

## Rother District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	3 October 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Local Government Association – Corporate Peer Challenge
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Oliver
<b>Ward(s):</b>	Not applicable
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To provide Members with the formal report from the Corporate Peer Challenge and to agree the associated action plan.
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non-key

### Officer

**Recommendation(s):** It be **RESOLVED:** That the:

- 1) report of the peer challenge review team at Appendix 1 be noted; and
- 2) comments made by officers in relation to the key recommendations be noted and Members add any further comments.

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### Introduction

1. A Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) was carried out by the Local Government Association (LGA) during the period 21-23 March 2022.
2. The final report is attached as Appendix 1 and it is heartening to read in the opening paragraph that, “During the course of the peer challenge, it was clear that Rother District Council has dedicated and hardworking staff who want to deliver for Rother and its residents”.
3. Further information and background to the process can be found at [Peer challenge and remote peer support | Local Government Association](#).
4. The draft report was not received until 10 June 2022 and, as there were a number of queries and comments, was returned to the LGA on 12 July 2022. The final report was received on 6 September 2022.
5. The timing is unfortunate in that Members are now being asked to consider a document relating to a visit some six months ago. Nevertheless, it is important to note the issues raised at the time and the Council’s response to those issues.
6. The report has been published on the Council’s website as part of the papers for this meeting and will also be published by the LGA on their website.

## Discussion

7. As can be seen from the final report attached as Appendix 1, the peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all CPCs. These areas are seen as critical to councils' performance and improvement:
  - a. Local priorities and outcomes - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
  - b. Organisational and place leadership - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
  - c. Governance and culture - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
  - d. Financial planning and management - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
  - e. Capacity for improvement - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?
8. The first two days of the process were taken up with meetings involving a range of Members and officers, as well as a range of external stakeholders. There was informal feedback to the Leader and Chief Executive at the end of each day.
9. On the final day the peer team delivered headline feedback and recommendations to a selected audience of Members and officers, primarily those involved in the previous two days. During this feedback there was opportunity for clarification and questions.
10. Following receipt of the final report, which contained 12 recommendations for action, officers have compiled the Council's response, attached as Appendix 2, and Cabinet are asked to add any further comments and agree the response.

## Conclusion

11. CPCs are an important part of the improvement journey for all councils and play an important role in our corporate aim to be an open and transparent Council. Cabinet are therefore asked to note the report and agree the actions/responses.

## Risk Management

12. There are no inherent risks in the report itself but it is important for openness and transparency that the Council publishes the report and addresses the issues raised.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

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Chief Executive: Malcolm Johnston

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Report Contact Officer:	Malcolm Johnston
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:malcolm.johnston@rother.gov.uk">malcolm.johnston@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Corporate Peer Challenge Report Appendix 2: Officers' response to the recommendations
Relevant Previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

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