

Report Title:	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Action Plan Progress
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information	No - Part I
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Johnson, Leader of the Council
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 25 August 2022
Responsible Officer(s):	Emma Duncan, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Director of Law, Strategy and Public Health Becky Hatch, Head of Strategy
Wards affected:	All

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REPORT SUMMARY

This report updates Members on the progress on the Action Plan resulting from the recommendations of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge, which took place from 24 – 27 January, 2022. The Royal Borough invited the LGA into the council to conduct the review, in order to provide an external assessment of its progress, and recommendations for further improvement. Their assessment and recommendations were set out in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report.

Cabinet considered the recommendations in March 2022 and agreed to accept the 11 recommendations subject to minor amendments and agreed to the preparation of an Action Plan (Table 1).

This report details the progress to date against the recommendations made.

1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Cabinet notes the report and the progress against the Action Plan.

Table 1: Action Plan Progress

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation1 Prioritise embedding the Corporate Plan across the Council and the establishment of a new performance framework which links service plans and priorities to budget and risks over the medium term.	Launch Citizens' Portal	Head of Strategy	120422	✓ Citizens Portal went live in April 2022
	Agree Terms of Reference for new Officer-led Performance and Risk Management Board (PRMB)	Head of Strategy	050522	✓ These have been agreed

	PRMB meet	Head of Strategy	050522	✓
	Embed new methodology to support performance reporting to Overview and Scrutiny	Service Lead – Strategic Policy	250722	✓
	Launch new Service Plan template	Service Lead – Strategic Policy	030522	✓
	Embed initial Service Plans into InPhase	Service Lead – Strategic Policy	310722	✓
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 2 Refresh the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with stronger links to the savings made by the Transformation Strategy and underpinned by the creation of a Transformation Fund to deliver the benefits needed. The first priority of the strategy should be to improve the customer experience.	Refreshed MTFS aligned to Corporate Plan presented to Corporate O and S Panel for review	Exec Director of Resources/Head of Finance	22/06/22	✓ Presented to committee and suggested changes accepted by cabinet at their meeting
	Refreshed MTFS/MTFP reported to Cabinet Refreshed MTFS/MTFP reported to Full Council	Exec Director of Resources/Head of Finance	21/07/22 28/09/22	✓ MTFS and MTFP recommended by cabinet. Will be considered at next scheduled Full council in September
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 3 Establish a Member development programme, including a new induction package for May 2023 which aligns to the strategic priorities of the Royal Borough. Group Leaders need to be fully involved in developing the programme to ensure ongoing	Discussion with LGA over support offer	Director of Governance/Head of Governance	1305022	✓

member participation, throughout the term of office.				
	Establish Officer working group to lead Induction Process	Head of Governance	May 2022	✓
	Officer Working Group meets to discuss proposals	Head of Governance	July to December 2022	✓
	Funding Agreed	Head of Governance	Budget process	
	Induction Programme commences	Head of Governance	080523	
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 4 Put in place stronger support for member casework that provides consistency and timeliness of response across all council functions. This will help members to carry out their ward work more efficiently and maintain residents' confidence that their issues are being dealt with.	Evaluate software for Member casework	Director of Governance/ Head of Governance	010722	✓
	Review undertaken of Corporate support function and restructure implemented	Chief Executive	010722	✓
	Funding Agreed for additional support (caseworkers and software costs)	Head of Governance	Budget process/in year growth	
	Role descriptions developed and evaluated	Head of Governance	August 2022	
	Recruitment	Head of Governance	Sept/Oct 2022	
	Implementation	Head of Governance	Nov/Dec 2022	
	RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone
Recommendation 5 Review the current model of scrutiny committees. There are currently 4 scrutiny panels and one county-wide health scrutiny. It may be better for the committees to be more closely aligned to the priorities in the Corporate Plan and service delivery arrangements covering	Report prepared for Constitution Working Group	Head of Governance	260422	✓

