

Peer Challenge Report

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



DATE	05/12/2016
PORTFOLIO	Leader
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PURPOSE

1. To inform the committee of the outcome of the Local Government Association Peer Challenge.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the committee consider the peer challenge report, attached at appendix 1.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3. Voluntary participation in the LGA Peer Challenge demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and willingness to be accountable to the local community.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Background

4. The corporate peer challenge is the main element of the LGA's sector-led improvement approach.
5. The corporate peer challenge is offered at no charge to councils. The Council undertook a peer challenge in September 2016. The members of the peer review team were:
 - Laura McGillvray, the Chief Executive, Norwich City Council (lead peer)
 - Cllr Dave Green, Former Leader, Bradford MDC
 - Hilary Govier, District Manager, JobCentre Plus
 - Nadine Muschamp, Chief Officer (Resources), Lancaster City Council
 - Neil Shaw, Programme Manager, Local Government Association
6. All corporate peer challenges have a core component, which looks into the council's leadership, governance and performance management. This core component seeks to answer the following questions:

- Does the council understand its local context and has it established a clear set of priorities?
- Does the council have effective political and managerial leadership and is it a constructive partnership?
- Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place to respond to key challenges and manage change, transformation and disinvestment?

7. The Burnley Corporate Peer Challenge also concentrated on the following themes in addition to the core component.

- *Theme 1* - Partnership and economic prosperity: exploring how the council engages with partner agencies to achieve economic prosperity within the borough.
- *Theme 2* - Burnley as a more inclusive borough: exploring the actions and measures the council is putting in place to redress the social and economic challenges facing the borough.
- *Theme 3* - 'Devo deal' for Lancashire: exploring how the council can make most of the anticipated upcoming Lancashire 'devo deal' and the Combined Authority.

The peer review findings

8. The full report is attached as appendix 1. The headline findings are:

- Burnley Council has strong political and managerial leadership in place.
- On this basis, its work makes a positive difference to the borough.
- The council has put significant energy into supporting the growth of the local economy, and enabled or supported the expansion of local businesses and helped to draw new employers to the borough.
- Collectively, the elected councillors have a strong understanding of the different aspects of Burnley.
- They have provided a clear steer on priorities and managers are focussed on these.
- The performance of many core council services is good. Staff members are committed and loyal, despite the workforce experiencing challenging reductions in their number.
- Though the council's future funding position is "challenging", it has "clear plans in place" and "a record of strong financial management."
- The council works closely with a wide range of other partner agencies to deal with shared issues.

Peer review follow up

9. There is an expectation that the Council will commit to a follow up visit within two years after the peer challenge. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess and demonstrate the impact of the peer challenge and the progress made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit. The timing of the visit is to be determined by the Council.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION

10. None.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

11. As set out in the report.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

12. None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

13. None.

FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE CONTACT:

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