



**Cabinet**

**Tuesday, 10 October 2023**

**LGA Corporate Peer Challenge**

## **Report of the Chief Executive**

### **Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor N Clarke**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. The Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is a part of the Local Government Association's (LGA) sector support programme. It involves 'peers' from within local government spending time with a council to provide a friendly, but critical challenge to the council and its work. It aims to highlight areas of good practice, as well as identify areas for improvement and ongoing support.
- 1.2. The Council has invited the LGA to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge. This will take place during 15-18 January 2024.
- 1.3. This report sets out the purpose and scope of the CPC, in addition to the obligations the Council is required to meet as part of the CPC process.

#### **2. Recommendation**

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) considers the content of the report, outlining the Council's participation in a Corporate Peer Challenge;
- b) commits to meeting the obligations, as set out in paragraph 4.6 of this report, and
- c) requests a report back to Cabinet following the conclusion of the Corporate Peer Challenge, which sets out the findings, recommendations and resulting action plan.

#### **3. Reasons for Recommendation**

The CPC is a valuable tool for improvement, made freely available to all councils every five years. Having last participated in 2018, now is the right time to make use of this opportunity once again to receive impartial, transparent and expert advice, to help the Council identify areas for improvement to continue to deliver high quality services for our residents.

## 4. Supporting Information

- 4.1. The CPC is a valuable tool for improvement, made freely available to all councils every five years. The process has recently been improved, taking on board recommendations from the [Independent Evaluation of Sector-Led Improvement](#).
- 4.2. The Council's CPC will take place on-site during 15-18 January 2024. In advance of the on-site visit, the CPC team will be provided with a pack of information, including a position statement (setting out the Council's perspective on how it operates and where its challenges are) and a selection of key documents (e.g. Medium Term Financial Strategy, Corporate Strategy and performance data). Once on-site the team of Councillor and officer peers will spend time at the Council, meeting with officers, Councillors and external stakeholders, with a view to understanding how the Council operates, what it does well and where it could improve. The CPC team will provide robust, strategic and credible challenge and support.
- 4.3. The CPC team is expected to comprise:
  - Conservative Leader peer
  - A member peer from another political party or Independent
  - Chief Executive peer
  - Executive Director/Manager x 2
  - LGA Peer Challenge Manager
  - LGA Project Support Officer
- 4.4. The CPC will cover six core themes:
  - **Local priorities and outcomes** – Are the Council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the Council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities?
  - **Organisational and place leadership** – Does the Council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
  - **Governance and culture** – Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge and scrutiny?
  - **Financial planning and management** – Does the Council have a clear understanding of its current financial position? Does the Council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
  - **Capacity for improvement** – Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the Council have the capacity to improve?
  - **The Environment** – This theme was requested by the Council, in addition to the five core themes above which every CPC will cover. This will take a comprehensive view on the Council's approach to the topic, including but not limited to climate change, commitment to net-zero, energy generation, waste management, finance.

- 4.5. At the end of the CPC visit on 18 January, the Peer team will provide a presentation to Councillors and officers to share headline feedback and recommendations. This will be followed by a report detailing the strengths of the Council, the issues considered, areas for further improvement and key recommendations. The LGA will provide a draft report within three weeks of the CPC's last day and a final report within three months of the CPC.
- 4.6. In order to take part in a CPC, the Council must commit to doing the following:
- publish the final report within three months of the CPC taking place
  - develop and a publish a detailed action plan that responds to the report's findings within five months of the CPC
  - take part in a progress review within 12 months of the CPC, where the Council's Executive Management team will update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps.
- 4.7. A report will also be brought back to Cabinet following the conclusion of the CPC, setting out the key findings, recommendations and resulting action plan.

## **5. Alternative options considered and reasons for rejection**

The Council could choose not to participate in a CPC, as it is not required to do so. However, it is good practice to do so approximately every five years. It is an opportunity to receive robust, independent advice about how the Council could make improvements to better serve its residents. Not participating would not be in the best interests of the Borough or its residents.

## **6. Risks and Uncertainties**

There are no risks associated with this report

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1. Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **7.2. Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications associated with this report.

### **7.3. Equalities Implications**

There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

### **7.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications**

There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.

## 7.5. Biodiversity Net Gain

There are no biodiversity net gain implications associated with this report.

## 8. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The CPC will help the Council to identify where it could make improvements to enhance residents' quality of life
Efficient Services	The CPC will help the Council to identify where it could operate more efficiently, with a focus on financial planning and management
Sustainable Growth	The CPC will have a focus on local priorities and outcomes, which will take into consideration our approach to development and sustainable growth
The Environment	The Council has requested that the environment be considered as a sixth key theme in the CPC, reflecting its level of priority to the Council

## 9. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- a) considers the content of the report, outlining the Council's participation in a Corporate Peer Challenge;
- b) commits to meeting the obligations, as set out in para 4.6 of this report, and
- c) requests a report back to Cabinet following the conclusion of the Corporate Peer Challenge, which sets out the findings, recommendations and resulting action plan.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Kath Marriott Chief Executive 0115 914 8291 <a href="mailto:kmarriott@rushcliffe.gov.uk">kmarriott@rushcliffe.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers available for Inspection:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	None