

**Meeting: Council**

**Date: 7 April 2016**

**Wards Affected: All**

**Report Title: Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan**

**Is the decision a key decision? Yes**

**When does the decision need to be implemented?** Ongoing implementation of action plan

**Chairman of LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan Working Party: Councillor David Thomas**

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## **1. Proposal and Introduction**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 3 February 2016, the Council received the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge feedback report on Torbay Council and an outline action plan.
- 1.2 Following that meeting, a detailed action plan has been prepared by a Working Party following a series of workshops with partners, members and officers to enable them to contribute towards the action plan. This report sets out the final action plan, which will assist the Council to embrace the opportunities and improvements identified by the Corporate Peer Challenge.

## **2. Reason for Proposal**

- 2.1 To enable the Council to respond to the recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report and make improvements.

## **3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision**

- 3.1 That the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Action Plan (as set out at Appendix 1) be approved; and
- 3.2 That a Strategic Partnership Forum Working Party comprising 5 members (politically balanced) be established to take forward the detailed actions outlined under No 1 of the Action Plan.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 The LGA provide councils with support through corporate peer challenges. Peer challenge is a tool for assisting councils in identifying areas for improvement. The process involves a small team of local government peers spending time with the Council to provide challenge and share learning. Peer challenges are not a formal inspection and are designed to complement and add value to the Council's own performance and improvement.
- 4.2 The LGA undertook the peer challenge review of the Council during an on-site visit (30 November to 3 December 2015).
- 4.3 During the visit, the Peer Challenge Team engaged with a wide range of people connected with the Council.
- 4.4 The Peer Challenge Team considered the following questions which form the core components looked at by all corporate peer challenges:
1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
  2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
  3. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
  4. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
  5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
- 4.5 At the end of their review, the Peer Challenge Team made a number of recommendations and provided feedback. A detailed action plan to respond to the LGA's recommendations has been developed and is attached at Appendix 1.

## **5. Approach to development of Action Plan**

- 5.1 A series of workshops have been held with partners (primarily those interviewed by the LGA Peer Team), members and senior officers to provide an opportunity for them to contribute and be involved in the preparation of the detailed action plan.
- 5.2 This was followed by a joint member and officer working group (politically balanced) to further refine the action plan and gather the feedback from the workshops. The resulting action plan is set out at Appendix 1 and is recommended for approval.

## **6. Outline of significant key risks**

- 6.1 The main risk associated with the report is the failure to respond to the recommendations of the LGA Peer Challenge Team. This may result in the Council not responding adequately to the challenges it faces. The resulting action plan addresses the recommendations by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge.

## **7. Other options**

- 7.1 Not to endorse the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge action plan – this is not recommended as the action plan will mitigate the risks outlined above.

## **8. Summary of resource implications**

- 8.1 The action plan will be delivered within identified resources and any additional resources will be incorporated in the budget setting process for 2016/2017.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 Key partners, stakeholders, elected members, and officers contributed towards the development of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge action plan. The action plan will assist the Council in making improvements which will ultimately lead to better outcomes for the community.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Detailed Action Plan

## **Background Documents**

Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Torbay Council Feedback Report