

Report of the Chief Executive to the meeting of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 13 September 2018.

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Subject:

In 2017, the Local Government Association conducted a peer challenge on Bradford Council. This made a number of recommendations that are summarised in this paper.

This report provides an update on progress to date on the report on the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge and Improvement Action Plan.

Summary statement:

Bradford Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake an independent Corporate Peer Challenge review, which took place in March 2017.

An Improvement Action Plan was presented to Executive in September 2017. This report outlines the progress made against that Improvement Action Plan and next steps.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area: Corporate

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Bradford Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake an independent Corporate Peer Challenge review, which took place in March 2017. An [Improvement Action Plan](#) was presented to Executive in September 2017, this report outlines the progress made against this plan.
- 1.2 Since the peer review was published, there have been many areas where there has been strengthened performance:
 - A new narrative has been developed across the district and a place marketing plan has been produced with an aim to improve perceptions of the district amongst four target groups (students, investors, businesses and residents).
 - The authority has continued to work well with partners to help shape the future of the district, as demonstrated by the State of the District event, attended by over 100 leaders of Bradford district organisations.
 - We continue to work closely with our partners to make a difference to the businesses and residents of the district. For example, over £2 million in additional investment for the district has been unlocked through our work with local partners around the recent Leeds City Region Business Rates Pool, working with the NHS on health and social care skills, the creative sector on creative industries skills and Community Led Local Development in Keighley and Manningham.
 - The creation of a new Economic Partnership has been formed with improved business engagement and a clear narrative on growth for the district through a new economic strategy published in March 2018.
 - This clear narrative alongside our coordinated action to support the local economy has helped to promote the district:
 - Bradford is now considered by Barclays as the best place in the country to start growing a small and medium sized enterprise (SME).
 - The district is now “on the map” for potential options for a station on the new Northern Powerhouse rail line.
 - The district was named as one of the top emerging European tourist destinations in 2018 in the Luxury Travel Guide.
 - The district is also increasingly becoming a place where the government wants to pilot and develop new initiatives. Earlier this year, Bradford District was selected as an Opportunity Area pilot with investment in education in deprived areas and our work on community cohesion being recognised as one of the five exemplar integration pilots.
 - The partnership between the Local Authority and the health sector has been recognised in a recent Care Quality Commission inspection report which applauded our partnership working and closer alignment of commissioning between health and social care. In line with this, the governance of the Bradford District Partnership with the Health and Wellbeing Board is now aligned, helping to ensure a place based decision making approach across all partners.
 - The Education Covenant, working with over 4,000 local businesses, recognises the valuable role of the whole community in supporting young people to realise their potential.

- The Authority has been sharing data intelligence with Born in Bradford and the Police to help facilitate better joined up and evidence based decisions.
 - More robust programme management processes are now in place, including improved financial monitoring and regular challenge sessions to help ensure the Council's budget is managed correctly.
 - The Authority is working to promote apprenticeships within the Council and in the wider district. We now have 221 active apprenticeships across the Authority.
 - The Bradford crest is now universally used as the internal logo within the Authority, with the Bradford 'B' and "Made in Bradford" widely used in partnership activities.
- 1.3 There is still more to do in some areas. This paper sets next steps in a number of areas to ensure that all recommendations in the peer review are delivered. This includes:
- Fully utilising the revised Health and Wellbeing Board governance by further integrated working across the health and social care system, including on how we consult and engage with residents.
 - Ensuring that the economic strategy is delivered with partners.
 - Making the most of upcoming initiatives for the district including the integration pilot and the local commissioning pilot by Locality.
 - Continue to provide robust challenge to ensure that budget savings are met. Further work is also needed to develop a strong and robust approach to commercialisation across the organisation, making the most of income generation opportunities and diversifying sources of funding.
 - Continuing our work to promote the role of apprenticeships within the council and more joined up work with our partners on apprenticeships.

2. BACKGROUND

The Corporate Peer Challenge Review

- 2.1 At the request of the Leader and Chief Executive of the Council, an LGA team conducted a Corporate Peer Challenge review of Bradford Council during the period 27- 30 March 2017.
- 2.2 The review team spoke to over 260 people including council staff, councillors, partners, stakeholders and young people. They gathered information and views from over 60 meetings and collectively spent more than 230 hours to determine their findings. They looked at five areas:

(i) Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the Council understand its local context and place and use this to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?

(ii) Leadership of place: Does the Council provide effective leadership of place through its councillors, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?

(iii) Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and

transformation to be implemented?

(iv) Financial planning and viability: Does the Council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?

