

# Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge - West Berkshire

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission on 28 July 2020
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Lynne Doherty
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	29 February 2020
<b>Report Author:</b>	Catalin Bogos
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	EX3887

## 1. Purpose of the Report

To publish the results of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge for West Berkshire Council and an action plan to address the recommendations within it.

## 2. Recommendations

To note the report and approve the actions that are being taken to address the recommendations within the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report.

## 3. Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary			
<b>Financial:</b>	There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. However, governance boards responsible for particular actions might identify such implications and manage accordingly.			
<b>Human Resource:</b>	There are no direct HR implications as a result of this report. However, governance boards responsible for particular actions might identify such implications and manage accordingly.			
<b>Legal:</b>	N/A			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	There are no significant risk management issues as a result of this report.			
<b>Property:</b>	N/A			
<b>Policy:</b>	There are no direct HR implications as a result of this report. However, governance boards responsible for particular actions might identify such implications and manage accordingly.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed		x		The actions planned in response to the Corporate Peer Review recommendations are

decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?				expected to achieve service improvements for the benefit of all residents and staff.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		The actions planned in response to the Corporate Peer Review recommendations are expected to achieve service improvements for the benefit of all residents and staff.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>				N/A
<b>Health Impact:</b>				N/A
<b>ICT or Digital Services Impact:</b>				N/A
<b>Council Strategy Priorities or Business as Usual:</b>	x			The actions planned in response to the Corporate Peer Review recommendations are expected to achieve service improvements impacting on the delivery of all Council's Priorities.
<b>Data Impact:</b>				N/A
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	Corporate Board, Heads of Service, Portfolio Holders			

## 4. Executive Summary

4.1 This paper sets out the results of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge which was undertaken here in November 2020. The resulting report from the LGA paints a positive picture with a small number of recommendations being made. The purpose of this paper is to set out these recommendations, facilitate debate and then set out how it is proposed to implement the recommendations.

4.2 The report highlights the current strengths of the Council's current leadership, governance and financial planning arrangements and sets out a number of suggested areas for attention, namely:

- Jointly design with residents the mechanisms through which to hear their voice more
- Respond to the desire partners have for the council to lead the setting of a clear direction for West Berkshire into the future and influence the place it should be – raising the ambition, establishing clarity of purpose and sharpening the focus

- Determine West Berkshire's housing, economic growth and environment priorities, how they need to inter-relate and reflect them in the emerging respective strategies
- Make communications central to the council's thinking
- The council needs to reassure itself that its approaches to demand management, modernisation, commercialisation and digitisation will deliver the anticipated savings for the authority
- Take stock of the council's commercialisation agenda and related risk appetite
- The council's accounts for 2018/19 have not yet been signed off by the Auditor – this needs to be addressed and the learning drawn out
- The Council Strategy needs to become central to the authority's thinking and understanding
- Look at how to strike a better balance in relation to the council's very extensive governance arrangements – ensuring proportionality through looking at how people use their time
- Extend opportunities for staff engagement
- Establish a focused programme to drive genuine transformation centred on the resident and improving outcomes

4.3 The action plan in Appendix D lists the actions planned in response to the key recommendations highlighted for reporting at Executive.

## 5. Supporting Information

### Introduction

5.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) launched its offer of 'sector led improvement' in 2011. As a solution to reduce the inspection burden on local Government, the Peer Challenge has become the primary means for delivering sector led improvement. There are a number of different types offered but all local authorities are meant to have a Corporate Peer Challenge every four or five years.

### Background

5.2 West Berkshire had its latest Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2019. Concluding their work, the LGA Peer Review Team produced a self contained report which is attached at Appendix C for Members' information. The LGA Peer Review report is relatively brief and covers the findings, recommendations and details of the peer challenge approach. As a result, the information is not replicated here.

5.3 The report has been placed on the Executive agenda to formally acknowledge it and provide an opportunity for further debate. A copy has already been made available to all staff and Members and is available to the public via the Council's website.

5.4 The recommendations in the report which are set out above are already being acted upon and Appendix D provides the full list of the actions being taken. These actions will

be incorporate in the refreshed Council Strategy Delivery Plan for 2020/21 which is currently being prepared.

### **Proposals**

- (a) The strengths in each of the five core components of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and the recommendations included in the LGA Report are noted.
- (b) The actions in response to the Peer Challenge's recommendations and the allocation of these actions to governing bodies responsible for their delivery are approved by the Executive.

