, Labour Deputy Leader of Waltham Forest
- Denise Hyde, Director of People at North Lincolnshire Council
- Caitlin Bateman, Graduate Trainee at Gloucestershire County Council
- Paul Clarke, LGA Peer Challenge Manager

4. Next steps

In response to the Corporate Peer Challenge and the final Feedback Letter (attached), an action plan will now be prepared to support those areas of development identified by the peer challenge team (point 3, page 3 of feedback letter) and a follow up date with the LGA will be confirmed.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Contribution to Council's Aims and Priorities

The Corporate Peer Challenge contributes to the delivery of all Council aims and priorities.

5.2 Financial Implications

None

5.3 Legal Implications

None

5.4 People

None

5.5 Property Implications

None

5.6 Consultation

Staff from across the organisation were invited to take part in the corporate peer challenge in 1:1 meetings, small focus groups or larger workshops.

The Corporate Management Team has agreed the final peer challenge feedback report.

5.7 Equalities Impact Assessment

None

5.8 Risk Assessment

None

5.9 Value for Money, Community Safety Implications and Environmental Impact

None

6 Background Papers

6.1 None

7 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Corporate Peer Challenge Southend-on-Sea Borough Council:
Feedback Letter