

Report subject	<b>Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report</b>
Meeting date	8 March 2023
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>In November 2021 the Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge of BCP Council.</p> <p>The peer team was made up of eight 'critical friends' which included two lead members, four senior officers from other local authorities and two LGA advisors.</p> <p>The Peer challenge focused on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local priorities and outcomes</li> <li>2. Organisational and place leadership</li> <li>3. Governance and culture</li> <li>4. Financial planning and management</li> <li>5. Capacity for improvement</li> </ol> <p>and at the council's request:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transformation</li> <li>• Partnership working</li> <li>• Summer response</li> </ul> <p>An action plan in response the final feedback report was approved by Cabinet in April 2022.</p> <p>Members of the peer team visited the Council on 1 December 2022 to review progress since the last visit and a summary of their findings is presented in the report appended to this paper.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:</b></p> <p><b>Receives the Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report and provide any comments</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>A peer challenge presents opportunities for councils to receive endorsements from other local authorities about how well services are being delivered but also to learn how things could be done differently to best meet the needs of the council and the wider community.</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Phil Broadhead– Leader of the Council
Corporate Director	Graham Farrant – Chief Executive
Report Authors	Bridget Webber – Head of Policy & Research
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Information

## Background

1. Following the Local Government’s Peer Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2021, a peer team visited the council in December 2022 to review progress with the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, which was approved by Cabinet in April 2022.
2. The progress review is an integral part of the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) process, normally taking place six months to a year from when the council published the CPC action plan. It is designed to provide space for the council’s senior leadership to:
  - update peers on the early progress made and to receive feedback on this including how the action plan aligns to the CPC’s recommendations
  - consider peers’ reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were ‘on-site’ including any further support needs
  - discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date
3. The progress review took place in person on 1 December 2022. During the day the peer team met with over 50 key internal stakeholders (including senior officers, members and staff) to discuss and report upon the progress that the council had made since the CPC, and specifically against the overall recommendations the peer team made as part of that process.
4. The council wanted the peers to give more specific feedback on the progress, opportunities, and challenges in relation to the council’s finances and governance as part of this process.
5. The peer team made 12 key recommendations for improvement in their previous feedback report. The action plan approved by Cabinet addressed all of these recommendations and several of the observations in the report.
6. This Peer Challenge Progress Review report does not report progress on everything in the action plan but it does acknowledge that action locally has been extensive and that there are many positives to report. The report particularly notes that:
  - the council and its leadership have actively engaged in the new health and social care landscape and that is very positive.
  - the inadequate rating by Ofsted of the council’s children’s services is being addressed, highlighting that how the council is working with Hampshire County Council as its Improvement Partner.

- there was real progress in respect of the council's climate change ambitions
  - the council's summer response was overwhelmingly positive and a great example of place leadership.
  - there are tangible benefits being derived from the council's focus on culture change, embracing of equality and diversity and starting to mainstream both this and its transformation plans into the council's 'Business as Usual' way of doing things.
  - there is evidence of significant strides being taken in terms of embedding equality and diversity in service delivery, employment practice and as a community leader in a short space of time.
  - the peer team felt that this was now starting to establish a far more coherent foundation for the council's future organisational development plans, and this should be something it continues to build upon.
7. The report also highlights areas for the council to address which the peer team discussed at the round table feedback session. These were:
- Governance and effective relationships
  - Financial management and stability
8. A full update of progress against the original Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan will be included in the end of year performance report to Cabinet later in the year.

#### **Summary of financial implications**

9. There are no known additional financial implications as a result of this review.

#### **Summary of legal implications**

10. There are no known legal implications as a result of this review.

#### **Summary of human resources implications**

11. There are no known human resource implications

#### **Summary of sustainability impact**

12. There are no known sustainability impacts. The review does highlight the progress made towards climate action across the council.

#### **Summary of public health implications**

13. There are no known public health implications.

#### **Summary of equality implications**

14. There are no known equality implications. The review does highlight the progress the council has made to ensure equality and diversity is embedded throughout the culture of the organisation.

#### **Summary of risk assessment**

15. The potential risk of reputational damage has been noted in the progress review report.

## 16. Background papers

[Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report](#)

[Corporate Peer Review Action Plan](#)

## **Appendices**

1 Peer Review Progress Report