people, place and corporate functions.				
	Constitution Working Group meet to consider and agree Report	Head of Governance	030522	✓
	Full Council consider and agree recommendations from CWG	Head of Governance	240522	✓
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 6 Revisit the terms of reference and remit of the joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for East Berkshire as part of the establishment of the ICS.	Scoping work to clarify current position and identify best practice	Head of Governance	June 2022	✓
	Meeting with relevant officers to agree recommendations for amendments to terms of reference where appropriate	Head of Governance	July 2022	✓
	Amendments discussed with Constitution Working Group	Head of Governance	Oct 2022	
	Full Council consider recommendations from CWG	Head of Governance	Nov 2022	
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 7 Review Cabinet portfolios so that they are re-balanced across people, place and corporate functions to enable more capacity to influence at a sub-regional and national level alongside local place leadership responsibilities.	That this is accepted in part, noting changes have been made since the Peer Review. No Further Officer Action			
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 8 Develop a clear and consistent framework on the role and governance of the arms-length Council entities including Optalis, AFC and the Property Company. Shareholder responsibilities should be separated from those of the strategic client.	Draw together governance regimes in one place and publish. Work is currently being undertaken to produce this.	Head of Governance	Sept 2022	
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 9 Develop a localism strategy with town and parish councils	Draft engagement framework to be developed by September 2022 setting out	Head of Strategy		

and community groups which promotes greater subsidiarity of decision making and thus enabling RBWM to be more strategic.	the framework for engagement between the council, residents, communities and partners (including voluntary & community sector and parish councils). Draft produced Consultation on draft Adoption The early phase development work on the engagement strategy has started.		Sept 2022 Oct/Nov 2022 Feb 2023	
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 10 Take advantage of the 25th anniversary of being a unitary council to work with the Youth Council and partners to set out a new 25-year vision for the Royal Borough.	Youth Council has been engaged and has agreed to undertake a piece of work in partnership with Council. The Youth Council will report back the end of the calendar year.	Chief Executive	October 2022 (tbc)	✓
RECOMMENDATION	ACTIONS	LEAD	Milestone	Complete
Recommendation 11 Once the improvement plan for the Planning function is in place and beginning to have an impact, consider a peer review of the Planning Service to drive continuous improvement in 2023/24 and beyond	The Improvement Plan is now operational and subject to monthly and quarterly review. Peer Review is likely to be scheduled for 2023/24.	Director of Place		

2. REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options

Table 2: Options arising from this report

Option	Comments
Cabinet agrees to note the Action Plan progress.	This is the recommended option

Option	Comments
Cabinet doesn't agree to note the Action Plan.	The Royal Borough invited the LGA into the council to assess our progress and make recommendations for further improvements. Failing to accept progress against the recommendations of the Peer Review team, would call into question the purpose of the review, and show the council in a poor light with the LGA.

1. KEY IMPLICATIONS

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: background

1.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge is part of the LGA sector support offer. It provides independent and external improvement support and challenge through a peer review, conducted by a team of Members and Senior Officers from other local authorities.

1.2 The review is a tried, and trusted method of improvement and provides a practitioner perspective and critical friend challenge. The Royal Borough invited in the LGA to conduct the review, to provide an assessment of its progress and recommendations for further improvement. It was delivered at no cost to the council.

1.3 The 2022 review was a Corporate Peer Challenge and covered five key areas:

- Local priorities and outcomes;
- Organisational and place leadership;
- Governance and culture;
- Financial planning and management;
- Capacity for improvement.

1.4 The 2022 Peer Review follows a prior review in 2017, and a briefer progress review in 2019. The results of all three reviews are published on our website.

1.5 The 2022 review was a mix of face to face, online and desk-based research. The team undertook interviews and focus groups with a wide range of Members, officers, stakeholders and citizens, speaking to nearly 100 people in total. The team also observed several key officer and Member meetings and visited sites within the borough. They also reviewed key documents and a self-assessment by the council. The findings from the review were developed into feedback and recommendations, which were shared through a presentation to those participating in the review, and are now set out in the Feedback Report.

1.6 The LGA will return to the Royal Borough in October 2022, to review progress.

1.7

Table 3: Key Implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Date of delivery
The council agrees the LGA recommendation s and takes these forward through a robust Action Plan.	The council makes poor progress in responding to the recommendations	LGA six month review concludes that good progress has been made in delivering the recommendations	LGA six month review concludes that excellent progress has been made in delivering the recommendations	Autumn 2022

2. FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

2.1 The financial implications of taking forward the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge recommendations will be considered as part of the budget process.

2.2 At this stage, there are no financial implications of taking the decisions recommended in this report. However, the potential implications of some recommendations, such as setting up a new Transformation Fund, should be noted as part of the discussion.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report. However, any changes to governance, such as to Cabinet Portfolios or Scrutiny Committee structures will have been in accordance with constitutional regulations.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

Risk	Level of uncontrolled risk	Controls	Level of controlled risk
LGA are dissatisfied with the council's response to the review.	Low	Ongoing engagement with the LGA and maintenance of existing strong relationships.	Low

5. POTENTIAL IMPACTS

5.1 Equalities. The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback report highlights equalities as an area for further development and strengthening within the council. This report has no equalities implications.

