

Appendix 1 - Corporate Peer Challenge 2020- recommendation action plan

Recommendation number KR = key recommendation	Details of recommendation	Action to be taken	Responsible Officer	Implementation Date	Progress to date
<p>KR1.</p> <p>(page 2, recommendation 1)</p> <p>(page 8, para 5)</p> <p>(page 9, para 3)</p>	<p>Build upon your effective and well-embedded budget planning arrangements into the future by ensuring that you: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take appropriate steps to minimise reliance on New Homes Bonus (NHB) as a means of sustaining the base revenue requirements of the organisation. 	<p>The MTFS recognises the likely withdrawal of NHB from the next financial year.</p> <p>Information is currently being gathered to allow Transform Working Group to understand the scale of the deficit that this will cause and the choices that will need to be made between services and council priorities, if the full effects of the withdrawal are felt. Recommendations from the working group will be made to the appropriate decision making body.</p> <p>Detailed scenario planning regarding the regulatory framework is not possible at the current time and our central understanding of the position will be fed into financial planning until the position is either clear or resources are free to undertake scenario analysis.</p>	<p>Head of Finance and Asset Management</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>😊 - There are a number of individual action points which are all being considered within financial planning assumptions.</p> <p>New Homes Bonus has been phased out of the Council’s MTFS as per the latest Government financial settlement. Although a replacement scheme is likely, no final decision has been made by Government and therefore nothing for housing reward is included in the MTFS. The Council will need to budget for the shortfall in housing reward in the coming years and this will be highlighted within the MTFS once the net position is known.</p>

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	<p>- Prepare for possible changes to commercial investment regulatory framework through detailed scenario planning.</p> <p>(incl. continued and possible widened use of Transform Working Group would support greater organisational input into defining future plans and in doing so, ensure the financial landscape is understood by all members and officers). And;</p> <p>The Garden Town Programme represents major investment in and by the borough council, but successful delivery is dependent on Homes England funding of around</p>	<p>TWG will be used to review the gap between cost and resource and make recommendations on the changes necessary to ensure the council remains financially sustainable.</p> <p>In addition, the MTFS will become a biannual exercise to increase member understanding and awareness of the financial challenges facing the Council.</p> <p>The council is dependent on the funding being secured in order to deliver the bridge. Given the MTFS deficit, it is not possible to add to this to in order to self fund the bridge. All resources will be focussed on ensuring the funding is available and drawn down. It is</p>		<p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p>	<p>No further commercial property purchases are planned and we are now in a phase of managing the existing portfolio. The council will be complying with the regulatory framework around borrowing for commercial investment.</p> <p>TWG will continue to be briefed on emerging issues which will have a transformative or financial impact. Future agendas could include details around the Environment and the Planning Bills and their impact on the organisation.</p> <p>Agreements are in place with Homes England for the delivery of the bridge and quarterly draw downs of funding are taking place.</p>

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	£8.1 million and this is a risk to the council. Enhanced planning around alternative options – and likely impact – should these funds not materialise in part or in full would enhance financial and risk.	expected that a first draw could take place by December 2020.			
<p>KR2. (page 2, recommendation 2)</p>	<p>Create the necessary senior leadership resilience, focus on prioritisation and overall resource requirements within the organisation going forward so that so that the council is on as sound a footing as possible to continue to meet the challenges facing the sector. As part of this: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify roles and responsibilities of Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Management Team in order, ensuring that opportunities for senior officers to contribute and influence are well understood; - Build on partnership and shared service delivery 	<p>This recommendation was pre-covid and therefore the financial and resource challenge is more significant than at the time of the LGA report - even then there was a large degree of uncertainty in relation to Local Government finances. Actions undertaken have been around an immediate need to prioritise resource and capacity to support the council's response to and recovery from the pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Heads of Service prioritising their work streams to identify what could be deferred including project related work. - Update on capacity list to identify any potential spare capacity 	Corporate Management Team	<p>March 2021 March 2022</p>	<p>😊</p> <p>In the short term and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic a review of key actions within the council plan and Covid-19 recovery plan were undertaken and where necessary actions deferred. The annual refresh of these documents has allowed more consideration to be given to what can be delivered.</p> <p>Where pressure points have arisen as result of responding to Covid-19 additional resources have been deployed to those areas.</p> <p>Roles of CLT and management team have been re-affirmed. The resignation of the Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) provided the opportunity for this and those duties have now been absorbed</p>

