

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 2 SEPTEMBER 2019

PART I - DELEGATED

7. CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE FEEDBACK REPORT AND RESPONSE TO KEY RECOMMENDATIONS (CED/DCES/DoF)

1 Summary

- 1.1 A Corporate Peer Challenge was completed at Three Rivers Council between the 12 and 15 March 2019. The conclusion of the week of challenge and investigation is a plenary meeting, where the Peer Team provide their considered feedback and opinions of the Council, our structures, performance and policies.
- 1.2 Following the Corporate Peer Challenge, the Peer team compile a report for the Council with their findings and recommendations for improvements.
- 1.3 This report provides the full feedback report from the Peer team (Appendix 1). Additionally, Management Board have collated a high level action plan in response to the recommendations (Appendix 2) which is seeking approval.

2 Details

- 2.1 Management Board took a decision to take part in a Corporate Peer Challenge in October 2018. Our last Peer Challenge had taken place in 2013 and it is recommended by the Local Government Association (LGA) for a Peer challenge to take place approximately every five years. The LGA were invited to attend an initial discussion meeting and the Peer Challenge was agreed for March 2019.
- 2.2 A Peer Challenge is organised around a core set of five themes and Three Rivers chose to add two additional themes of Commercial Agenda and Planning for Growth
 1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting
 2. Leadership of place
 3. Organisational leadership and governance
 4. Financial Planning and viability
 5. Capacity to deliver
 6. Commercial Agenda
 7. Planning for Growth
- 2.3 In preparation for the Peer Challenge a comprehensive Position Statement was prepared by officers. The Position statement sets out how the Council sees itself at the point in time, it notes our successes and difficulties. This document acts as a guide to the Peer team in their preparations for and in conducting the review.
- 2.4 Officers also prepared a calendar of meetings for the Peer Team. The meetings are organised around the seven themes. The team met with Cabinet, Members, senior officers, staff, Unison, partner agencies, stakeholders, and other tiers of local government.
- 2.5 The Peer team spoke to over 120 people. They gathered information and views from more than 54 meetings, visits to key sites and additional research and reading. They

collectively spent more than 210 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending nearly 6 weeks in Three Rivers DC.

- 2.6 A draft feedback report was received in April 2019. The council have responded to the LGA and have agreed a final report in the interim period. During that same period there have been some further influences on the timing of the Final feedback report, such as two elections (with periods of purdah restrictions) and the appointment of an interim Chief Executive.
- 2.7 The full feedback report is attached at Appendix 1. Management Board have prepared a high level action plan to address and action the seven key recommendations from the feedback report. The Response to Recommendations Action Plan is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.8 In addition to the Response to Recommendations Action Plan, the review of vision which will develop a new Strategic Plan, will address issues that have arisen since the Peer Challenge including the Declaration of a Climate Emergency. Other issues within the report are currently being reviewed by Management Board which will feed into the new Strategic Plan and service planning.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To report on the Peer Challenge Findings and seek approval of the proposed response to recommendations.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are not within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.
- 4.2 The purpose of the recommendations in Appendix 2 is to respond to the recommendations of the Peer Challenge Report. As individual actions are developed they will be brought to committee for approval with individual budget implications identified.

5 Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, and Customer Services Centre Implications

- 5.1 None specific.

6 Financial Implications

- 6.1 No specific financial implications have been identified in relation to the Action Plan proposed in Appendix 2. As individual actions are developed financial implications will be identified for each area and detailed for consideration by Committee. They will also form part of the Council's Corporate Financial and Service Planning process for 2020-21.

7 Communications and Website Implications

7.1 The Peer Challenge Report and Action Plan will be published on the Council's website.

8 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

8.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

8.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnerships, Finance, Property & Major Projects service plans. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plans.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
The Council fails to respond to the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge	Failure to improve Council Performance	Action Plan to be developed and delivered to address recommendations Individual reports to be brought back to Committee.	Treat	6

8.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely ----- Likelihood ----- ▼ Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
Impact Low -----► Unacceptable				

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

8.4 In the officers' opinion, of the new risk above, were it to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and is therefore a strategic risk. The management of strategic risks are reviewed by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Description of the risk	Service Plan
The Council fails to respond to the recommendations of the Strategic Plan	Community Partnerships Finance Property and Major Projects

9 Recommendation

9.1 That:

9.1.1 Policy and Resources Committee note the Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report in Appendix 1.

- 9.1.2 Policy and Resources Committee agree the responses to the recommendations of the Feedback Report outlined in Appendix 2.

Report prepared by: Gordon Glenn, Performance and Projects Manager

Data Quality

Data sources:

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report.

Data checked by:

Management Board.

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	X
3	High	

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

1. Corporate Peer Challenge, Three Rivers District Council, Feedback Report.
2. Peer Challenge – Three Rivers Response to Recommendations