5.2 Climate change/sustainability. The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback report praises the priority given to climate change within the council and includes suggestions for further strengthening this agenda.

5.3 Data Protection/GDPR. There are no data protection issues associated with this report.

6. CONSULTATION

8.1 The process of undertaking the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge involved interviews with a wide range of Members, staff, stakeholders and citizens, in order to assess the council and generate its findings and recommendations. The initial findings of the review were shared with all who participated on 2 February 2022, with opportunities provided for feedback and comment.

7. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 The implementation stages are set out in table 5.

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
20 October 2022	Six month follow up visit from the LGA, to assess progress on delivering the recommendations of the Report.

8. APPENDICES

8.1 This report is supported by 0 appendixes

9. CONSULTATION

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Mandatory: Statutory Officers (or deputies)</i>			
Adele Taylor	Executive Director of Resources/S151 Officer	28/07/22	28/07/22
Emma Duncan	Deputy Director of Law and Strategy / Monitoring Officer	Author	
<i>Deputies:</i>			
Andrew Vallance	Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)	28/7/22	28/7/22
Elaine Browne	Head of Law (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	28/7/22	28/7/22
Karen Shepherd	Head of Governance (Deputy Monitoring Officer)	26/7/22	27/7/22
<i>Other consultees:</i>			
<i>Directors (where relevant)</i>			
Duncan Sharkey	Chief Executive	26/7/22	26/7/22

Andrew Durrant	Executive Director of Place		29/07/22
Kevin McDaniel	Executive Director of Children's Services		
<i>Heads of Service (where relevant)</i>			
<i>External (where relevant)</i>			
<i>Insert as appropriate or N/A</i>			

Confirmation relevant Cabinet Member(s) consulted	Leader of the Council	Yes/No <i>delete as appropriate</i>
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REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	To follow item?
Non-key decision	No	No

Report Author: Emma Duncan, Monitoring Officer and Deputy Director of Law, Strategy and Public Health

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqIA : LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan Progress

Essential information

Items to be assessed: (please mark 'x')

Strategy		Policy		Plan		Project		Service/Procedure	
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Responsible officer	Emma Duncan, Becky Hatch	Service area	Strategy	Directorate	Law, Strategy & Public Heath
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Stage 1: EqIA Screening (mandatory)	Date created: 11/08/2022	Stage 2 : Full assessment (if applicable)	Date created : n/a
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Approved by Head of Service / Overseeing group/body / Project Sponsor:

"I am satisfied that an equality impact has been undertaken adequately."

Signed by (print): Rebecca Hatch

Dated: 12/08/2022

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqlA : LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan Progress

Guidance notes

What is an EqlA and why do we need to do it?

The Equality Act 2010 places a 'General Duty' on all public bodies to have 'due regard' to:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.
- Fostering good relations between those with 'protected characteristics' and those without them.

EqlAs are a systematic way of taking equal opportunities into consideration when making a decision, and should be conducted when there is a new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure in order to determine whether there will likely be a detrimental and/or disproportionate impact on particular groups, including those within the workforce and customer/public groups. All completed EqlA Screenings are required to be publicly available on the council's website once they have been signed off by the relevant Head of Service or Strategic/Policy/Operational Group or Project Sponsor.

What are the "protected characteristics" under the law?

The following are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010: age; disability (including physical, learning and mental health conditions); gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

What's the process for conducting an EqlA?

The process for conducting an EqlA is set out at the end of this document. In brief, a Screening Assessment should be conducted for every new or reviewed strategy, policy, plan, project, service or procedure and the outcome of the Screening Assessment will indicate whether a Full Assessment should be undertaken.

Openness and transparency

RBWM has a 'Specific Duty' to publish information about people affected by our policies and practices. Your completed assessment should be sent to the Strategy & Performance Team for publication to the RBWM website once it has been signed off by the relevant manager, and/or Strategic, Policy, or Operational Group. If your proposals are being made to Cabinet or any other Committee, please append a copy of your completed Screening or Full Assessment to your report.

Enforcement

Judicial review of an authority can be taken by any person, including the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) or a group of people, with an interest, in respect of alleged failure to comply with the general equality duty. Only the EHRC can enforce the specific duties. A failure to comply with the specific duties may however be used as evidence of a failure to comply with the general duty.

