

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

26 July 2023

Report Title: Corporate Peer Challenge Outcome and Action Plan

Submitted by: Council

Portfolios: One Council, People & Partnerships, Finance, Town Centres & Growth

Ward(s) affected: All

Purpose of the Report

To provide Council with the opportunity to formally receive the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge report on Newcastle under Lyme Borough Council, and the Action Plan which has been prepared in response.

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and consider the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge report; and
2. Approve the Action Plan prepared in response to the LGA's recommendations.

Reasons

The development of an Action Plan is a requirement placed on local authorities when they agree to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge, in order to set out how they intend to respond to the LGA's recommendations from the review.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Borough Council agreed to receive a Corporate Peer Challenge earlier this year as part of the LGA's sector improvement offer. The visit was hugely successful, both in its smooth running and array of partners and stakeholders involved, but also in the positive outcomes reported at the end of the week.
- 1.2 The Peer Team's final report has now been agreed for publication and the Council has a duty to publish an Action Plan to sit alongside it, which responds to the eight key recommendations made.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 of this report is the LGA Corporate Peer Review final report.
- 1.4 Appendix 2 of this report is the Council's Action Plan prepared in response to the LGA's recommendations.
- 1.5 The draft Action Plan responds to the eight key recommendations made by the LGA Peer Team in their final report following the Corporate Peer Challenge in March of this year. The recommendations are designed to help the Council make further improvements to its already strong position, as acknowledged in the report. The LGA's recommendations will make a welcome contribution to the Council's commitment to continuous improvement.
- 1.6 The actions, grouped against the themes bulleted below, are owned at senior leader level, with clear implementation dates and deliverables. Once agreed by Council, the actions will be

monitored by the Strategic Hub in order to help ensure that good progress can be demonstrated by the time of the LGA return visit later this municipal year. The themes covered are:

- One Council Programme
- Capacity
- Regeneration
- Finance and Budgets
- Governance
- Partnerships

1.7 Upon member approval and appropriate scrutiny, the final report from the LGA and our accompanying Action Plan will be published on the Council website. The LGA will also publish the final report on their own site.

1.8 Some of the actions detailed are already underway and the remainder will commence imminently. Progress will be monitored centrally and reported back to members at periodic points, prior to the LGA's return visit.

2. **Proposal**

That Council:

- **Receive and consider the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge report; and**
- **Approve the Action Plan prepared in response to the LGA's recommendations.**

3. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

3.1 None from this report.

4. **Equality Impact Assessment**

4.1 Local authorities have a responsibility to meet the Public Sector Duty of the Equality Act 2010. The Act gives people the right not to be treated less favourably due to protected characteristics. There are no differential equality issues arising directly from this report.

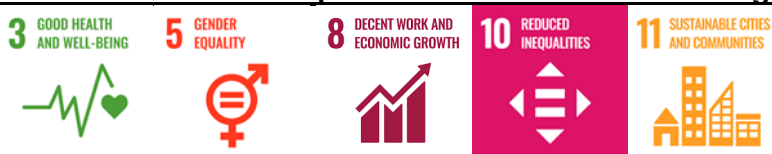
5. **Financial and Resource Implications**

5.1 The Action Plan is designed to build on the Council's already strong financial management.

6. **Major Risks**

6.1 No new major risks have been identified through the process of developing the Action Plan.

7. **UN Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Change Implications**





8. **Key Decision Information**

8.1 This is not a key decision.

9. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

9.1 This report was considered at the July Cabinet meeting

10. **List of Appendices**

10.1 Corporate Peer Report (Appendix 1), Council Action Plan (Appendix 2).

11. **Background Papers**

11.1 Working papers held by officers responsible for managing the Peer Challenge.