



Full Council	Tuesday, 05 April 2022	Matter for Information
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Report Title: **Local Government Association (LGA)
Corporate Peer Challenge (2022)**

Report Author(s): **Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service)**

Purpose of Report:	To present to the Council the attached feedback report of the Peer team and to note the required next steps of preparing an Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the review.
Report Summary:	The Local Government Association (LGA) recommends all councils take up its offer of a Corporate Peer Challenge, every three to five years. The Council voluntarily agreed to take part, initially in 2017, with a review taking place in January 2022. The purpose of the challenge is to provide councils with a general "health check" based on five key themes, to consider how well it has appraised its own situation and how well prepared and focussed it is for the opportunities and challenges ahead. This report summarises the findings of the Peer team and sets out the next steps for the Council to take.
Recommendation(s):	<p>A. The Council notes the LGA's Feedback report, as published on 18 March 2022 on the Council's website and attached to this report at Appendix 1;</p> <p>B. The Council notes the requirement for the publication of an Action Plan within 8 weeks of the date of the published report. The Action plan to set out how the Council will deliver the Peer team recommendations; and</p> <p>C. The Action Plan to be reported to the first Council meeting in the 2022/23 municipal year to include the proposals for Members to develop a new long-term vision for the borough with local stakeholders.</p>
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service) (0116) 257 2602 anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Objectives:	Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1) Growing the Borough Economically (CO2) Providing Excellent Services (CO3)
Vision and Values:	"A Stronger Borough Together" (Vision) Accountability (V1) Respect (V2) Teamwork (V3) Innovation (V4) Customer Focus (V5)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.

Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1) Political Dynamics (CR3) Reputation Damage (CR4) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Economy / Regeneration (CR9)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	1. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report (Final) (2022)

1. Information

- 1.1. The Peer Challenge was conducted over four days between 24 and 27 January 2022. The Challenge is an independent and improvement support offer. A team of experienced elected Members and Senior Officers conduct it, from other councils outside of the Leicestershire area.
- 1.2. The Peer Challenge focuses on five key areas summarised as: -
- Does the Council understand the local place, i.e. the Borough, and use that to set its priorities?
 - Does the Council provide effective local leadership and resilience of place and are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
 - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements, are Member and Officers roles understood?
 - Does the Council have a clear understanding of its current financial position with a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
 - Is the organisational capacity being utilised to best effect to deliver the Council's priorities?

Over the four days the Peer team explored these key areas with more than sixty-seven people including a range of Officers together with elected Members and external stakeholders, through a series of meetings, discussion sessions and focus groups.

- 1.3. In summary the Peer team found that since its last review in 2017, the Council has

undertaken a variety of work to improve its services and ways of working particularly by progressing its performance framework and prioritising channel shift to digital services. The team found “the *majority of building blocks are now in place to best deliver the council’s work and serve its communities.*” The Peer team also acknowledged the Council responded well to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic through its support to the Borough’s most vulnerable residents and local businesses as the economy opened up. The high levels of awareness by both Members and Officers, of the Council’s financial position and the challenges it faces was acknowledged and particularly the proactive response to the LGA’s financial health check in July 2021. The Peer team were once again complimentary about the staff, finding the general atmosphere at the Council as supportive and productive together with positive feedback from external partners on the Council’s honest and open relationships.

1.4. The key recommendations for the Council to now produce an Action Plan for implementation are in summary: -

- To plan, develop and communicate a long-term, Member-led vision for the borough with local stakeholders including residents and partners
- Members and Officers to work more effectively particularly to refresh the Corporate Plan and to resolve issues around the workings of the committee system.
- Continue to build on communications to promote the Council’s priorities and its good work.
- Robust planning for allocating resources including capacity to deliver the Council’s ambitions and major projects.
- Pick up pace on key areas such as staff recruitment, business support and engagement.
- Plan to ensure all residents can access the services, information, and advice that they need.
- Explore and apply for further external funding opportunities to deliver its notable ambitions through its strategic growth, corporate and other plans.