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqIA : LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan Progress

1.1 What is the overall aim of your proposed strategy/policy/project etc and what are its key objectives?

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Action Plan Progress

The Royal Borough invited the LGA into the council to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge review in January 2022, in order to provide an external assessment of its progress, and recommendations for further improvement. Their assessment and recommendations were set out in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report. Cabinet considered the recommendations in March 2022 and agreed to accept the 11 recommendations subject to minor amendments and agreed to the preparation of an Action Plan. The Action Plan updates Members on the progress to date against the recommendations made. Recommendations with particular relevance to the Equalities have been summarised below:

Recommendation 1

Prioritise embedding the Corporate Plan across the Council and the establishment of a new performance framework which links service plans and priorities to budget and risks over the medium term.

- The Corporate Plan contains a cross-cutting commitment to reducing inequalities and a range of specific goals focused on improving outcomes for people with protected characteristics. The council is currently revising its Equality objectives and undertaking an ambitious research project to strengthen our understanding of inequalities and disadvantage in the Borough. Revised equality objectives will be included in a refresh of the Corporate Plan by the end of 2022. This reflects feedback from the CPC Review team to strengthen our approach to Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion.

Recommendation 3

Establish a Member development programme, including a new induction package for May 2023 which aligns to the strategic priorities of the Royal Borough. Group Leaders need to be fully involved in developing the programme to ensure ongoing member participation, throughout the term of office.

- The Member development programme will include specific training on Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion.

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqIA : LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan Progress

Recommendation 5

Review the current model of scrutiny committees. There are currently 4 scrutiny panels and one county-wide health scrutiny. It may be better for the committees to be more closely aligned to the priorities in the Corporate Plan and service delivery arrangements covering people, place and corporate functions.

- Corporate Overview & Scrutiny will review progress on strengthening the council's approach to Equalities.

Recommendation 9

Develop a localism strategy with town and parish councils and community groups which promotes greater subsidiarity of decision making and thus enabling RBWM to be more strategic.

- Development of the strategy includes strengthening engagement with a range of groups representing the views and interests of groups with protected characteristics.

Recommendation 10

Take advantage of the 25th anniversary of being a unitary council to work with the Youth Council and partners to set out a new 25-year vision for the Royal Borough.

- The development of the vision, strengthens engagement with our Youth Council and ensures that young people's views and priorities are reflected within the council's long term vision.

Stage 1 : Screening (Mandatory)

1.2 What evidence is available to suggest that your proposal could have an impact on people (including staff and customers) with protected characteristics? Consider each of the protected characteristics in turn and identify whether your proposal is Relevant or Not Relevant to that characteristic. If Relevant, please assess the level of impact as either High / Medium / Low and whether the impact is Positive (i.e. contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group) or Negative (i.e. could disadvantage them). Please document your evidence for each assessment you make, including a justification of why you may have identified the proposal as "Not Relevant".

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqIA : LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan Progress

Protected characteristics	Relevance	Level	Positive/negative	Evidence
All protected characteristics	Relevant		Positive	<i>Increased focus on equality, diversity and inclusion across the council, through embedding of the Corporate Plan, Member induction, and strengthened engagement with stakeholder groups.</i>
Age	Not relevant		Positive	<i>Youth Council leading on the development of the 25 Year Vision, enhancing youth engagement and voice in the borough's vision and priority setting.</i>
Disability	Not relevant			
Gender re-assignment	Not relevant			
Marriage/civil partnership	Not relevant			
Pregnancy and maternity	Not relevant			
Race	Not relevant			
Religion and belief	Not relevant			
Sex	Not relevant			
Sexual orientation	Not relevant			

Outcome, action and public reporting

ROYAL BOROUGH OF WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

EqIA : LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - Action Plan Progress

Screening Assessment Outcome	Yes / No / Not at this stage	Further Action Required / Action to be taken	Responsible Officer and / or Lead Strategic Group	Timescale for Resolution of negative impact / Delivery of positive impact
Was a significant level of negative impact identified?	No			
Does the strategy, policy, plan etc require amendment to have a positive impact?	No			

If you answered **yes** to either / both of the questions above a Full Assessment is advisable and so please proceed to Stage 2. If you answered "No" or "Not at this Stage" to either / both of the questions above please consider any next steps that may be taken (e.g. monitor future impacts as part of implementation, re-screen the project at its next delivery milestone etc).