



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Leader
LEAD OFFICERS:	Chief Executive
DATE:	14 February 2019

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	ALL
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
KEY DECISION:	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

SUBJECT:

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION PEER REVIEW

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a Peer Review at the Council from 3rd to 6th December 2018 providing an external perspective on how well the Council is performing and on its future plans. The LGA undertake these challenges at all Councils every five or six years.

As part of the challenge process the Peer Team had a series of meetings and focus groups with a range of people from across the council and its partners including elected members, senior officers, managers, supervisors, apprentices and frontline staff.

Informal feedback from the Peer Team was shared with Policy Council in December and the formal written report has now been received and is appended. The Peer Team have outlined 11 recommendations in their report for the Council to consider.

The comments and observations from the Peer Team are positive with particular reference to our deep understanding of place and the challenges and opportunities presented, the widely respected political and managerial leadership at the council, our partners having a real confidence in the council as well as passionate staff who are committed to the area.

The report also highlights that the Council has helped to bring significant improvements in infrastructure attracting inward investment and indicates that the Council should consider further steps to ensure that more local people can benefit from the economic activity generated.

A formal response to the recommendations and an action plan is being developed and will be brought to Council Forum in March 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board note the report from the LGA Peer Team and that a formal response and action plan in relation to the recommendations is being developed for consideration at Council Forum in March 2019.

3. BACKGROUND

The LGA undertook a Peer Review at Blackburn with Darwen Council from 3-6 December 2018 providing an external perspective on how well the council is performing and on its future plans. The LGA undertake these challenges at all councils every five or six years.

Peers are at the heart of the challenge process providing a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge. They are experienced councillors and officers from other authorities, providing a fresh perspective that is informed by experience of what it is like to manage and deliver public services and work in partnership for the benefit of the community. The Peer Team was led by Diana Terris, Chief Executive of Barnsley Council and Councillor Iain Malcom, Leader of South Tyneside Council.

Each corporate peer challenge focused on five core components, which in the LGA's experience are features of effective councils. The peer team considered these in the light of the local context and priorities of Blackburn with Darwen. The core components of the challenge were:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting
2. Leadership of Place
3. Financial planning and viability
4. Organisational leadership and governance
5. Capacity to deliver

In addition to the above, the Council had asked the team to consider the following:

- Community engagement
- Digital transformation

As part of the challenge process, the Peer Team had a series of meetings and focus groups with a range of people from across the council and its partners – including elected members, senior officers, managers, supervisors, apprentices and front line staff.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

The Council will consider the recommendations and develop a formal response and action plan which will set out any key issues and risks to delivery where appropriate.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

As agreed at Policy Council in December 2018 the Council's Corporate Plan is being refreshed and will be considered at Council Forum in March 2019. The new Corporate Plan will consider and reflect some of the recommendations outlined in the Peer Review report, in particular developing an agreed set of outcomes for people, place and council to be reflected in the Corporate Plan and a review of the Key Performance Indicators.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Any financial implications will be covered within existing budgets.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

In line with best practice the Council invited the LGA to undertake a Peer Review in December. There is no legal requirement to do so.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Any resource implications will be covered within existing budgets.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 ☒ Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 ☐ In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

There were no consultations necessary for the Peer Review. A number of elected members, partners, residents and council officers were interviewed by the Peer Team as part of the process.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Alison Schmid, Service Lead Policy and Research
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DATE:	5th February 2019
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**BACKGROUND
PAPER:**

LGA Peer Review formal report