

## **LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE – FOLLOW UP VISIT**

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Cabinet are asked to note the LGA report and responses to the peer challenge follow up visit.

### **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 In February 2019 the Council invited the original peer team to make a follow up visit to the 2017 Corporate Peer Challenge and assess progress in response to the recommendations made. This paper presents the LGA report and summarises the main observations from this follow up visit, highlighting areas for further consideration.

### **3. PROGRESS MADE**

- 3.1 At the follow up visit the peer team spent two days onsite at the council reviewing key documentation and speaking to over 35 members and officers to assess progress against the six recommendations themes of:
- Strategic framework and alignment with financial plans
  - Alternative delivery models to achieve objectives
  - Using ICT to support change
  - Engaging and empowering staff
  - Planning for the future of the District
  - Relationships with the New Forest National Park Authority
- 3.2 The feedback report (Appendix 1) set out the Peer team's observations against each recommendation theme and concluded an impressive pace and extent of change since the original visit with particular emphasis on the priority given to the Local Plan, the development of Housing strategies and the investment made in ICT infrastructure. The team also highlighted the positive working relationships between members and officers and that Task & Finish groups are used to engage a wide range of members in developing the Council's future direction.

### **4. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS AND ACTIONS**

- 4.1 As part of the visit the peer team identified some areas worthy of further consideration, to sustain and build on the substantial progress made. These areas and the Council's responses are as follows:
- **Clarity on what the Council of the future looks like**  
*This will be considered by the new administration along with the development of the corporate plan*
  - **Identifying the next steps for ICT and smarter working arrangements**  
*A programme of works for ICT and smarter working will be developed*

- **Engagement with residents**

*The Community Strategy is currently under development and ensuring council priorities reflect those of local communities will be a key theme of the strategy*

- **Performance management framework and approach**

*This will be considered by the new administration along with the development of the corporate plan*

- **Commercial and residential property investment strategy**

*The strategy will continue to be refined in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan*

- **Staff survey**

*Consideration will be given to the most effective and appropriate means of further staff engagement as part of the HR strategy*

- 4.2 The Council welcomed these observations and further updates on progress against each of these areas will be reported as part of the performance framework.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

## **7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS**

- 7.1 I am pleased the peer challenge team found an “impressive pace of change” since their original visit. The emphasis on progress in financial matters, ICT, local plan and empowering staff were very encouraging and I thank the Members and Officers for their efforts.

### **For further information contact:**

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### **Background Papers:**

Cabinet 6 December 2017 – Corporate  
Peer Challenge