

Appendix 2: Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan – Draft

Ref	LGA Recommendation	Action	Cabinet Lead	Sponsor
1	<p>Constitutional Review - Complete and implement your constitutional review as a matter of urgency.</p>	<p>We recognise the foundational importance of the review of the constitution. Our approach will be to identify and implement changes which will bring about the most impactful change first.</p> <p>This work will enable the Council to take decisions more effectively and efficiently at the right time and underpins recommendation 2 below.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All councillor’s and officers will be trained to understand the changes as well as the benefits that those changes will bring. • By March 2023, the first phase of this work will include the introduction of a new scrutiny process. By summer 2023 onwards we expect to see a significant reduction in call-ins and as a result less duplication of capacity across the Council. • The second phase will see the development of a programme plan (by June 2023), to address recommendations set out by the Centre for governance and Scrutiny’s review (including reviewing the scheme of delegations and several Standing Orders). 	Cllr Stephen George, Leader	Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance)

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2	<p>Organisational commitment to behaviour change - Underpin your constitutional changes with a clear organisational and visible commitment to behaviour change. It will be important to ensure that the councillor development and leadership development programmes are aligned with the council's agreed values and behaviours, supporting a more effective councillor / officer working relationship.</p>	<p>We owe it to residents and partners to conduct our business in an environment where both officers and councillors can thrive and achieve optimal outcomes. Behaviours which undermine effective working practice, and do not create supportive, open and professional working environments, will not be tolerated.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recognised that the majority of unacceptable behaviours take place in a public arena. A suite of activity will be implemented to support officers to manage those situations, and they will be supported by the Chief Executive to not tolerate direct instances of unacceptable behaviour. • In addition, a comprehensive set of initiatives, training and facilitation will be implemented to prevent on-going instances of unacceptable behaviour and will include aligning the councillor development, councillor induction and leadership development programmes to the Council's agreed values and behaviours. • Whilst this is an ongoing area of work, we want to see demonstrable improvements so that staff are experiencing effective councillor and officer working relationships as evidenced through staff feedback. 	Cllr Paul Collins	Executive Director (Neighbourhoods and Environment)

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3	<p>Election Cycle - Implement the proposed boundary review and, as part of this, consider changing the election cycle to whole council elections every 4 years.</p>	<p>We recognise that an election in thirds cycle does not allow the Council to maximise the time in which it can conduct business and generates additional costs for the Council. We further recognise the Peers findings, that elections in thirds creates additional challenges and that this is impacting on longer term strategic decision making.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with councillors, residents, and partners to understand the benefits of an all-out (whole council) election cycle. • By November 2023, Council will consider a decision which will recommend changing election cycles within a timeline appropriate to the relevant boundary review. 	Cllr Martin Terry	Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance)
4	<p>Partnerships - Re-engage partners across public, private and voluntary sectors on Southend 2050. Establish how the Council will work in partnership to deliver shared outcomes for the city.</p>	<p>We wholeheartedly recognise the value of the City's community and partner assets that Peers witnessed and understand that the Council cannot deliver on its ambitious plans in isolation.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the end of 2023 we will have reengage partners to transform Southend 2050 into a more effective 'partnership plan' with clear outcomes for Southend, strategically aligned with all partners. • By April 2023, we will have begun the process to gain a clear overview of local and regional partnerships and their governance supporting effectiveness in contributing to the achievement of partnership outcomes. We will review this on an annual basis. 	Cllr Kay Mitchell	<p>Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance)</p> <p>Executive Director (Adults and Communities)</p>

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5	<p>Prioritisation - Ensure agreed priorities are aligned to resources and capacity. Provide more clarity on the link between strategic priorities and delivery.</p>	<p>We recognise that more needs to be done to focus our attention on our core priorities, and how the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan can enable the alignment of resource to deliver priorities.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will start to achieve this through the re-introduction of Service Planning, which will be rolled out by April 2023 and through the refresh of the Corporate Plan in the summer where we will be more specific in the definition of our priorities. • We will deliver a programme of work to prioritise resource aligned to strategic need and be clear about service standards, service reduction or services to be stopped. The alignment of resources to service standards will be agreed as part of the budget setting process for 2024/25 onwards. This will enable councillors to make informed decisions about choices. • We will use our governance process to ensure we continue to be aligned and committed to strategic intent throughout the year. 	Cllr Steve Wakefield	Chief Executive
6	<p>Communication - Communicate and engage with all councillors, officers and residents on agreed priorities to help build a shared understanding. Be clear</p>	<p>Linked closely with recommendation 5, we understand the importance of an open and transparent approach to support the Council's reputation for trust and integrity. This is even more important when communicating</p>	Cllr Carole Mulroney	Executive Director (Strategy,

