

REPORT TITLE: CORPORATE PEER REVIEW 2017 – ACTION PLAN

7 DECEMBER 2017

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: CLLR HERRILL - LEADER AND PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER FOR HOUSING

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

This report provides details of the action plan that is in place to respond to the nine key recommendations arising from the Corporate Peer Challenge that was undertaken in February 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Committee notes the detail in the action plan in Appendix 1 to the Report and raises any concerns with the Portfolio Holder.

IMPLICATIONS:1 COUNCIL STRATEGY OUTCOME

- 1.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge was conducted to provide support and external feedback on the Council's current achievements and performance and to highlight areas where it could improve and achieve even more.

2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 None directly.

3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Delivery of the actions in the Plan will be met from within existing resources.

5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report and Action Plan are both published on the Council's website.

- 6.2 Progress against the actions in the Plan is regularly reported to Cabinet members.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 None required.

8 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 8.1 None.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<i>Property – n/a</i>		
<i>Community Support n/a</i>		
<i>Timescales – delays to the delivery of the actions</i>	Regular monitoring is undertaken to identify and resolve slippage	
<i>Project capacity - none</i>		

<i>Financial / VfM – none</i>		
<i>Legal - none</i>		
<i>Innovation - none</i>		
<i>Reputation – ensuring that the Council delivers the actions that respond to the recommendations as set out in the Peer Challenge Feedback report.</i>	Regular monitoring and reporting of the progress the Council is achieving against the Action Plan, including this report.	

## 10 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

- 10.1 A peer challenge is provided by the Local Government Association (LGA) at no cost to local authorities, as part of their sector led improvement programme. The process is designed to be forward thinking, facilitative and problem solving. It is not a form of inspection and does not rank or score local authorities in any way.
- 10.2 In February 2017, the Council invited the LGA to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge to provide external feedback on how it was performing and to highlight the areas where it can do and achieve even more.
- 10.3 In its feedback report, the Peer Challenge team recognised the high quality services and support that the Council is delivering and that Winchester is well placed strategically and surrounded by opportunities.
- 10.4 The peer team also highlighted in their report nine key recommendations that will help the Council to further improve services over the coming years. A copy of the Feedback report is published on the Council's website can be viewed via this [link](#).
- 10.5 In response to the LGA's nine recommendations, the Council has developed an action plan and this is attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.

## 11 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 11.1 None.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

None.

#### Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES: Appendix 1 – Corporate Peer Challenge 2017 - Action Plan.

This table below provides details of the actions against the nine key recommendations that were included in the Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback report completed in February 2017.

No	Recommendation	Action
1	<p><b>Clearly articulate a vision and strategic narrative</b> for the district and for the council. This will give confidence to partners, residents and staff and can be used to prioritise activity.</p>	<p>A strategic narrative will be developed that sets the context for future delivery as well as visioning the future. This will align with work to identify ways of working within the council and engagement with partners</p> <p>Internal communications to support the strategic narrative and ensure clear messages for staff</p>
2	<p><b>Develop an evidence-based approach to the council's understanding of the views and needs of the whole community.</b> This will help balance strong local opinion and reinforce the decision-making process.</p>	<p>Commission a Residents Survey to establish a wide baseline of priorities and establish support or otherwise for future schemes.</p> <p>Review of data held and identification of key data sets required across all sections of our community to make evidence based decisions.</p>
3	<p><b>Review political and partnership structures and forums including the operation and role of the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b> to ensure that they can perform their roles effectively.</p>	<p>Review the Constitution with the remit focussed on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Effective and efficient decision making</li> <li>▪ Effective contribution to policy development and pre-scrutiny</li> <li>▪ Greater clarity on delegations between members and officers</li> <li>▪ Build on existing review of PHDs to make these more effective</li> <li>▪ Clarity of financial rules of procedure</li> <li>▪ Build on effective member briefing/policy briefings</li> </ul> <p>Undertake training for officers on political skills</p> <p>Review and refresh external stakeholder relationship particularly business, partners, town and parish councils</p>

No	Recommendation	Action
4	<p><b>Develop a shared understanding of the financial challenges ahead.</b> The council is currently in a healthy financial position but action is required to ensure the financial challenges and risks are well understood across the organisation and that the council has a diverse approach to balancing its budget in the medium-term and is not solely reliant on a small number of major projects.</p>	<p>Use Outcomes Based Budgeting (OBB) to achieve a long term financial plan with clear options for savings / income generation</p> <p>Maximise opportunity for alternative income generation and asset development within a sustainable and resourced capital programme</p> <p>Clearly articulate the financial position and the various options to close the gap through different means</p>
5	<p><b>Review the way in which the business is managed</b> – to ensure that core policies and processes are understood and consistently applied.</p>	<p>Establish quarterly performance reporting to CMT, Leader’s Board and Cabinet including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial</li> <li>▪ Council Strategy measures</li> <li>▪ Projects</li> <li>▪ Corporate Health Indicators</li> </ul> <p>Revise the Council’s risk appetite and risk management strategy to reflect the council strategy and new Cabinet’s aspirations</p>
6	<p><b>Be clear about how WCC is approaching transformation, entrepreneurialism and digital</b> – ensure ambitions are understood by members and staff and supported with appropriate skills and technology.</p>	<p>Need clear document and communications around the Council approach to transformation (what it means for WCC and what it is trying to transform)</p> <p>Need effective delivery mechanisms to achieve this (through 8 below)</p> <p>Development of a Digital Strategy to set a direction of travel for digital ambitions and technological support</p>
7	<p><b>Clarify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.</b> Staff structures seem confusing and, whilst they support effective service delivery, they inhibit collaborative and ‘horizontal’ working.</p>	<p>Review roles, responsibilities and structures to deliver council strategy</p> <p>Establish clear relationship management with key stakeholders e.g. LEP, HCC to maximise opportunities</p>

No	Recommendation	Action
8	<p><b>Strengthen programme and project management.</b> The council's Programme and Project Management Office needs to be suitably placed within the organisation and empowered to deliver and hold others to account.</p>	<p>Establish a full Programme Management Office to oversee and support all programmes and move to a clear distinction between programme and projects that support an overall Transformation programme</p>
9	<p><b>Use the new People Strategy/Workforce Plan to address concerns that the council has the capacity but lacks the skills to deliver,</b> alongside new approaches to pay and reward, to ensure the council can attract the right people and to blend internal and external expertise.</p>	<p>Review of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pay and benefits</li> <li>▪ On boarding and engagement</li> <li>▪ Appraisal process</li> <li>▪ Supporting HR policies</li> <li>▪ Talent management</li> </ul> <p>Refresh organisational values</p> <p>Complete a review of staff accommodation to consider long term options to improve conditions and collaborative working</p>