

Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Update

Purpose

1. To provide the committee with an overview of the activity undertaken in respect of the agreed actions following the Corporate Peer Challenge in Wiltshire which took place at the end of 2017.

Background

2. Following the formation of a new council in 2017 and the agreement of a new 10-year business plan the council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to arrange a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) for Wiltshire.
3. CPCs are improvement focused and are tailored to meet individual councils' needs, designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement. They are not inspections and do not provide a detailed diagnosis or scored assessment.
4. The LGA put together an expert team from other local authorities who reviewed a range of documents and information before spending four days in Wiltshire in November 2017. During their time at the council the group spoke to more than 130 individuals including councillors, staff and partners; attended more than 40 visits and meetings; collectively spent more than 260 hours investigating and deliberating to reach their conclusions.
5. The Peer Team reported that the council had strong and accessible political leadership; that stakeholders are clear about what the council stands for; that the council has an ambitious business plan; that the council benefits from a committed workforce who are well engaged; that there is a strong record of financial management in the council; that the council has overseen a very good recovery in Children's Services since 2012.
6. Additionally, the Peer Team made some observations, suggestions and recommendations about how the council might improve.
 - To enable the most effective delivery of its Business Plan the council should seek to clarify and quantify its key priorities. Sharper focus should be brought to organisational delivery and resource allocation which underpin this.

- In respect of the key areas of commercialism and ‘digital’ the council should build a shared understanding of the opportunities, investment required and skill needed in these areas so that it is more able to achieve successful outcomes.
 - Revisit the current intent and application of the Area Boards - so that into the future the council’s ambitions in terms of leadership of place can be further realised
 - More closely align financial and budget planning to organisational priorities and underpin this with a more robust planning and performance management regime. This will enable better linking of business and financial planning and further supporting a culture of openness and accountability
 - Apply the same approach and commitment to the Adults Services Transformation plans as was afforded to the council’s previous children services recovery plan – so that it is organisationally owned and more likely to be delivered as a consequence
 - In order to increase the delivery of housing numbers across Wiltshire, the council may wish to consider developing its plans in respect of a smaller number of strategic sites. This may strengthen its ability to secure the appropriate infrastructure and enable it to more effectively deliver its housing plan aspirations
 - Ensure that both the council and corporate leadership team (CLT) themselves invest sufficient time in focussing on their development as a team. They have a pivotal leadership role and such investment will help them realise their ambition to provide strong, collegiate corporate leadership on behalf of Wiltshire Council into the future.
7. Cabinet approved an action plan in March 2018 based on the CPC report, and OSMC received an update in November 2018. This report provides a further update against that action plan. An updated version of the action plan is provided at appendix A.

Key developments since November 2018

8. The council has introduced a revised methodology for service planning. Clear outcomes are being developed to ensure delivery on the Business Plan Priorities. Outcomes are supported by Outputs with robust delivery plans, fully resourced. These will replace service plans and give direct connection straight through to individual appraisal targets.
9. KPIs at outcome and output levels will ensure robust performance management.

A new performance and risk management policy was adopted by Cabinet in March 2019 which sets out an assurance framework; including risk and linking to financial management, which through business planning, monitoring and management links all activity back to Wiltshire Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Business Plan

10. March cabinet agreed the approach to commercial investment and has agreed £ 10m a year provision in the capital programme for the next five years and a framework for assessing services in the context of the commercialisation is in development. A commercialisation task group has been established to help shape the commercialisation strategy and drive it forward. The Council's Leadership and Management Programme includes elements of commercialisation with an understanding that this filters through the organisation as current and future leaders are trained. The latest cohort of the leadership programme, which started in spring 2019, will receive a module on commercialisation.
11. An important element of the implementation of the digital strategy was the awarding of the contract to Microsoft (MS) to jointly deliver the outcomes of a five-month review. Working in partnership with MS is enabling the council to resource and build long-term capacity to deliver a significant cultural and technical change to the way the organisation operates and serves its customers. An IT and Digital strategy has been approved by Cabinet and Council has approved the necessary increased funding. The strategy makes recommendations in terms of a 'get well' programme for the council's ICT, further developments in the Digital area, enhanced governance around technology investments, and changes to the ICT team to enable them to support the technology into the future.
12. To support the strategic approach to digital transformation, a new Director of Digital and IT post has been. The new role focuses on achieving efficiencies across services using new platforms as well as exploiting existing solutions; making the best of solutions already in place. In addition, work is ongoing to develop a programme of training and learning to ensure that staff are aware of, and able to utilise, the opportunities presented by digital transformation.
13. A new Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods post has been created in the recent Tier 2 restructure and is in the process of recruitment. Following the Community Working Review there is a focus on providing a clear programme of devolution to communities, introducing multidisciplinary, multi-agency team approach to responding to community need. Transfers of assets will continue through Area Boards and transfers of packages of assets and services to town councils is now supported by a new policy.
14. The Adult Social Care Transformation programme continues to progress, with the current care management system in adult care due to be replaced with new system in November 2019. This is the same system used by Children's social care which will allow more effective data sharing.

15. A new Advice and Contact team is now in place working alongside the Adults Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Further virtual partners will be identified to maximise partnership working in addition to police and health agencies.
16. The Council's Adult Services are being supported by a joint commissioning team, led by a new Director of Commissioning who started in spring 2018, that also support Children's services. The new joint service has worked with local providers to create a new framework, helping to shape the market, for providing Help to Live at Home services which is due to go live in Autumn 2018. Commissioning is also a focus for the new Directors of Adult Services who are working with the Clinical Commissioning Group to devise and implement joint place-based commissioning.
17. Homes England funding has been secured for phase 2 of the Council house build programme. The announcement to lift the HRA borrowing cap has enabled a significant increase in the programme, to be reported to October 2019 Cabinet. Southern area boards have been attended to explain affordable housing opportunities and especially community led housing, which has a new team in place. It is intended to report to cabinet in July with detailed proposals on establishing the local housing company and local development company, which have already been approved in principle.
18. A bed audit of extra care, residential & nursing homes, supported living and shared lives (for adults) has been completed and a draft accommodation strategy is now in place. The next planned phase will be to develop an Estates Strategy.
19. In reviewing commissioning, procurement and contract management arrangements, a comprehensive improvement plan is in place for the Strategic Procurement Hub, this includes the contract management arrangements. The roles and responsibilities within SPH have been reviewed and a new structure is in place. Consultation is completed for Brokerage restructure. Consultation for wider commissioning restructure will begin at end of June 2019.
20. The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) are now scheduled to meet fortnightly as a Corporate Director team, and as a wider CLT (including statutory directors). This results in increased time spent developing as a team but also on discussing and agreeing actions relating to the strategic agenda. The Corporate Directors have agreed shared objectives for cascading to the extended leadership team, and whole council. These weekly meetings have however been impacted by events in Salisbury this year.
21. The Corporate Directors are now provided with professional advice and challenge from the Directors in the discharging of their statutory responsibilities and this is supporting and informing strategic decision making and delivery of the business plan priorities.

22. The Corporate Directors are now receiving leadership development and coaching as a team and individually. This is being provided as part of a schedule of development by an external expert.

Recommendations

23. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee note the progress against the Corporate Peer Review Action Plan described above and in Appendix A.

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Executive Directors