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(page 6, para 2)	<p>strengths to cement your 'place leadership' role and from this explore further opportunities as to how these arrangements will help build capacity (see also page 10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build on existing corporate project evaluation mechanisms to develop a clear process for prioritisation and changing resource requirements ('prioritise the priorities – see page 10) <p>(incl. thought be given to succession planning to fulfil the council's leadership responsibilities re: city region, midlands connecting corridor)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recovery fund has been approved that could be used for additional resources. - Clarity of roles and responsibilities will be re-affirmed as part of the interim arrangements to cover the Deputy CEO role. 			<p>permanently within the roles of Heads of Service.</p> <p>Moving forward, and now the council is on its recovery journey then the medium term aspects of the recommendation can be considered, for example senior leadership resilience, partnerships, 'prioritising the priorities' – an Executive Committee/CLT awayday was held on 9 November to start dialogue on the strategic challenges ahead.</p>
<p>KR3. (page 2, recommendation 3) (page 6, para 7)</p>	<p>Consider ways and approaches to promote the 'Tewkesbury Brand' more effectively as part of your successful leadership of place approach.</p>	<p>Branding, particularly around the Garden Town project will be considered moving forward.</p> <p>An additional communication's officer has been recruited to give additional resilience to corporate communications.</p>	<p>Head of Development/Garden Town Programme Director/Head of Corporate Services</p>	<p>Spring-2021 December 2021</p>	<p>😊</p> <p>Tewkesbury Garden Town have branding as part of the thinking place commission which is complete. (This is different to the Tewkesbury branding).</p>

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	(incl. more proactive approach to external comms)				In addition to the additional corporate communication's officer, a two year fixed term post specifically in relation to Garden Town communications has successfully been recruited.
<p>KR4.</p> <p>(page 2, recommendation 4)</p> <p>(page 6, para 6)</p> <p>(page 9, para 7)</p>	<p>Agree how you can proactively move the Garden Town delivery programme to the next phase by establishing/ developing stakeholder governance and engagement structures and processes.</p> <p>(incl. community liaison and engaging with members at the earliest opportunity) and;</p> <p>(the council would benefit from taking time to map in more detail the likely organisational resource implications of the Garden Towns across their projected delivery timescales)</p>	<p>TGT team are working with ARUP to develop the governance and are working to establish governance structures for the program.</p> <p>The TGT team meet regularly with Northway and ARPC and Member Reference Panel to engage them with the work being carried out and this will be continued. A terms of reference are being created to support the group. There will also be full member briefings to ensure all members are kept up to date with relevant work.</p> <p>The TGT are currently recruiting a Place Manage which will focus on developing the "place" aspect of the Garden Town. Along with</p>	Garden Town Programme Director	<p>Complete</p> <p>Spring 2021</p> <p>Complete</p>	<p>A governance structure has been agreed by Council and is now being implemented. This includes a member liaison group and distinct engagement with community and business. (Business and community panel). Resourcing is under review as funding becomes available.</p> <p>Building on this foundation, TBC has been successful in securing support through the government's New Development Corporation Competition (NDCC) and as a result, a further consultancy commission has just been launched to help explore options for the establishment of an appropriate delivery vehicle for the GT.</p> <p>This post has recently been recruited to.</p>

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		discussions with finance regarding for funding for wider Garden Town support.			
<p>KR5.</p> <p>(page 2, recommendation 5)</p> <p>(page 8, para 3)</p>	<p>Building upon your existing sound governance arrangements review both: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the timings of key meetings so that all members can contribute effectively - the length/ style of member reports so they more effectively inform and enable better decision making. <p>(incl. greater use of technology to promote virtual engagement.)</p>	<p>The Council determines the Schedule of Meetings, including the time those meetings commence. Individual Committees are always free to review and revise start times and any changes are made in consultation with the Chair and Lead Member as appropriate. Similarly, Working Groups, Ad-Hoc meetings, seminars etc. are set in consultation with the appropriate Lead Member and take place at a variety of times in the morning, afternoon and evening to cater for all Members.</p> <p>A review of the report format is in the Democratic Services Work Programme but due to other commitments it is not anticipated that this will be complete until the end of the next financial year.</p> <p>All the Council's meetings are currently held virtually and the use of new technology has been embraced by Members.</p>	<p>Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>Current practice, no change is anticipated.</p> <p>March 2022.</p> <p>Current Practice.</p> <p>December 2021</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p> <p>Not yet commenced.</p> <p>☺</p> <p>Members have embraced the use of technology and have successfully participated in virtual committee,</p>

