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| REPORT TO: | Cabinet |
| DATE: | 24 July 2024 |
| SUBJECT: | LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report and action plan |
| PURPOSE: | To receive the findings of the BBC LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and an associated action plan |
| KEY DECISION: | No |
| PORTFOLIO HOLDER: | Councillor Anne Dorrian, Leader of the Council |
| REPORT OF: | James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | None |

SUMMARY

In May 2024, Boston Borough Council welcomed Peers from the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge.

This report brings forward the findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge (Appendix A) and the Council's action plan (Appendix B) in response.

The findings and action plan have been reviewed by a joint meeting of the Council's scrutiny committees – Corporate and Community and Environment and Performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the findings from the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge at Appendix A.
2. To approve the action plan at Appendix B.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that Cabinet is formally sighted on the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge findings and has an action plan in place to take forward the recommendations.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None

1. Report

- 1.1** In mid-2023, Boston Borough Council (BBC) was approached by the Local Government Association (LGA) with a view to confirming timescales for the next Corporate Peer Challenge for the Council. Councils undergo a Peer Challenge from the LGA every few years to support their improvement and development.
- 1.2** The BBC Corporate Peer Challenge took place between 14 May and 16 May 2024, with Peers on site at Municipal Buildings each day.
- 1.3** The Peer Challenge process involved Peers – both Councillors and Officers – from other Councils visiting BBC to meet with Partners, Councillors and Officers, to form a rounded view of the Council’s position on the following themes:
- Local priorities and outcomes
 - Organisational and place leadership
 - Governance and culture
 - Financial planning and management
 - Capacity for improvement
 - The Council’s approach to physical asset
 - Corporate Strategy and Cultural Change
- At the request of the Council, the Peers also explored organisational sustainability and looked at the role of scrutiny and how this could be strengthened.
- 1.4** In advance of the Challenge a detailed evidence base and position statement were submitted to the LGA to support the process. This provided pre-reading for the Peers to enable them to hit the ground running when on site.
- 1.5** The findings and recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge are attached at Appendix A.
- 1.6** The Council has produced an action plan to take forward the recommendations (Appendix B).
- 1.7** In developing the action plan, a joint meeting of the Council’s scrutiny committees took place. At the meeting Councillors considered in detail the action plan and proposed a series of amendments, which have been considered by the Leader and included within the action plan.
- 1.8** At a high level, the amendments/actions as a result of the input of the Committee are:
- 1) the need to ensure any residents survey undertaken is wide-reaching and engages the whole community;
 - 2) that Carbon Literacy training is offered to the Community Leaders Network;

- 3) that a further action is added to the action plan in regard to the Council actively addressing concerns raised regarding health and wellbeing in the workforce and
- 4) that alongside publication of the final report, the Council provides narrative that seeks to summarise the key messages from the Peers for ease of understanding for those who don't work within Local Government.

1.9 We would like to formally thank the LGA and their Peers for visiting the Council.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

The Peer Challenge was specifically BBC focused, however, learning from the Challenge will be used Partnership-wide.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

As set out in 'Expected Benefits to the Partnership'

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This impacts all corporate priorities.

STAFFING

Capacity, including staffing capacity, was considered by the Peers during the Challenge.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

DATA PROTECTION

None

FINANCIAL

Financial position and capacity were considered by the Peers during the Challenge.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management was considered by the Peers during the Challenge.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

The Peer Challenge process involved discussions with internal and external audiences to shape the findings.

REPUTATION

None

CONTRACTS

None

CRIME AND DISORDER

None

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are matters identified within the Peer Challenge feedback.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

| MISSIONS | |
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| This paper contributes to the follow Missions outlined in the Government’s Levelling Up White paper. | |
| Living Standards | By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing. |
| Research and Development | By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth. |
| Transport Infrastructure | By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing. |
| Digital Connectivity | By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population. |
| Education | By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third. |
| Skills | By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas. |
| Health | By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years. |
| Wellbeing | By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing. |
| Pride in Place | By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing. |
| Housing | By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government’s ambition is |

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| | for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas. |
| Crime | By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas. |
| Local Leadership | By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement. |

ACRONYMS

- SHDC – South Holland District Council
- LGA – Local Government Association

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

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| APPENDIX A | Peer Challenge Report |
| APPENDIX B | Peer Challenge Action Plan |

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A joint meeting of Corporate and Community and Environment and Performance scrutiny committees on 11 July 2024

REPORT APPROVAL

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| Report author: | James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate |
| Signed off by: | James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate |
| Approved for publication: | Councillor Anne Dorrian, Leader of the Council |