

Corporate Peer Challenge in Haringey 2023 – Action Plan

Introduction from Cllr Peray Ahmet, Haringey Council Leader and Andy Donald, Chief Executive

We would like to start by thanking the Peer team and the LGA for their work on this Peer Challenge. We enjoyed meeting you, talking to you about where Haringey Council is at on our journey; and reading your report. Whilst this action plan focuses on delivering on the recommendations, which are understandably about what we can do better and areas for continuing development, we think it is also important to recognise how positive the report is overall.

This is a time of considerable change at Haringey, not least in our relationships with our residents and communities. This is why we 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. We were therefore delighted to read:

“There is widespread commitment within the Council to these objectives, with visible evidence of both members and the workforce going the extra mile to contribute to these aims and achieve a fairer and greener Haringey.” [pg3]

We both know how important the culture and values of any organisation are. We have worked together over the last 18 months to build a culture at Haringey that is exemplified in our new values; caring, collaborative, community-focused, courageous and creative. The Peer team’s reflection described below resonates with our own sense that we are making positive progress in this area.

“Haringey’s workforce is committed, engaged, passionate, and proud of their work and the leadership of the Council. The peer team heard from staff that the Council cares about their employees’ well-being and that they are pleased they can bring their whole selves to work, with the Council fostering an inclusive and supportive work environment. The peer team also found that the Council’s values are known amongst the staff team and starting to embed..” [pg 17]

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.

We know how busy the Peer team members are in their day jobs delivering for their own communities and so we would like to put on record our thanks to them for taking the time to be part of this important process.

Background

In May 2023 Haringey welcomed a team from the Local Government Association to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge. 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. 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.

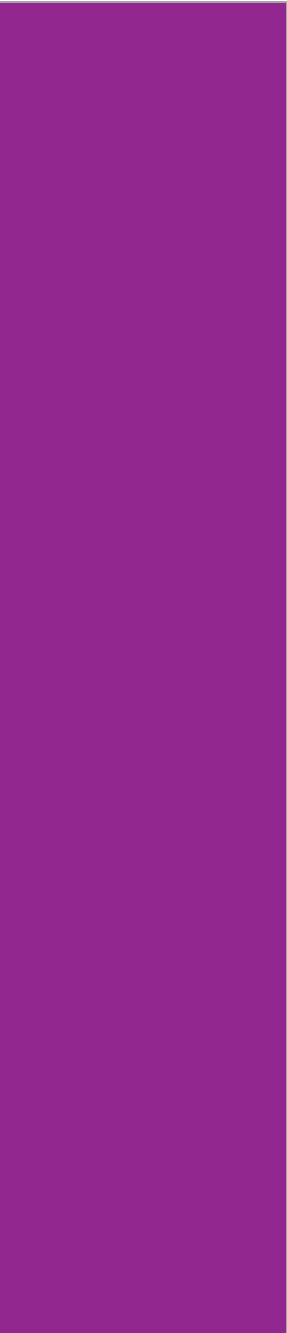
Following the 'challenge' a Final Report was produced by the LGA which included a number of recommendations. They are set out below alongside a set of actions that the council proposes to take to respond to them.

Delivery and transparency

In order to aid accountability for delivery we have identified an individual officer and Cabinet Member who will drive forward action on each point working with their colleagues. We have also indicated a deadline for completion of each action set out in the report. We are determined that this action plan will be implemented and that it will deliver on the recommendations that have been made. We will report progress alongside the next update to Cabinet on our wider performance in the spring of 2024.

In line with the expectations of the LGA Peer Challenge process we look forward to welcoming the Peer team back in 2024 to check on our progress.