(v) Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the Council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

- 2.3 While reviewing the above five areas the Council also asked the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge review team to focus on social inclusion and opportunities for young people in skills, education and employment, reflecting Bradford being the youngest city in the country.

The Corporate Peer Challenge Review findings

Headlines

- 2.4 A summary of the Peer Challenge Review can be found in **Appendix A**. The key findings were:
- The Council “recognises it is on a journey of change” from being a provider of services to “being a facilitator and co-ordinator of all of the local resources around a set of shared priorities”.
 - “There is clear recognition of the financial challenges and increasing demand on services faced by local government and its impact, alongside an ambitious approach” to align resources to the priority outcomes in the Council Plan through the budget process.
 - “The Council is ambitious, self-aware and an improving organisation with huge potential, well positioned to benefit from the ambitious goals and programmes set out in the District and Council Plans and increasingly influential within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority.”
 - There is “effective ward and neighbourhood leadership by councillors, officers, partner organisations and active and committed community leaders and voluntary sector.”
 - “The emerging narrative of place needs to more fully reflect the many places that make up the district, alongside clarity around the district’s role and investment requirements in delivering the City Region Strategic Economic Plan.”

The Corporate Peer Challenge Review recommendations

- 2.5 The review made eight key recommendations:

- Develop a coherent narrative of place and ambitions.
- Use the narrative to place shape more effectively with partners.
- Use the ‘People Can’ approach in a more systematic manner.
- Make best use of newly appointed Strategic Director roles.
- More robust financial accountability and allocation of resources within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Accelerate a Team Bradford approach to using apprenticeships.
- Review the Re-deployment Policy.

- Pick one brand for the Council.

The Improvement Action Plan

- 2.6 The results of the peer review were presented to Executive in September 2017 and an improvement plan was agreed. At the same meeting, it was agreed that the peer review recommendations on Strategic Director roles and one brand for the Council were completed. For other recommendations, a summary of progress made to date and areas for further work to ensure that the peer review recommendations are fully delivered are captured in the following table.

Summary of progress made to date

LGA Recommendation	Progress made	Next steps
1. Develop a clear narrative of place and your ambitions	<p>An exercise was undertaken in April 2017 to produce a narrative for the district with partners. This narrative was used to help develop the new economic strategy with partners and sets the ambitions for the district on growth, skills and employment. This was launched in London and Bradford in March 2018.</p> <p>Bradford Economic Partnership is leading on promoting the Bradford narrative through its Made in Bradford website and social media, supported by the Council and local businesses, organisations and groups.</p> <p>To further improve the attractiveness of the district to a number of target audiences (students, businesses, investors and residents), we have developed a place marketing plan.</p> <p>Whilst there are still some clear challenges in the external perceptions of the district, there are many indications that this activity is leading to results in terms of internal and external perceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - iMpower have rated the district as one of the top 10 most productive authorities. - Barclays have rated Bradford as the best place to start a business. - Bradford and the surrounding district has been rated as one of the top emerging travel destinations in the Luxury Travel Guide. - Recognition in the recent Care Quality Commission report on Bradford District's Health and Social Care praising the joined up work around the partnership narrative. <p>As part of the development of the integration strategy, we have been engaging with our communities. In Summer 2018 we commissioned a district wide conversation with residents and business from across our district to discuss local priorities to respond to the government's</p>	<p>The newly appointed Assistant Director for the Office of the Chief Executive will review the current approach to place marketing to ensure our activity in this area has maximum impact with target audiences.</p> <p>We are working to develop how we involve the voice of youth in the development of our narrative and approach. We will be piloting from Sept 2018 a social media based approach to hearing and responding to youth voice. This approach is considered to be more accessible to many young people, particularly those who feel they cannot have their voice heard in larger district wide youth voice events.</p> <p>The authority will work to ensure that all new strategies and the refresh of the Council Plan is built on the clear narrative of place and ambitions that we have set.</p> <p>From Spring 2019, the authority will begin to work to draw on this narrative to refresh the Council</p>

LGA Recommendation	Progress made	Next steps
	<p>Integrated Communities strategy and Bradford's designation as a local pilot area. Over 650 people were involved, most spending over an hour talking about their experiences of life in the district and how we can work better together to reduce the barriers to integration that people face. Key emerging themes focused on employment, children missing at school and across communities and work around our shared 'rights and responsibilities' including community safety, hate crime and litter. A local action plan is now being developed to respond, which will form part of our wider Stronger Communities strategy.</p> <p>We have also reviewed our existing Council Plan objectives and ambitions and created a revised programme of performance indicators which clearly set out the things we are looking to achieve as an authority over the next twelve months and beyond.</p>	<p>Plan.</p>

