

# **BUSINESS SUPPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**12 APRIL 2018**

## **CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE**

Report from: Neil Davies, Chief Executive

Author: Richard Hicks, Director Regeneration, Culture,  
Environment and Transformation & Deputy Chief  
Executive

### **Summary**

This report sets out the outcomes and recommendations following the Corporate Peer Challenge held in November 2017.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

1.1 The Leader invited the Local Government Association to Medway to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge between 20-23 November.

#### **2. Background**

2.1 The LGA team were asked to visit Medway to consider what we are doing and to gain insight into potential areas for improvement. This was not an inspection and we wanted to use this experience to learn from others, to improve what we offer here in Medway and to continue to establish Medway as a great place to live, work, learn and visit.

2.2 The Peer team reviewed 4 key areas:

- Regeneration
- Communication – Inward Investment and Placemaking, Place Branding (linked to our Regeneration Programme)
- Transformation
- Commercialisation.

2.3 The Peer Review team included:

- Rob Tinlin, former Chief Executive of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
- Councillor David Renard, Conservative Leader of Swindon Borough Council

- Simon Machen, Corporate Director of Growth and Regeneration, Peterborough City Council
- Tom Whiting, Corporate Director of Resources, London Borough of Harrow
- Matt Nicholls, Head of Communications Support, Local Government Association
- Jess Norman, Programme Support Officer, LGA (shadowing)
- Chris Bowron, Peer Challenge Manager, LGA.

2.4 The Peer Review team held meetings with Members, staff, Partners and key stakeholders. The full list can be seen in Appendix 1.

2.5 The Peer Review team collated their findings from the interviews and focus group sessions and held a presentation on 23 November to Cabinet Members and the Senior Management team. The full report can be found in Appendix 2.

2.6 The Peer Review team proposed eight recommendations for Medway to take forward:

- Reassurance that the £5m savings for 2018/19 are on track and will come from true transformation activity.
- Establish a transformation programme that looks much further into the future- including Smart Council and Smart City strategy and ambitions.
- Define what is meant by 'commercial' and develop a commercial strategy.
- Budget-setting – explore alternative approaches to aid longer-term planning, enable more fundamental organisational re-design and tackle the need for avoidable mid-year management control actions.
- Many aspects of the commercial initiatives put in place so far are sound but there are some aspects of governance that it would be good to re-visit.
- Address the IT capability issues in the organisation.
- A 'lean' organisation - reassure yourselves that resources are aligned with the council's priorities and the ambitions for place.
- The skills agenda- build on the good initiatives and real potential by seizing it and driving it forward through the Skills Board.

2.7 These recommendations have been discussed and progressed with the Corporate Management Team and will be taken forward by officers in discussion with the relevant Portfolio Holders.

### **3. Risk Management**

3.1 There are no risks to Medway Council directly arising from this report

### **4. Finance and Legal Implications**

4.1 There are no finance and legal implications relating to this report.

### **5. Recommendations**

5.1 It is requested that the Committee notes the recommendations and final Report attached as Appendix 2.

## **Lead officer contact**

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## **Appendices**

Appendix 1- List of meetings held

Appendix 2- Corporate Peer Challenge final outcome report