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					<p>working groups, briefings etc during 2020/21.</p> <p>As we move back to meetings in person consideration is being given to webcasting meetings and a project team has been set up to look at this.</p>
<p>6. (page 6, para 3)</p>	<p>Building on the knowledge and expertise developed through the Growth Hub, the council may wish to consider slightly redefining its support for local business growth – moving more towards an enabling role rather than delivery. This will help manage resource requirements whilst wishing to maintain a strong economic development focus.</p>	<p>Consideration will be given to the recommendation. This needs to be balanced with the contractual obligation the council has with the Local Enterprise Partnership regards to the running of the Growth Hub. This will be looked at as part of the development of the new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.</p>	<p>Head of Development</p>	<p>Jun-2021 June 2022</p>	<p>Deferred.</p> <p>This recommendation has been impacted by Covid-19. The Growth Hub Team have been working virtually since March 2020 to support the business community who have been impacted significantly by the pandemic. As reported to O&S committee in November, the current strategy will now run until 2022. A new strategy will start to be developed later this year.</p>
<p>7. (page 8, para 2)</p>	<p>Opportunities exist to strengthen the role of Scrutiny in pre-decision and policy development work</p>	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny Committee receives the Executive Committee Forward Plan at each of its meetings and has been particularly keen to ensure the document is well populated. The Committee also considers its own Work Programme at each meeting and</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Services/Head of Democratic Services</p>	<p>March-2021 December 2021</p>	<p>😊</p> <p>A productive session was recently held with committee members. An action plan is currently being written to capture the agreed outcomes.</p>

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		<p>conducts an annual review of policies to ascertain whether they require review and what, if any, the Committee's role is in that review. Progress on projects are reviewed as part of the performance tracker and any requiring further scrutiny are highlighted by Members for further work to be undertaken. The Council and the Executive Committee also refer matters directly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further work to be undertaken.</p>			<p>In terms of general policy work, the committee have considered policies on corporate enforcement, customer care strategy, complaints and social media. Future items include the new housing strategy, car park strategy and digital strategy.</p>
<p>8. (page 10, para 6)</p>	<p>Look at innovative recruitment initiatives, particularly around Planning and One Legal services</p>	<p>We are in the process of procuring and installing a new system for recruitment which will make our 'front-face' much more attractive and modern to prospective applicants. This should be in place by Spring 2021. Also more broadly we are building a 'total rewards' offer to sell the considerable benefits of working for our Council.</p> <p>We will be joining new national initiatives to recruit those who previously were employed in Legal, Planning, and ICT, but</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Services/Head of Development/Borough Solicitor</p>	<p>Spring 2021 September 2021 Complete November 2020 March 2022</p>	<p>😊 The work to launch both a new digital recruitment system and also a new microsite for recruitment has been completed and launched in July 2021. In respect of 'total rewards', our new microsite showcases the advantages of working for our council including our new Agile Working policy, training and development opportunities, annual leave, Local Government pension, salary sacrifice initiatives such as 'bike to work'.</p> <p>Recruitment to One Legal and Planning remains challenging – this is in line with the national picture. Both</p>

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		have taken time out (to look after children for example).			of these services are currently under review, there is a planning improvement plan being presented to Executive Committee on 17 November. In relation to One Legal, a new Director of Law post has recently been advertised and interviews taken place.
9. (page 11, para 1)	Consider the undertaking of a comprehensive and regular resident's survey.	By the end of the financial year the Corporate Services Team will consider the options and engage Member's appropriately. This could include: - the undertaking internally of a snapshot survey (using Borough News and online) - commissioning externally a statistically weighted snapshot survey - an ongoing survey through the website and hardcopy forms.	Head of Corporate Services	March 2021 January 2022	😊 A survey was sent to 5,000 of our residents week commencing 25 October. Top level results are expected pre-xmas with a full results report to be produced early in the New Year. Stratford District Council were commissioned to undertake the work.