

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 14 October 2019

Title: Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge - Report and Action Plan

Portfolio:	Elected Mayor	Cabinet Member:	Norma Redfearn
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Responsible Officer: Paul Hanson, Chief Executive **Tel: 0191 643 7001**

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

As Cabinet know, as part of the national sector-led improvement programme, the Authority took part in a Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge. The challenge took place in North Tyneside from 18th – 21st June 2019 with experienced colleagues and was led by a serving Chief Executive of a similar Authority and an Elected Mayor.

The Peer Team presented feedback on 21st June 2019 to Cabinet Members and the Senior Leadership Team. That feedback was very positive about the Borough, its communities and businesses, and the Authority. The Peer Team also made some helpful recommendations for the Authority's future planning. The feedback session was followed up with a written report which is included at Appendix 1.

Part of the Peer Challenge process is the publication of the report and the consideration of any suggested actions. This report therefore asks Cabinet to note the Peer Challenge Feedback report and to agree the Action Plan at Appendix 2.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (1) Note the Peer Challenge feedback report at Appendix 1
- (2) Agree the action plan at Appendix 2

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 23rd August 2019.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report is directly concerned with the delivery of the entire Our North Tyneside Plan.

1.5 Information:

1.5.1 Background

Peer Challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the Authority's requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected based on their relevant experience and expertise. The peers who delivered the peer challenge for North Tyneside Council were

- Jim Taylor (Chief Executive, Salford City Council)
- Mayor Ros Jones (Elected Mayor & Leader, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council)
- Amy Harhoff (Director of Regeneration and Growth, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council)
- John Donnellon (Chief Executive, Blackpool Coastal Housing, Blackpool Council)
- Katharine Eberhart (Director of Finance, Performance and Procurement, West Sussex County Council)
- Satvinder Rana (Programme Manager, Local Government Association)

In advance of the site visit the Peer Team were sent a standard set of documents relating to the Authority's planning and financial management. In addition, they received a short statement which provided an overview of the place and the organisation. The site visit comprised of a range of meetings, focus groups and one to one discussions with a cross section of members, officers and partners.

From a combination of the background material and those discussions the Peer Team sought to answer five questions which are a core component of all Peer Challenges

- Understanding of the local place and priority setting
- Leadership of place
- Organisational leadership and governance
- Financial planning and viability; and
- Capacity to deliver.

1.5.2 Summary

In answering the questions the Peer Team were very positive about the Borough, the organisation and its partners. They saw North Tyneside as an attractive and vibrant place with members, staff, partners and residents all passionate about the Borough.

They felt the Authority was effective, well led and well managed providing good quality services and with a very positive culture. They identified successful regeneration across the Borough recognised by partners and residents.

Their recommendations focussed on four important areas; how the organisation tells its story, explains its plans and aligns its enabling services against those plans; ensuring regeneration work is inclusive; making sure a four-year medium term financial plan is in place to deliver the priorities of the Mayor and Cabinet and maximising participation and influence in the North of Tyne Combined Authority.

1.5.3 Next steps

The recommendations from this challenge are summarised in an action plan at Appendix 2. As part of the peer challenge process, the Local Government Association provide further support, advice and guidance. The process also includes a follow up visit which is expected to take place within the next two years. The Authority has already signalled it will take up this offer.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

To note the findings of the report and agree the action plan

Option 2

To note the findings of the report and not agree the action plan

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons

- The report is based on material provided by the Authority and extensive discussion with relevant members, officers, partners and residents; and
- The action plan is, in part a response to the Feedback Report but is also aligned to the work set in train by the Elected Mayor and Cabinet as priorities for the new Chief Executive last summer.

1.8 Appendix:

Appendix 1: Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report

Appendix 2: Action Plan

1.9 Contact officers:

Paul Hanson, Chief Executive, tel. (0191) 643 7001

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

2.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal and External Consultation and Engagement

The Peer Challenge involved extensive engagement during the on-site exercise and is explained in the report.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no equalities and diversity implications arising from this report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising from this report.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service