

BOROUGH OF POOLE

CABINET

13 JUNE 2017

LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PART OF THE PUBLISHED FORWARD PLAN – Yes

STATUS – Policy

1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To present the Feedback Report prepared by the LGA following the Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in Poole on 4 – 7 April 2017 and a recommended response to the feedback.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Cabinet is recommended:
- i. to accept the LGA’s Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report,
 - ii. to approve the strategic response to this,
 - iii. to ask officers to implement this in consultation with Portfolio Holders and
 - iv. to request a follow up report later in the municipal year.

3 Background- The LGA’s Peer Challenge Programme

- 3.1 The government and the LGA promote the principles and practice of sector led improvement work. The expectation is that every local authority will have a corporate peer challenge. Over 70% of local authorities have done so.
- 3.2 The emphasis in this work is on learning and the production of recommendations that the host authority owns and takes responsibility for.
- 3.3 Peer reviews are carried out by a team including a Member and officers from other councils. A team were on site in Poole from 4-7 April.
- 3.4 The Council has made effective use of this approach with peer led reviews in Adult and Children’s Social Care as well as Housing & Community Services.
- 3.5 Senior officers have also taken part in peer reviews in other local authorities.

4 Focus for the Peer Challenge in Poole

4.1 The LGA Review Team were asked to focus on three themes which reflect the uniquely complex situation we are facing including the proposals for local government reorganisation and the development of joint services with Bournemouth Council. The themes were:

- i. The management of change over the next two years where this includes delivering priorities for Poole, the development of joint services with Bournemouth and laying the foundations for a new unitary council whilst operating services (many of which are themselves changing) and saving a further £6M.
- ii. Our ambitious plans for regeneration where fresh approaches are being developed.
- iii. Our approach to communicating and engaging with all stakeholders about our ambitions and performance at a time of so much change.

4.2 This approach was complemented by five broad lines of enquiry which all peer reviews follow. They are:

- i. Understanding of the local place and priority setting
- ii. Leadership of Place
- iii. Financial planning and viability
- iv. Organisational leadership and governance
- v. Capacity to deliver

4 Main Findings and Recommendations

4.1 The LGA Peer Challenge Team's report is presented at [Appendix 1](#). This includes an Executive Summary and Key Recommendations.

4.2 Overall the feedback says that the Council:

- has good political and managerial leadership
- maintained services well whilst making substantial savings
- has good Member/officer relationships that support good decision making
- faces a complex set of change across a range of inter-related fronts
- built successful partnerships with a wide range of key stakeholders
- developed good strategic plans to ensure services are sustainable in the medium and long term
- set out sound and ambitious plans for regeneration of the town centre but needs to ensure there is a clear storyline for this and adequate resourcing
- manages changes in the delivery of services well but needs to develop a more effective approach to corporate change management
- benefits from flexible, loyal and dedicated staff who should be nurtured

- communicates effectively with room for improvement
- has significant capabilities and many strengths to build on
- could improve its effectiveness and efficiency by focusing now on Vision, Place, People, Pace, Focus and Talent

4.3 The Review Team made these key recommendations
(The wording of these recommendations may change in the final version of the LGA report).

- Develop a clear and consistent vision and narrative for Poole, the place and the council for the programme of change over the next 2-3 years, with and through partners and key stakeholders
- Establish a clear vision and prioritised plan for the regeneration of Poole, highlighting the mutual interdependencies and emphasizing the community and economic benefits
- Establish a sustainable change plan for the council over the next 2-3 years which addresses as a priority the following:
 - Reviewing leadership and programme management capacity to ensure it is fit for purpose
 - Enhancing capacity through a focus on council priorities and horizontal, cross cutting programmes to avoid silo working
 - Ensuring there is a consistent, proactive and clear approach to managing communications internally and externally
 - The development of a robust workforce plan-including HR/OD and change aspects

5 Strategic Response

5.1 The overall response is to accept the findings of the review and the recommendations made.

5.2 To support this it is proposed that the Council makes a strategic response focusing on these actions. These are made in the context of the plans for local government reorganisation in Dorset and the development of joint services with Bournemouth Council:

1. Review the articulation and promotion of the Council's vision for Poole and for the change it wishes to make in the organisation
2. Develop a clear vision and prioritised plan for the regeneration of Poole making sure this is adequately resourced
3. Develop a sustainable change management programme for the next 2 – 3 years encompassing the delivery of priorities, the delivery of significant savings, the creation of joint services and laying the foundations for a new unitary council ,
4. Make sure we have the capacity to deliver this and our business priorities

5. Build on existing capacity by focusing on Council priorities and developing work cutting cross service boundaries
6. Develop a consistent, proactive and clear approach to improving communications internally and externally including a web offer that includes more news content.
7. Champion and celebrate success both internally and externally
8. Develop a work force plan to lead and support staff through the changes ahead

6 Next Steps

- 6.1 The next steps are to implement the response to the LGA report.
- 6.2 Officers will monitor and review progress with implementing the response. A follow up report to the Cabinet will be made later in the municipal year.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 Some of the actions proposed in this report will require resources to ensure they are delivered. These are not specifically identified here. Any such requirements will be met within the existing approved budget and will be the subject of specific consideration by officer in consultation with Members where appropriate.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

9 Risk Implications

- 9.1 There is a risk that if the Council does not respond to the recommendations made by the LGA Review Team that it will not achieve its priorities as effectively and efficiently as would otherwise be the case.

10 Equalities Implications

- 10.1 Responding to the Feedback report and implementing the action plan will assist the Council in promoting equality and diversity.

11 Conclusions

- 11.1 The Cabinet is asked to accept the LGA's Feedback Report and to approve the action plan in response to this.

Background papers

Appendix 1 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 4-7 April 2017 Feedback report