

Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge September 2017 Recommendations

1: Recommendations structural and constitutional governance

- Undertake a full Constitutional review – led at the most senior officer level, supported by members.
 - Through this review update the Constitution and associated protocols to reflect the new operating model. An updated constitution can be a powerful mechanism to drive forward the culture you need to embed your new operating model.
 - Recognise that members and officers have distinct roles, but can lead and deliver together adopting a ‘one-team’ approach. Ensure that protocols and codes reflect this and do not conflate how members and officers should act, e.g. members and officers should have distinct social media protocols
 - Use the constitutional modernisation to empower a refreshed leadership culture and style that uses the constitution in a positive way.

2: Recommendations for Accountability

- Introduce a process map to clarify lines of accountability for all commissioned and contracted out services. This should be developed by members and officers and accompanied by a clear narrative set within the context of the council’s single vision for people and place. Identify and communicate internally and externally the process map, ensuring it is widely understood, setting out:
 - What your measures of success will be:
 - How you will measure progress:
 - How you will communicate these:

3: Recommendations for Scrutiny

- Introduce regular all member briefings on key issues
- Strengthen scrutiny through:
 - Ensuring clear and adequate timeframes to allow members, particularly scrutiny members to digest, understand and question papers to ensure decision-making is inclusive and robust.
 - Considering how scrutiny can play a role in member development allowing councillors to enhance their skillset.
 - Ensuring that Executive and wider Executive members (deputy lead and principal members) should not sit on scrutiny panels
 - Undertaking regular scrutiny training and other key skills for members.
 - Using the forthcoming boundary review as an opportunity to update scrutiny committees to reflect your new operating model and ambitions.
- Evaluate officer capacity and ensure it can adequately support a thriving scrutiny function.

4: Recommendations for understanding of local place and priority setting

- Invest more time in understanding what your residents value.
- Engage positively with residents and community groups.
- Further develop your commitment to residents – consider using tools such as Residents Surveys to understand the issues that matter most to residents and how they want to be communicated with about them
- Ensure you have measures in place to marry member ambition and officer capacity and skills, which includes:
 - Resourcing your economic development function to focus on Council to business and business to business relationships.

- The role of culture and heritage in terms of inward investment and quality of life. Is there sufficient resource to manage these important relationships and ensure adequate promotion of the borough?
- Having a clear policy for inward investment and the resource to meet the borough's offer.
- The role of the Borough Local Plan is to deliver the council's vision which includes driving economic growth and enhancing cultural and heritage assets. The Local Plan drives all development decisions and will be critical to achieving your ambition.
- Businesses benefit from political engagement and the Council benefits from its association with key investors in the area. The Council needs to be clear about how this engagement is going to be managed and sustained going forwards.

5: Recommendations for Leadership of Place

- Consider how to maximise existing partnerships
- Enhance and deepen relationships with businesses.
- Ensure interaction with safeguarding boards is regular and consistent.
- Articulate and share what an integrated health and social care system in the borough will look like, and what that will mean for residents and partners and ensure there are no gaps in services as you transition to a more integrated health and social care system.

6: Recommendations for financial planning viability

- Link the medium term financial strategy to the single overarching council vision and ensure that financial strategies and decisions are effectively communicated alongside corporate priorities
- Ensure that colleagues have adequate ownership of planned savings and are able to report against them.
- Ensure that future transformation needs of services, including commissioned services, are adequately planned for and managed.

7: Recommendations for organisational leadership and governance

- Consider what inclusive and inspirational leadership looks and feels like for the Royal Borough and how you can embed it throughout the organisation.
- Consider whether the language around 'commissioning council' which you have been promoting is helpful – consider if you are more of a 'partnering council'.
- Develop an engagement strategy – residents, businesses and partners, and adequately resource it.
- Focus energy on how you can ensure that all staff understand and feel part of the new operating model and understand their collective roles going forward.

8: Recommendations for capacity to deliver

- Consider setting up a central commissioning unit to help develop and share the skills needed to deliver the new operating model, including investing more time in the skills and approaches you need to ensure you have a strong client management function.
- Be clear about lines of accountability within the organisation and with partners, such as public health. Ensure this is regularly updated, shared and widely understood.
- Ensure that SLT and CMT include the right people – statutory roles should be fully engaged in the appropriate fora.
- Continue to progress your People Strategy to ensure that it is developing the skills the organisation needs into the future.
- Develop a 'one-team' approach to leadership – bringing together the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet on a regular basis to explore key strategic issues and your leadership culture. This one-team approach should set the tone for the organisation and work collaboratively to embed change.