

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	10 March 2022
Subject:	Local Government Association Peer Review Revisit		
Report of:	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

This report seeks endorsement from Cabinet for a Peer revisit to take place in relation to the 2018 LGA Peer Assessment.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to

(1) welcome the LGA's intention to undertake a Peer Review Revisit in April 2022.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Peer Reviews are a proven tool for sector-led improvement and the Council has always been open to learning from others and sharing good practice. The peer challenge that took place in 2018 provided external recognition of the things it believes the Council was doing well, highlighted where the Council can learn from other councils considering best practice elsewhere and recommended several key actions.

In January 2019 Cabinet considered and agreed an action plan responding to the Peer Review Team's recommendations and in March 2020 Cabinet received a progress update.

This report seeks to keep Members informed of the LGA peers revisit intentions to assess progress against their recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

NA

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

The report does not have direct implications for finances or resources, actions within the proposed action plan may have implications. In such cases and where they cannot be contained within existing budgets there will be a separate report to Cabinet or Cabinet Member seeking approval in accordance with the Council's constitution

(B) Capital Costs

The report does not have direct implications for finances or resources, actions within the proposed action plan may have implications. In such cases and where they cannot be contained within existing budgets there will be a separate report to Cabinet or Cabinet Member seeking approval.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): The report does not have direct implications for finances or resources.	
Legal Implications: There are no implications arising directly out of this report.	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	Yes
Have a negative impact	No
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: NA
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: NA
Commission, broker and provide core services: NA
Place – leadership and influencer: NA
Drivers of change and reform: The Council is a self-aware learning organisation and commissioned a peer review from the LGA in 2018 to assure it plans and learn from best practice. This report ensures transparency of the intention of the LGA peers to undertake a revisit in April 2022.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: NA
Greater income for social investment: NA
Cleaner Greener NA

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6708/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.4908/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

NA

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Cabinet meeting.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

Associated papers are published on the Council website.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council commissioned the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a peer review as an independent check on how the Council is performing in terms of planning for and delivering against our ambitious plans for the future.
- 1.2 The peer review took place in September 2018 and the peer review team was made up of experienced elected member and officer peers. The peer team considered the following five core themes:
 - Understanding local context and priority setting
 - Leadership of place
 - Financial planning and viability
 - Organisational leadership and governance and
 - Capacity to deliver.

- 1.3 In addition to the five core themes, the peer review focused on the progress that the Council has made in implementing its 'vision for change' and the Council's approach to commercialisation.
- 1.4 The overarching message in the initial feedback from the LGA peer team immediately following the review was -

Sefton has listened to and served its communities well through a challenging period of austerity. To meet your Sefton 2030 ambitions, the Council will need to further recognise and move towards a model of co-production especially with your communities.

The peer review team summarised the Council's strengths as

- Knowledge of Sefton 'the place' is strong.
- Strong political and managerial leadership.
- Vision is in place, priorities have been set and transformation plan in place, which is significant.
- Local Plan is in place which has required difficult decisions
- MTFP is linked to strategy and priorities.
- The Council has a committed and passionate workforce.
- Strong partner relationships exist across the Borough.
- The council exhibits self-awareness and willingness to reflect.
- The Council has successfully managed a 51% reduction in grant funding and put in place a 3-year budget: and
- The Localities model has proven to be effective and the service is moving in the right direction

- 1.5 Cabinet considered the feedback report in December 2018, the recommendations were accepted, and Cabinet requested officers to develop an action plan for their consideration. [Action Plan](#) was approved in January 2019. Progress on the Action Plan was considered by [Cabinet](#) in March 2020.
- 1.6 The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer review team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer review team. The follow up visit was delayed due to the COVID 19 pandemic and will take place 21st and 22nd April 2022.

2 Revisit

- 2.1 Members of the LGA team have held a scoping call with the Chief Executive. Following this the LGA are working with the Head of Strategic Support to draft a timetable for the visit. At the end of March 2022, a risk assessment will be carried out to ensure that the timetable for the visit is COVID safe and any required adjustments to the timetable will be made at that point.
- 2.2 The Peer Review revisit team will include

- Cllr Steve Houghton, Leader of Barnsley Council (member of original Peer Review Team)
- Ali Griffin, Chief Executive at London Councils (member of original Peer Review Team)
- Jayne Traverse Executive Director Place Cheshire East Council
- Dan Archer Programme Manager, Local Government Association (member of original Peer Review Team)

2.3 A progress self-assessment (Position Statement) will be produced and will account of the impact of the pandemic, changes to national and local policy and priorities and be an honest reflection of our current position and future plans. This will be submitted to the LGA along with any required supporting evidence by 31st March 2022.

2.4 Cabinet is asked to welcome the LGA's intention to undertake a Peer Review Revisit in April 2022.