## **6. Other options considered**

The Council found valuable the Corporate Peer Challenge process which reflects on the strengths recognised by fellow experienced Councillors and officers and also recommendations for further improvement. A careful consideration of the feedback, resulting in an action plan to address the recommendation, is the option that will achieve the maximum benefit from undertaking the corporate peer challenge.

## **7. Conclusion**

The LGA Peer Challenge highlights that there is much for the Council to shout about in terms of its successes. It also identifies a number of recommendations for further improvement. Work has already begun on addressing some of the recommendations highlighted in the report. All of the actions in response to these recommendations will be built into the refreshed Council Strategy Plan for 2020/21 and beyond.

## **8. Appendices**

Appendix A – Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix B – Data Protection Impact Assessment

Appendix C – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report

Appendix D – Action Plan in Response to the Corporate Peer Challenge 2019

---

**Background Papers:**

None

---

**Subject to Call-In:**

Yes: ☒ No: ☐

---

**Wards affected: All**

---

**Officer details:**

Name: Catalin Bogos  
Job Title: Performance and Risk Manager  
Tel No: (01635) 519102  
E-mail Address: [Catalin.Bogos@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:Catalin.Bogos@westberks.gov.uk)

---

## Appendix A

### Equality Impact Assessment - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity as set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act), which states:

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:*
  - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; This includes the need to:*
    - (i) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;*
    - (ii) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;*
  - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, with due regard, in particular, to the need to be aware that compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*
- (2) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.*
- (3) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others.*

The following list of questions may help to establish whether the decision is relevant to equality:

- Does the decision affect service users, employees or the wider community?
- (The relevance of a decision to equality depends not just on the number of those affected but on the significance of the impact on them)
- Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?
- Is it a major policy, or a major change to an existing policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?
- Will the decision have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?
- Does the decision relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?
- Does the decision relate to an area with known inequalities?
- Does the decision relate to any equality objectives that have been set by the council?

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a full Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

<b>What is the proposed decision that you are asking the Executive to make:</b>	Note the LGA Report and approve the Action Plan.
<b>Summary of relevant legislation:</b>	n/a
<b>Does the proposed decision conflict with any of the Council's key strategy priorities?</b>	No
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Catalin Bogos
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	11/02/2020

<b>Is this a:</b>		<b>Is this:</b>	
<b>Policy</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>New or proposed</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Already exists and is being reviewed</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Function</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Is changing</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Service</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>		

<b>What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed decision and who is likely to benefit from it?</b>	
<b>Aims:</b>	Support further improvement by addressing the recommendations from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2019
<b>Objectives:</b>	Executive to note the LGA report and approve the Action Plan produced in response to the report
<b>Outcomes:</b>	Areas of strength for the Council are maintained and further improvements are achieved in response to the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge's recommendations.
<b>Benefits:</b>	Improved services for residents in West Berkshire.

<b>Note which groups may be affected by the proposed decision. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this.</b> (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)		
<b>Group Affected</b>	<b>What might be the effect?</b>	<b>Information to support this</b>
Age		
Disability		
Gender Reassignment		

Marriage and Civil Partnership		
Pregnancy and Maternity		
Race		
Religion or Belief		
Sex		
Sexual Orientation		
<b>Further Comments relating to the item:</b>		
Improvements are expected to impact on all residents in the district.		

<b>Result</b>	
<b>Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</b>	
<b>Will the proposed decision have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Please provide an explanation for your answer:</b>	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered 'yes' to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.

If a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the [Equality Impact Assessment guidance and Stage Two template](#).

<b>Identify next steps as appropriate:</b>	
<b>Stage Two required</b>	Not required.
<b>Owner of Stage Two assessment:</b>	
<b>Timescale for Stage Two assessment:</b>	

**Name:** Catalin Bogos

**Date:** 11/02/2020

Please now forward this completed form to Rachel Craggs, Principal Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity) ([rachel.craggs@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.craggs@westberks.gov.uk)), for publication on the WBC website.



## Appendix B

### Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via [dp@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:dp@westberks.gov.uk)

Directorate:	Resources
Service:	Legal and Strategic Support
Team:	Performance, Research and Risk
Lead Officer:	Catalin Bogos
Title of Project/System:	Action Plan in Response to the Corporate Peer Challenge 2019
Date of Assessment:	11/02/2020

## Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
<p><b>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</b></p> <p><small>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</b></p> <p><small>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</b></p> <p><small>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will any decisions be automated?</b></p> <p><small>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual’s input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?</b></p> <p><small>Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>x</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answer “Yes” to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.**