LGA Recommendation	Progress made	Next steps
<p>2. Use the narrative to place shape more effectively with partners</p>	<p>Over the last year, we have made progress to foster and embed a “Team Bradford” approach to working with partners to shape our place. There are a number of examples of this:</p> <p>The partnership between the authority and health has been recognised in a recent Care Quality Commission inspection report which applauded our partnership working and closer alignment of commissioning between health and social care. The governance of the Bradford District Partnership is now also aligned with the Health and Wellbeing Board, ensuring a place based decision approach across all partners.</p> <p>There is now an aligned Bradford District recruitment narrative across partners, using the developed place narrative for the district.</p> <p>£2 million in additional investment has been unlocked for the district through a partnership approach to the recent Business Rates Pool, working with the NHS on Health and Social Care skills, the creative sector on creative industries skills and Community Led Local Development in Keighley and Manningham.</p> <p>A children’s transformation and integration group has been established. This enables providers and commissioners across a wide stakeholder group (including the voluntary and community sector) to share and critique services for local communities and drive ambition.</p> <p>The district is working closely with the Government and our local schools to improve the life chances of our children through the Opportunity Area. This brings £6 million in additional funding for the district as well as close working relationships including with dedicated secondments from the Department for Education working in the district.</p> <p>We are working across organisations in the city to combine data</p>	<p>Continue to work across the Health and Wellbeing partnership to provide delivery on our shared agenda.</p> <p>Build on the existing shared intelligence partnership with the Police. Work with Born in Bradford and their partners at University College London and the University of York to share evidence and develop research to enable the authority, partners and communities to develop new interventions and programmes.</p>

LGA Recommendation	Progress made	Next steps
	<p>intelligence and analysis. In August 2017, a multi-agency hub for council and police shared intelligence and data analysis was created to improve shared intelligence around joint priority areas.</p> <p>The Education Covenant is a district wide collaboration between the Council, education and skills providers, businesses and parents. The purpose of the covenant is for the education sector to work more closely with the business community to achieve change for children and young people in the district. Over the last year, over 4,000 local businesses were involved in the Education Covenant.</p> <p>We are working with communities to co-produce the 0-19 Family Hub Service offer for Prevention and Early Help. Area advisory networks have been created to develop a new model for this service through the capacities of local residents, local associations and local institutions. It is planned that a new delivery model will be in place by October 2018.</p> <p>The authority has been working closely with Born in Bradford to help evaluate what works to create an evidence base of best practice for both the Opportunity Area and our housing partnership work.</p>	

LGA Recommendation	Progress made	Next steps
3. Use the People Can approach in a more systematic manner	A separate paper to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is covering the performance of People Can and next steps.	A separate paper to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlines some of the organisational next steps to deliver People Can.
4. More robust financial accountability and allocation of resources within the Medium Term Financial Strategy	<p>Our Medium Term Financial Planning continues to strengthen with steps taken to revise our budget delivery programme where proposals are experiencing difficulty and that new proposals are only accepted where they are backed by robust business cases. This extends to working with external organisations such as IMPower to accelerate delivery of our Adults demand management programme.</p> <p>Programme management arrangements have been strengthened to ensure robust management of projects. The authority has been providing robust challenge as part of the budget setting process. Autumn challenge sessions are being held to address in-year spending pressures and to take pro-active management of in-year savings.</p> <p>New governance arrangements have also been implemented – overall financial position alongside performance within Budget Delivery Programme are a focus at Council Management Teams every month. Building on this we have invested in automating our financial reporting, boosting the skills of budget holders and focussing our resources on the highest areas of risk.</p> <p>We have also strengthened the resilience of our balance sheet to withstand forthcoming external financial pressures by revising our Minimum Revenue Provision policy and releasing £52.5m into a dedicated earmarked reserve.</p>	<p>Continue to have Autumn Challenge sessions to address in year spending processes and target future savings in the upcoming budget processes.</p> <p>Identification of additional funding sources which support council priorities.</p> <p>Further develop a strong and robust approach to commercialisation across the organisation, making the most of income generation opportunities and diversifying sources of funding.</p>