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	about the difficult decisions required to deliver a balanced medium term financial position.	<p>difficult and sensitive issues such as how we will continue to deliver on priorities, in a challenging financial and political context – which may mean stopping or reducing services and projects.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop an engagement and communication plan which enables residents, staff, councillors and partners to collectively build and gain understanding about the opportunities and importantly the challenges faced in Southend. • We will re-design our budget setting process to enable collective and shared understanding of the difficult decisions required to deliver a balance budget, against statutory services, and prioritised outcomes. • We will closely monitor the responses to our community engagement activity to check that progress is being made on how well informed our residents feel. 		Change and Governance)
7	<p>Modernise your council operating model, systems and processes - This will help support the required pace of change and transformation. In addition to modernising governance</p>	<p>We recognise the need to modernise the Council including its systems, processes, and data driven decision making requiring transformational change to operate as a modern, efficient and effective Council.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p>	Cllr Laurie Burton	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Executive Director (Finance and Resources)</p>

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	<p>and decision-making processes (as outlined above), the Council needs to ensure business needs are driving the operating model and that the Council has the capacity to deliver this. This includes work to implement the new data strategy and Corporate Data systems (including HR systems)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From April 2023, we will implement a new leadership, management and delivery framework, to help drive the pace of change and strengthen governance arrangements. • This will be underpinned by a new approach to business intelligence strengthening decision making through the introduction of a new data strategy and a suite of new Boards. • The Transformational Blueprint is our plan to support the Council to reset and adapt to deliver its priorities in the most efficient way. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From February 2023, Phase one will deliver implement ‘tactical’ savings already identified across the Council. ○ The delivery of phase two, the ‘strategic’ opportunities identified within the Blueprint are planned to commence from summer 2023. ○ In addition, phase three will commence a programme of service redesign, using a set of principles relating to areas such as customer experience, digital, enablement and demand management. 		<p>Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance)</p>
8	<p>Develop a consistent plan to address inequalities and disparities across the city and its neighbourhoods - The Council should challenge itself as to whether the</p>	<p>We recognise the need to create a more equal and inclusive city, where everyone has an equal chance to succeed. This is articulated and delivered through our Southend 2050 ambition, the Council’s Corporate Plan, Equality Objectives, and Locality Plans jointly</p>	Cllr Ian Gilbert	<p>Executive Director (Adults and Communities)</p>

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	<p>thematic nature of the Corporate Plan and Southend 2050 will address the entrenched inequalities and deprivation within some of Southend-on-Sea's localities and neighbourhoods.</p>	<p>developed with the NHS. This recommendation will support us to better apply our capability and capacity in a more targeted way. This work is closely linked to recommendation 4.</p> <p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When we refresh our Corporate Plan we will strengthen the accountability of outcome delivery to spatial inequalities across the city. • Strengthening the delivery of Locality Plans in collaboration with the Alliance (a partnership delivering structure within the Integrated Care System) will enable Council services to have the data and evidence required to make informed decisions to increase the impact of overcoming the wider determinants of health. 		
9	<p>Strengthen your voice and influence for the benefit of the City and South Essex in the wider regional agenda - It will be important for the Council to ensure it continues to exercise sufficient voice and influence on</p>	<p>The local government landscape is changing, to ensure we are on the front foot we need to be engaged in understanding what opportunities may exist for our residents, visitors, and businesses. We further understand that our residents, visitors, and businesses will derive the benefits of investment within our neighbouring authorities.</p>	Cllr Stephen George, Leader	Executive Director (Growth and Housing)

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	ASELA in relation to the devolution agenda.	<p>The action we will take includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to take a lead role in the ASELA Joint Committee and work programme, seeking opportunities that will benefit the entire economic area. • We will continue to support councillors so that they are informed about the devolution opportunities which lie ahead and can best represent the interests of Southend residents, visitors and businesses. 		