

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Report of Chief Executive

To

Cabinet

On

21 March 2023

Report prepared by: Sarah Brown, Policy Manager

Agenda

Item No.

**Supplementary Report to LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (Oct 2022)
Report and draft Action Plan (Cabinet 21st February 2023)
Not eligible for call-in to Scrutiny by virtue of Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15(e)(ii)
Cabinet Member: Councillor Stephen George**

Part 1

1. Purpose of Report and desired outcome/s

- 1.1 The original paper was presented to Cabinet on 21st February 2023 and was referred back to Cabinet following the Policy & Resource Scrutiny meeting on 15th March 2023. This paper sets out additional information to respond to the questions raised at Scrutiny.
- 1.2 The ability to consider this supplementary information at the 21st March Cabinet Meeting will allow for the Corporate Peer Challenge Officer Programme meeting on 22nd March to continue, and for initial Working Parties to go ahead by the end of March. This will allow for sufficient progress to be made in further developing plans so that the Council can benefit from the learning and improvement at the earliest stage, and to demonstrate progress to the LGA when they return in August. Considering this item on 21st March further avoids any possible confusion over what can or cannot be done during the pre-election period, which begins at the end of March.

2. Additional information

- 2.1 The Scrutiny meeting questioned what engagement activity had occurred to develop the Action Plan and requested that all members have the opportunity to inform its development.
- 2.2 The Action Plan was initially developed with the Senior Leadership Team and the Extended Leadership Group. These groups were asked to consider what action would support the learning and improvement identified by the LGA. The feedback from this engagement was further developed with CLT and Cabinet. As well as capturing work already ongoing, this high-level Action Plan intends to be the beginning of a live process, where more detail will be identified to ensure that the Council can respond to the LGAs findings in a way delivers the most effective improvements.

- 2.3 Several senior officers have been identified to lead themed activity. Those officers have been tasked with developing more detailed and comprehensive plans, including timescales. The Executive Director for Strategy Change and Governance will chair programme meetings to monitor activity and progress. The initial programme set-up meeting is due to take place on 22nd March. Progress will be reported monthly to CLT.
- 2.4 In order to ensure that all members have the ability to inform the development and implementation of the comprehensive plans, it is proposed the Corporate Matters and Performance Delivery Working Party provides a forum for the plans to be strengthened and for existing, or new activity to be explored and developed. The first Working Parting meeting will be scheduled up by the end of March.
- 2.5 The LGA are due to return to the Council in August, an exact date is yet to be agreed. At that time, the Council must be able to demonstrate to the LGA that it has taken on board their findings and have established plans in place, with a suite of activity underway demonstrating our commitment to improvement.
- 2.6 Scrutiny also noted the LGA requirement to publish an Action Plan within 8 weeks of the publication of the LGA's findings. Following an additional conversation with the LGA on 16th March, the LGA have confirmed that the draft Action Plan published for Cabinet on 21st February satisfies their requirements. The LGA clarified that, within 8 weeks, they are looking for an intention to respond to their findings, which they consider has been met. In addition, the LGA advised that it is expected that plans evolve in order to best respond and deliver the outcomes required to learn and make improvements.
- 2.7 Cabinet is asked to note the approach outlined above which will enable all councillors to engage in the ongoing development and implementation of activity.