LGA Recommendation	Progress made	Next steps
<p>5. Accelerate a Team Bradford approach to using apprenticeships</p>	<p>Following the peer review, we set an ambitious target of 500 apprenticeships a year by 2021. This is far in excess of the national targets of 2.3% of the workforce in order to reflect the fact that we are the youngest city in the country.</p> <p>There are currently 221 active apprentices being funded from Bradford Council's Apprenticeship Levy. This is made up of 110 existing staff accessing apprenticeship development opportunities; 55 new apprenticeship starts within the Council; and 56 new apprentices in schools that contribute to the Levy. There are 76 apprenticeships in progress and due to start soon. Most new apprentices are aged under 30, with a good proportion being under 20.</p> <p>Our performance of 221 active apprentices is in excess of the national target of 2.3% of the workforce. Whilst it is behind our own internal stretching target, our performance is strong when compared to other authorities in the region. For example, Leeds (whilst being a larger authority) has around the same number of apprentices as Bradford, Barnsley have 104, Hull have 126, and York have 30. Conversations with other local authorities have indicated that many areas face similar challenges to increase apprenticeship numbers (for example, under austerity and cuts, many authorities face vacancy freezes which makes it challenging to recruit new staff).</p> <p>Our levy funds are predominantly being used to fund level 2 and 3 qualifications at present; these are the intermediate grade apprenticeships. However, we are now working with managers to explore options for higher grade apprentices.</p> <p>Alongside our own activity, we are working in partnership with businesses and other employers to increase the number of apprenticeships in the district. This includes activities like building pre-apprenticeship education</p>	<p>Bradford Council have set internal targets of 500 apprentices per year by 2021, with a focus on under-represented groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% - disabled people • 30% - BME • 5% other vulnerable groups (carers, young offenders, young parents etc) <p>In order to meet this target, we are now converting all vacancies below Band 8 into apprenticeships (unless there is a business case for why this is not possible).</p> <p>In addition, 100% of young people leaving care are to be offered access to a traineeship or apprenticeship.</p> <p>We continue to work with departments to look at how we can increase apprenticeship opportunities, and we are now exploring higher level apprenticeship opportunities for new recruits (where vacancies arise). We are supporting existing employees to undertake apprenticeship development opportunities. We are also exploring how we can make</p>

LGA Recommendation	Progress made	Next steps
	<p>pathways, and apprenticeship enrichment programmes. In addition, our business rates pool funding for skills and workforce development in health and social care will support individuals looking to develop their careers in these sectors in the district.</p>	<p>best use of the levy funds to fund development opportunities for organisations across the district.</p> <p>We are working with businesses and training providers across the district to run an apprenticeship fair at Valley Parade during Apprenticeship Week 2019. This will be the first time this event has occurred in Bradford so our young people will not have to travel to Leeds.</p>
<p>6. Review the redeployment policy</p>	<p>We have had an on going dialogue with Trade Unions on improving our workforce information in consultation processes and how we can improve the support offered to staff going through the redeployment process.. We have implemented additional up-front 1 to 1 support for employees in CV preparation, interview skills and careers counselling.</p> <p>Our Redeployment Officers also continues to provide advice about the suitability of jobs for redeployees.</p> <p>These processes aim to support staff regardless of whether they are redeployed to another role in the council or find a career elsewhere</p>	<p>As part of the Big Project to deliver culture change to the Council, we are already reviewing all of our redeployment, recruitment & selection arrangements and incorporating the assessment of behaviours in addition to competencies. The continued roll out of the Evolve system will identify development needs, skills and knowledge of employees.</p> <p>We are developing an employee knowledge portal and upgrading our existing manager portal including the introduction of a new recruitment and induction site. Both portals will be live later in 2018.</p>

Next Steps

- 2.7 As part of the Peer Challenge process, we are entitled to a light touch follow up review. This will provide an independent assessment of how we are delivering against the recommendations. At the time of writing, a follow up meeting is being planned for Spring 2019.
- 2.8 There are also planned papers on People Can and Commercialisation tabled for future meetings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will allow an opportunity for a more in depth examination of these specific areas.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

None

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

The delivery of the Corporate Peer Challenge review Improvement Action Plan will be met from within current resources. Responding to the review and implementing its recommendations are key elements in the work of each Outcome Board.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Governance arrangements to ensure the delivery of the Corporate Peer Challenge review Improvement Action Plan will be managed within the programme and project management arrangements of the Council Plan Outcome Delivery Boards.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

No comments from the legal appraisal.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

None directly. Equalities Impact Assessments will be considered as necessary.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

Not applicable

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None

7.6 TRADE UNION

If changes are made to Council policy as a result of this action plan, Trade Unions will be consulted as appropriate.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None directly

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Review the progress made to date against the Corporate Peer Challenge review recommendations, as captured in the updated Improvement Action Plan in the above table.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A: [Corporate Peer Review Challenge Summary Findings](#)

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None