

CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

Report of the Leader of the Council

Date:	8 March 2022
Agenda Item:	4
Contact Officer:	Christie Tims, Chief Operating Officer
Tel Number:	01543 753780
Email:	Christie.tims@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Key Decision?	NO
Local Ward Members	n/a



CABINET

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In November 2021 the Council invited a Corporate Peer team from the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a peer challenge. The last peer challenge was undertaken in 2014.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet accept the recommendations provided in the Corporate Peer Challenge Report as set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the action plan developed to respond to the recommendations in **Appendix 2** and will review this action plan after 6 months.

3. Background

- 3.1 A Corporate Peer Challenge is a voluntary process commissioned by a council to aid their improvement and learning. It involves a small team of local government peers spending time in another council to provide challenge and share learning to aid future improvement.
- 3.2 The process involves engaging with a wide range of people connected with the council and the findings are delivered via a report and recommendations that the Council must respond to. The production and publication of the report has been delayed as a result of Covid -19 in December/January.
- 3.3 The peer challenge process reviews five core components providing 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
- 3.4 During the three-day challenge, the team spoke to more than 70 people including a range of council staff, members, external partners and stakeholders and gathered information and views from more than 40 virtual meetings. The final report from the LGA is attached at **Appendix 1**. The overall opinion is very positive about how the Council performs across the subject areas.
- 3.5 As with all challenges, areas for improvement are identified. Nine key recommendations were made by the team and these are summarised within page two of the final report. An internal action plan comprising these recommendations with associated action points can be found in **Appendix 2**. It is proposed the delivery of the action plan is monitored via the Being a Better Council Programme and formally reviewed after six months with support from the LGA to ensure actions are delivered effectively.

Alternative Options	1. A Corporate Peer Challenge is a voluntary exercise offered to local councils every 4 or 5 years to provide advice. Once undertaken a council must commit to publicise the report and develop an action plan in response to the recommendations.
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Consultation	1. The action plan has been developed in conjunction with key officers, Cabinet and a briefing session to members on 1 March.
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Financial Implications	1. None specifically from this report and action plan.
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Approved by Section 151 Officer	Yes
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Legal Implications	1. None specifically from this report and action plan.
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Approved by Monitoring Officer	Yes
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Contribution to the Delivery of the Strategic Plan	1. This action plan will ensure the outcomes from the Strategic plan are clear and deliverable.
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Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications	1. Not relevant to this report.
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Crime & Safety Issues	1. Not relevant to this report.
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Environmental Impact	1. None relevant to this report.
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GDPR / Privacy Impact Assessment	1. None relevant to this report.
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	Risk Description & Risk Owner	Original Score (RYG)	How We Manage It	Current Score (RYG)
A	That the Corporate Peer Challenge report is not published	Yellow Likelihood Yellow and Impact Assessment Yellow	This report mitigates that risk. The report will also be available via the Council Website.	Green Likelihood Green and Impact Assessment Green
B	The council does not accept or progress the recommendations from the report	Yellow Likelihood Yellow and Impact Assessment Yellow	This report and action plan mitigates that risk. The plan will be monitored by the Better performing project and a formal update will be programmed for 6 months following the review.	Green Likelihood Green and Impact Assessment Green

	Background documents
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	Corporate Peer Challenge 2014
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	Relevant web links
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	Peer challenges we offer Local Government Association
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