

Report to COUNCIL

Corporate Peer Challenge – Feedback report

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Sean Fielding, Leader of the Council

Officer Contact: Dr Carolyn Wilkins OBE, Chief Executive, Oldham Council and Accountable Officer, NHS Oldham CCG

Report Author: Lewis Greenwood, Head of Executive Services, Oldham Council and NHS Oldham CCG

Ext. 3542

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Purpose of the report

This report highlights the findings of the LGA Peer Challenge carried out in Oldham between 21 – 24 January 2020.

Recommendations

The Council is asked to:

1. Note the contents of this report and the feedback report received which is attached as an appendix to this report;
2. Note that a report will be presented to the Cabinet over the coming months which will set out the Organisation's action plan against each of the key recommendations as set out within this paper.

1.0 Background and Summary of LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report

1.1 Oldham Council undertook a voluntary Corporate Peer Challenge between 21 – 24 January 2020 which was facilitated by the Local Government Association and undertaken by Senior Elected Members and Chief Officers across Local Government.

1.2 All Corporate Peer Challenges explore a number of areas as set out below:

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, the Council sought feedback on our whole system approach to Public Service Reform.

1.3 The Challenge Team spent four days in Oldham and during this time spoke with a large number of Councillors, staff, partners and community groups which focused on the areas above.

1.4 Ahead of the Corporate Peer Challenge, the Council committed to publishing the feedback report. This is set out as an appendix to this report.

1.5 The feedback report highlights that the organisation has a clear vision and energy for the borough, our ambition and future direction of travel, our relentless focus to improving outcomes for our residents and the strong partnership ethos that is in place across the borough.

1.6 The report praises our 'bold, brave and honest' approach to Public Service reform, as well as highlights that our 'Team Oldham' approach is not only real, but that everyone within Oldham has 'commitment, passion and ambition for our organisation and place' and that we pride ourselves on working closely with Communities as a 'Council of Oldham, not in Oldham'.

1.7 The report identifies that the scale of Oldham's ambition is a strength, although this also presents a challenge. The challenge team recommended a number of key points to be considered. These will be addressed in the council's resultant action plan and are set out below:

1. Focus the various priorities into a clear, achievable singular corporate set as part of the forthcoming Team Oldham Plan;
2. Once done, review the levels of oversight and assurance against this more focussed set of priorities to ensure appropriate support and challenge is in place, which is suitably informed;

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3. Review the additional benefits that Overview and Scrutiny can bring in helping to shape and challenge the delivery of the key priorities for the Council and the borough;
 4. Continue to embed the Strategic Design Authority approach at pace so that it can drive the delivery of transformation and realisation of savings;
 5. Agree a programme of ongoing savings which can be delivered at pace to stop the reliance on one off funding and reserves;
 6. Progress the 'Creating a Better Place' vision and strategic framework given the significant benefits for the borough, as well the medium – longer term financial sustainability of the Council'
 7. Develop a specific set of phased asks from partners both inside Oldham and across Greater Manchester which will help us deliver our vision;
 8. Further develop relationships with partners in the private sector;
 9. Work with partners in the VCFSE to formalise a framework setting out how the Council works with this sector;
 10. Consider holistically how the energy, commitment and creativity of the workforce across Team Oldham can be optimised.

2.0 Appendices

- 2.1 The LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge feedback report is attached to this report as an appendix.

3.0 Recommendations

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 2. Note that a report will be presented to the Cabinet over the coming months which will set out the Organisation's action plan against each of the key recommendations as set out within this paper.