

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 15 July 2019

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PORTFOLIO: Cllr James Swindlehurst, Leader, Regeneration & Strategy

PART I **NON-KEY DECISION**

LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - DRAFT ACTION PLAN

1 Purpose of Report

To review the draft Action Plan in response to the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and agree next steps. The final LGA report is at Appendix A.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- (a) That the draft Action Plan at Appendix B be considered and noted.
- (b) That the timetable for an LGA led Governance Review Appendix C be noted.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a. Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Recommendations in the draft action plan (Appendix B) include the council's collaboration with our partners. Our response to these recommendations will influence the council's contribution to the delivery of partnership working, the Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy (SJWS) priorities, as well as the way in which the priorities in future iterations of the SJWS are developed.

3b Five Year Plan Outcomes

The findings of the peer challenge support our strategic direction of travel to better articulate our long-term vision for the borough - including more emphasis on people. This will help us to deliver all five of our priority outcomes:

- Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful
- Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs
- Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay
- Our residents will live in good quality homes
- Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

Theme 3 of the peer challenge addressed Financial Planning and Viability.

(b) Risk Management

The key potential risk with the peer challenge was always to our reputation. We have embraced the peer challenge and commented constructively on the findings. The LGA have responded in a similarly constructive manner and as a result we have maintained a positive relationship which will contribute to the resetting of our reputation with the LGA and government generally.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

A number of the LGA's recommendations relate to good governance and ethical standards.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Should the implementation of the action plan necessitate an assessment, it will be carried out as required.

(e) Workforce

There are no direct workforce implications. Implementation of the action plan will be managed by senior leaders.

5 **Supporting Information**

5.1 Background

The LGA corporate peer challenge took place between 5th and 8th February 2019. The LGA team spoke to more than 90 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders - collectively more than 250 hours were spent to determine their findings.

The peer challenge focussed on:

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. 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?
3. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes and performance?

4. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders and its communities?
5. 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?

5.2 Recommendations

Key findings include:

- Recent stability of political and officer leadership was welcomed by all
- Leadership speaks compellingly about the future for Slough
- Track record of delivering a balanced budget
- Recognition Slough is a 'boom town' with a thriving economy and investor confidence
- There is a great story to be told around inclusive growth and how Slough residents will benefit
- Emerging transformation agenda is the right thing to do

The LGA report sets out 29 recommendations including a specific LGA review of good governance and ethical standards – see **Appendix C** for an outline proposal from the LGA.

The LGA report highlighted the following 6 key recommendations:

- Establish a stronger sense of where you want to get to – your vision
- Develop and deliver this vision which identifies what the future looks like for all parts of the community – for place and for people
- Consider and articulate what a 21st Century Council will look like for Slough to build unity around a common purpose
- Establish a more fundamental equilibrium between the council's ambition for people and place, and communicate this
- Progress the emerging transformation agenda and invest more time in rooting this in culture change
- Develop your governance from 'basic control' to good

5.3 Transformation

The report reaffirms our own assessment of the key areas that need to be addressed as part of our transformation programme – the business case for which was approved by Cabinet on 15 April 2019.

6 Comments of Other Committees

This report has not yet been seen by any other committees.

7 Conclusion and next steps

The LGA corporate peer challenge was a constructive process that has confirmed our understanding of the key issues facing the council and supporting the case for transformation.

The LGA will be invited to undertake a Governance review by the end of the calendar year and a follow up to the corporate peer challenge by September 2020.

8 **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' Feedback Report. Corporate Peer Challenge, Slough Borough Council 5th-8th February 2019.
- 'B' Draft action plan.
- 'C' LGA Governance Review Proposal