

TITLE	Corporate Peer Review
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – 22 November 2016/2016
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 the Committee:

- 1) consider the findings of the Corporate Peer Review report;
- 2) consider progress in delivering improvement actions, set out in the action plan;
- 3) consider the implications of the review and action plan for the Overview and Scrutiny work programme for 2017/18.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Local Government Association (LGA) feedback report was developed following the Corporate Peer Review in February 2016. The report highlighted a number of strengths and also set out the challenges facing the Council. The detailed report can be found at Appendix A. The report was considered by the Executive at its meeting on 27 October 2016.

An action plan (Appendix B) has been developed identifying activities, many of which were already underway, to address the areas identified as requiring improvement. The report to the Executive provided 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.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will be considering its next annual work programme at its meeting in January 2017. It is suggested that the Corporate Peer Review report and the WBC Action Plan provide information about strengths and weaknesses that will help inform the development of the new work programme.

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. The resulting Action Plan is set out at Appendix B.
- 1.5 The Corporate Peer Review provides an assessment of the Council's strengths and the challenges it will face over the next period. As such it provides useful information for the Committee to consider in developing its next annual work programme.

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

The peer review is part of the LGA's sector led improvement activities and was at no additional cost to the Council.

Cross-Council Implications

Impacts across and beyond the Council.

List of Background Papers

Corporate Peer Challenge – Wokingham Borough Council – Feedback Report

Contact Andrew Moulton	Service Governance & Improvement
Telephone No 07747 777298	Email andrew.moulton@wokingham.gov.uk
Date 11 November 2016	Version No. 1

This page is intentionally left blank