

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	22 November 2022
Subject:	Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan
Report of:	Head of Corporate Services
Head of Service/Director:	Head of Corporate Services
Lead Member:	Leader of the Council
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

As part of its approach to sector led improvement, the Local Government Association (LGA) offers a fully funded corporate peer challenge to Councils every four to five years. Tewkesbury Borough Council accepted the LGA offer and welcomed an LGA led team on site during week commencing 2 March 2020. As with all peer challenges, this included a review of five core components. This is essentially a high level, external 'health-check' centred upon; understanding of local context and priority setting, financial planning and viability, political and managerial leadership, governance and decision making and organisational capacity. In addition, the scope of the challenge was localised, to ask the challenge team to also focus on; organisational set-up to successfully deliver growth plans and ambitions; confidence in delivery of the Garden Communities projects and, in more general terms, the ability and capacity to deliver the new Council Plan. During the four day challenge, the team spoke to more than 120 people including a range of Council staff, Councillors, external partners and stakeholders and gathered information and views from more than 40 meetings.

The final report from the LGA was very positive about how the Council performs across the subject areas. As with all challenges, areas for improvement were identified in the form of five key recommendations. An internal action plan comprising these recommendations with associated action points and other less implicit recommendations were approved by Council on 8 December 2020. Council delegated the monitoring of progress in delivering those actions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis. This is the fourth, and proposed final, progress report. The majority of actions have been completed with the remaining actions of an ongoing nature which are also reported through other sources, namely the Council Plan. The action plan is attached at Appendix 1.

Recommendation:

- 1. To CONSIDER the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge Action Plan**
- 2. To APPROVE the suggestion at Paragraph 2.2 of the report for the Action Plan to be closed off and removed from the Committee's Work Programme.**

Financial Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Legal Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

None directly arising from this report.

Safeguarding Implications:

None directly arising from this report.

Impact on the Customer:

None directly arising from this report though there is a completed action within the action plan relating to the undertaking of a resident's survey.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of its approach to sector led improvement, the Local Government Association (LGA) offers a fully funded corporate peer challenge to Councils every four to five years. Tewkesbury Borough Council accepted the LGA offer and welcomed an LGA-led team on site during week commencing 2 March 2020.
- 1.2 As with all peer challenges, this included a review of five core components. This is essentially a high level, external 'health-check' centred upon; understanding of local context and priority setting, financial planning and viability, political and managerial leadership, governance and decision making and organisational capacity. In addition, the scope of the challenge was localised, to ask the challenge team to also focus on a number of questions: are we set up organisationally to successfully deliver our growth plans and ambitions? are we confident in the delivery of the Garden Communities projects? and, in more general terms, the ability and capacity to deliver the new Council plan?
- 1.3 During the four day challenge, the team spoke to more than 120 people including a range of Council staff, Councillors, external partners and stakeholders and gathered information and views from more than 40 meetings. The final report from the LGA was very positive about how the Council performs across the subject areas.
- 1.4 As with all challenges, areas for improvement were identified in the form of five key recommendations. An internal action plan comprising these recommendations with associated action points and other less implicit recommendations was approved by Council on 8 December 2020. Council delegated the monitoring of progress in delivering those actions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis. This is the fourth, and proposed final, progress report. The majority of actions have been completed with the remaining actions of an ongoing nature which are also reported through other sources, namely the Council Plan. The action plan is attached at Appendix 1.

2.0 THE ACTION PLAN

2.1 The action plan is as approved by Council but with an additional column so commentary can be added on how the actions are progressing. Though the LGA team made a number of recommendations, these were small in number and the majority of the key recommendations simply asserted what we already had corporate awareness of.

2.2 In terms of the actions, the majority have been completed and are 'business as usual'. A small number of actions, mainly of a strategic nature will be ongoing for the foreseeable and are reported through the Council Plan. Other actions are wholly complete, such as the implementation of a new corporate report template, the undertaking of a residents' survey, delivery of the new HR microsite and online recruitment, senior leadership roles and responsibilities etc. Overall, the delivery of the action plan is positive, hence the recommendation to 'close it off' and remove from the Committee's Work Programme.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 None directly arising from this report.

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

4.1 If the Council does not implement the recommendations made by the peer challenge team then this will be a lost opportunity for improvement and there is a potential reputational risk of not accepting critical feedback.

5.0 MONITORING

5.1 The action plan has been reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 Action plan links to priorities on 'Finance and Resources' and 'Garden Communities'.

Background Papers: Approval of action plan – Council, 8 December 2020

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan