

**Report for:** 17 October 2023 Cabinet

**Title:** LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Response to Recommendations

**Report authorised by:** Andy Donald, Chief Executive

**Lead Officer:** Claire McCarthy, Assistant Director for Strategy, Communications and Collaboration

**Ward(s) affected:** N/A

**Report for Key/  
Non-Key Decision:** Non-key decision

## **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1. This report sets out the council's response to the recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge that took place in May 2023. The Peer Challenge was led by a team of local government peers and facilitated by the Local Government Association (LGA).

## **2. Cabinet Member Introduction – Leader of the Council**

2.1. Corporate Peer Challenges are a valuable tool offered by the LGA to provide challenge and support to councils. A team of local government peers from councils across the country were invited to Haringey to look at how our services are run, how we engage with our residents and communities, and where we can improve.

2.2. This is a time of considerable change at Haringey, not least in our relationships with our residents and communities. This is why I was asked the peer team to specifically look at this theme alongside our approach to 'getting the basics right'. Both of these are key elements of the Haringey Deal and will be critical to our future success.

2.3. I am really proud of the positive nature of the report and feedback we had from the peer team. It shows how far we have come as an organisation and is a testament to the hard work of our staff, our partners and the residents and communities who work with us every day.

2.4. However, we know that we still have a lot of work to do to ensure that we are consistently the best organisation we can be. There is no room for complacency not least because of the incredibly challenging financial environment in which councils – including Haringey – find ourselves in. The recommendations the peers have set out in their report will be really helpful to taking us that next step on our journey.

### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. Cabinet is asked to endorse the action plan as set out in Appendix B, which responds to each of nine recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge report.

### **4. Reasons for decision**

- 4.1. There is an expectation that all councils undertaking a Corporate Peer Challenge will commit to publishing the feedback report and produce an action plan, which responds to the recommendations in the report.
- 4.2. The recommendations are important in helping the council improve, including building stronger relationships with the residents and communities in Haringey and provide better, more efficient services.
- 4.3. The action plan sets out what the council is doing to respond to these recommendations, including specific actions, when they will be delivered, and who will be responsible for delivering them.

### **5. Alternative options considered**

- 5.1. The option not to respond to the Peer Challenge recommendations with a formal report was considered. The decision has been made that it would be better to publish the report, and the council's response to it, so that the council can be held to account on its improvement plans.

### **6. Background information**

- 6.1. In May 2023 Haringey welcomed a team from the Local Government Association to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge. This involved senior officers from service councils across the country, led by Althea Loderick, Chief Executive at Southwark Council and a lead councillor peer, Cllr Sir Steve Houghton, Leader at Barnsley Metropolitan Council. All councils are given the opportunity to have one of these reviews every 4-5 years as part of a local government-led approach to improvement and mutual support.
- 6.2. The LGA team spent four days on site meeting with staff, councillors, partners and stakeholders. The team also had access to a range of documents and information in order to support their work.

- 6.3. A Peer Challenge is not an inspection but nonetheless it is an important way for local authorities to identify and prioritise areas for development or improvement.
- 6.4. Following the 'challenge' a Final Report was produced by the LGA which included a number of recommendations. The full report, including the recommendations, is set out at Appendix A.

## **7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-2024 High level Strategic outcomes**

- 7.1. The Corporate Peer Challenge responds to all themes in the Corporate Delivery Plan, support improvements across council services, relationships with residents and communities and with members.

## **8. Carbon and Climate Change**

- 8.1. This action plan does not have direct impacts on carbon and climate change, but does support the council to deliver more efficient, resilient and resident-focused services. This may have a positive impact on reduction of carbon and helping services deliver on the council's climate change ambitions.

## **9. Statutory Officers comments (Director of Finance (procurement), Head of Legal and Governance, Equalities)**

### **Finance**

- 9.1. Currently, none of the proposed actions set out in the Peer Challenge Action Plan are expected to require additional resources over and above those already within agreed service budgets. If additional resources are identified as required to fully deliver the actions, the Lead Officer will need to identify a resource and obtain the required approval for increased spend.

### **Procurement**

- 9.2. Strategic Procurement note the report content and recommendations in section 3. There are no procurement decisions resulting from this report and recommendations.

### **Head of Legal & Governance [Name and title of Officer completing these comments]**

- 9.3. The Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) has been consulted in drafting this report. There are no Legal comments.

## **Equality**

- 9.4.** The Peer Challenge report makes a number of specific proposals on how the council can improve its approach to tackling inequalities. This includes one specific recommendation to further embed leadership of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) agenda in the council, and a second specific recommendation to continue proactive work with local communities and make it clear which methods of engagement will be used in different service situations. The action plan sets out how the council will respond to these recommendations.

### **9.5. Use of Appendices**

Appendix A – LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in Haringey 2023 Report  
Appendix B – Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

### **10. Background papers**

N/A