

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Leadership Team's Report to Cabinet

23 April 2024

<u>Report Title:</u>	Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Visit
<u>Submitted by:</u>	Corporate Leadership Team
<u>Portfolios:</u>	One Council, People & Partnerships, Finance, Town Centres & Growth
<u>Ward(s) affected:</u>	All

Purpose of the Report

To provide Cabinet with the final report from the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge progress review visit, which took place in January 2024.

Recommendation

That Cabinet:

1. Receive the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge progress review report; and
2. Approve its publication on the Council's website in line with LGA requirements.

Reasons

The progress review report marks the final stage of the Corporate Peer Challenge process following the Council's full review visit in March 2023. It assesses the progress made against the Council's Action Plan and the report is required to be published on the Council's website as the final element of the review.

1. **Background**

- 1.1 The Borough Council agreed to receive a Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2023 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 was published on the Council's website, alongside an Action Plan, which responded to the eight key recommendations made and covered the following themes:
 - One Council Programme
 - Capacity
 - Regeneration
 - Finance and Budgets
 - Governance
 - Partnerships
- 1.3 Since then the Council has made good progress in delivering against the Action Plan, as acknowledged by the Peers in their progress review – "The peer team felt the ambition and energy of the Council and that some of the things which were being talked about during the CPC are now moving to fruition". Many actions are now completed, with the rest underway and will continue to be monitored internally until fully implemented.
- 1.4 The Council can again feel proud of its achievements, as externally evidenced through the Corporate Peer Challenge, with many positive aspects highlighted in the progress review:

- ✓ Increased levels of employee satisfaction and engagement which is a real testament to how the organisation is run
- ✓ Staff the peer team met with again underlined their commitment to the Council and its aims and continue to be a tremendous asset to the organisation and the Borough
- ✓ The peer team were impressed with the Council's ambitions where it is aiming to be 'industry leading' in its approach to delivering regeneration
- ✓ The peer team continue to be impressed with how the Council manages its finances
- ✓ The peer team were impressed with the strength and depth of the partnership working and the active role which the Council plays

1.5 Appendix 1 of this report is the LGA Corporate Peer Review final progress visit report.

2. Proposal

That Cabinet:

- Receive the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge progress review report; and
- Approve its publication on the Council's website in line with LGA requirements.

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 review process has recognised and helped build on the Council's already strong financial management.

6. Major Risks

6.1 No new major risks have been identified through the CPC process.

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 The original review report was considered by Full Council.

10. **List of Appendices**

10.1 Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Report (Appendix 1).

11. **Background Papers**

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