

Agenda Item 72.

TITLE	Corporate Peer Review
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 27 October 2016
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Andrew Moulton, Head of Governance and Improvement Services
LEAD MEMBER	Keith Baker, Leader of the Council

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

An effective, efficient, high performing Council focusing on the needs of its residents and communities.

RECOMMENDATION

That Executive:

- 1) notes the findings of the Corporate Peer Review report; and
- 2) notes the progress in implementing improvement actions.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Local Government Association (LGA) feedback report developed following the Corporate Peer Review in February 2016 sets out the Council's strengths and much that we can be proud of. It also set out our challenges and identified areas where we should look to improve. The detailed report can be found at Appendix A.

An action plan (Appendix B) was developed identifying activities, many of which were already underway, to address the areas identified as requiring improvement. This report and appendices provides an update on progress on the activities included in the Action Plan.

It is planned for the LGA to return in February 2017. 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.

Background

- 1.1 A Corporate Peer Review is a voluntary improvement review which is facilitated by the Local Government Association (LGA). Wokingham's Corporate Peer Review took place from Monday 8th February to Thursday 11th February 2016. The review focussed on five core themes:-
- i. Understanding the local place and priority setting: does the Council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
 - ii. Leadership of place: does the Council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
 - iii. Organisational leadership and governance: is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
 - iv. Financial planning and viability: does the Council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
 - v. Capacity to deliver: is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the Council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
- 1.2 Exploring these areas has given the council reassurance and an indication of its ability and capacity to deliver on its plans, proposals and ambitions. The review also focussed on another area of particular importance to Wokingham - the extent to which the Council is prepared to respond to the next wave of austerity.
- 1.3 A feedback report was prepared by the LGA which set out our strengths and things to be proud of and our challenges, identifying areas where we should look to improve.
- 1.4 In summary, the review found the Council to be ambitious and high achieving in many areas, supported by sound finances and enthusiastic, capable staff. The detailed report can be found at Appendix A.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
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The peer review is part of the LGA's sector led improvement activities and was at no additional cost to the Council.
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Cross-Council Implications

Impacts across and beyond the Council.
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List of Background Papers

Corporate Peer Challenge – Wokingham Borough Council – Feedback Report
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