

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive (Introduced by the Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance)	Executive Cabinet	20 March 2014

LGA PEER CHALLENGE FEEDBACK

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To share the findings of the LGA peer challenge.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That the letter and next steps be noted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- This report presents the findings of the LGA peer challenge which took place in January.
- The challenge team was made up of six senior officers and members from other authorities who carried out a 'health check' around five 'core component areas' and one focus area, economic development.
- Following initial background research, the peer challenge team met with over 50 officers, councillors, partners and stakeholders. The findings of the review are set out in a presentation and letter which are attached to this report. The letter is extremely positive, identifying strengths in terms of leadership, ambitions, staff culture, performance, partnership working, delivery and more. Also included in the letter are six key suggestions and ideas for consideration.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- To support the council's long terms outcome of being an ambitious council that continually strives to improve.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	✓
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

9. The LGA developed a package of offers to councils following the abolition of CAA. The 'taking the lead' package aims to help councils to strengthen local accountability and tackle the way they evaluate and improve services. A major part of the package is the offer to each council to have a free peer challenge.
10. The peer challenge offer is not an inspection like CAA or CPA. It is a forward looking challenge carried out to individual authorities specification, aimed at improving, not judging.
11. The council accepted this offer, and the challenge took place between the 14th and 16th January 2014. The peer challenge team was made up of six senior officers and members from other authorities who were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise.
12. Prior to the challenge, the peer challenge team were provided with a range of documents and information, including a position statement which set the scene for the challenge. While on site the team spoke to more than 50 people, including a range of council staff, councillors, external partners and stakeholders through over 20 meetings and focus groups.
13. On the final day the team presented their initial findings, with these findings being summarised further in the letter. The presentation and the letter are attached to this report in appendix A.

FEEDBACK

14. The peer challenge was structured around the five core components of:
 - a. understanding of the local context and priority setting;
 - b. financial planning and viability;
 - c. political and managerial leadership;
 - d. governance and decision making; and
 - e. organisational capacity.
15. In addition, we asked the team to explore economic development and regeneration.
16. The feedback given by the peer challenge team is extremely positive. Overall they noted that the council is well led, ambitious, understands its context and seeks to address the local challenges and community aspirations.
17. The letter provides feedback and points to consider for each of the review areas, along with six overall suggestions and ideas for consideration. These points will be discussed further and where appropriate included within an action plan.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	✓

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

19. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

20. There are no comments.

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS

21. As noted in the main body of the report, the peer challenge identified areas of strength for the council and gave some areas for the council to consider. This recommendations will be considered as part of the council's business planning process for 2014/15 and in the development of the corporate strategy refresh.

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Position Statement Final	10/01/14	Web	https://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/documents/s43024/PositionStatementFINAL.pdf

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Rebecca Huddleston	5779	04/03/2014	Peer Challenge EC Report March 2014