Recommendation	Summary	Lead Officer	Lead Cabinet Member	Actions	Deadline for completion
<p>1. Establish a long-term vision for the Borough.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In collaboration with communities and partners, work to establish a comprehensive long-term vision for the borough ➤ Opportunity to go beyond short-term goals ➤ Should provide clear direction for council’s activities and include a narrative making clear the council’s role ➤ Should help to align resources towards common goals, and articulate to staff, members, partners and stakeholders their responsibilities for delivery 	<p>Director of Culture, Strategy and Engagement</p>	<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>A Borough ‘vision’ will be developed. It will be based on a 10 year time horizon. The intention is that this will support prioritisation and galvanise action. It will not be simply a set of actions the council will take. Instead, we hope it will be a true vision for the borough which we develop and deliver with our residents, partners, Councillors and staff.</p> <p>In addition, we will develop a Corporate Delivery Plan for the period 2024-26. This will set out how we will continue to operationally deliver on the commitments we have made and will support continued transparency around our delivery.</p>	<p>Brought to Cabinet by September 2024</p> <p>Brought to Cabinet in March 2024</p>
<p>2. Embed leadership of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) agenda in the Council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Leadership of EDI should be further integrated in all levels of leadership and management ➤ Promoting diversity, ensuring equal opportunities, and creating an inclusive work environment ➤ Embedding EDI supports interactions both internally and with our communities ➤ Opportunities to reflect commitment to EDI in policies, practices and decision making helping ensure it’s modelled across the organisation 	<p>Chief Executive</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion</p>	<p><u>Internal</u> An EDI Action Plan has been developed through a process of significant staff engagement.</p> <p>The Action Plan breaks down our long term goals into clear, transparent and achievable actions. The actions have been identified and prioritised based on the findings of our EDI audit and workforce equalities data.</p> <p>The actions are grouped under 6 themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Leadership 4. Recruitment 5. Retention 6. Progression 7. Management 	<p>Launched and disseminated September 2023</p>




			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The autumn 2023 ‘all staff’ events will include a major focus on EDI, specifically ‘ally-ship’. • A new development programme for Managers will include specific training and development on EDI. <p>Our Leadership Network will have a six-monthly focus on our anti-racism agenda with the aim of growing our organisational understanding of racism. The Network will be asked to commit to specific actions and demonstrate progress on these.</p> <p><u>External</u> We recognise the intrinsic link between the internal and external EDI agendas. As a council we know we play a critical equalities leadership role in our borough. We also have both legal and moral obligations to promote equality and prevent discrimination.</p> <p>Our Coordinating Group Addressing Racism brings leaders from partner organisations together, including the NHS Trusts, Voluntary and Community Sector and police, to provide each other with peer support and constructive challenge on our collective and separate anti-racism work.</p> <p>The Group will undertake a benchmarking exercise to create a clear baseline for each of our organisations and our collective position in Haringey.</p>	<p>October 2023</p> <p>New programme due to start in summer 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2023</p>
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			<p>An action plan will be developed across 7 key levers of power and influence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment practice, including apprenticeships and work experience 2. HR practice, including training, culture, talent management, formal procedures 3. Policy and strategy development 4. Investment power 5. Communications power 6. Service delivery 7. Influencing regional and national decision makers <p>Our Community Networks provide a platform for organisations and residents from marginalised backgrounds (Somali, Turkish and Kurdish etc.) to speak directly with senior officers from statutory organisations, working through challenges, identifying opportunities, and improving mutual understanding.</p> <p>We will arrange a councillor representative for each Network who will attend Network meetings and feed back to elected colleagues.</p> <p>We will arrange quarterly meetings bringing the leads of each of the Community Networks together with relevant Cabinet Members and senior Council officers to ensure issues, insights and progress from the Networks help to inform decision making at senior level.</p>	<p>January 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>December 2023</p> <p>December 2023</p>
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<p>3. The Council should continue proactive work with local communities and make it clear which methods of engagement will be used in different service situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue proactive approach to engaging with communities ➤ Actively seek input from residents, listen to needs and concerns, and involve them in decision making ➤ New participation strategy provides the framework ➤ Ensure internal networks are fully utilised to share participation tools and techniques ➤ Record and communicate learning 	<p>Assistant Director for Strategy, Communications and Collaboration</p>	<p>Leader of the Council</p>	<p>Implementing all aspects of the Haringey Deal will continue to be a key area of focus for the organisation. We will further develop our aspirations for the Deal as part of the Borough Vision development process.</p> <p>An initial participation framework has been published and is being disseminated across the organisation. Feedback from dissemination activity is being incorporated into the ongoing development of the framework. The second iteration will be published in January 2024.</p> <p>The next iteration of the participation framework will set out the organisational expectations for actively involving residents, using a range of participatory approaches described in the existing framework, accompanied by implementation guidance and support.</p> <p>The council’s internal participation network is an active ‘community of practice’ through which we will continue to build capacity and skills for resident participation into the culture of the organisation. In addition, we will continue using other staff networks and forums to generate momentum, disseminate guidance and learning, and seek feedback on what further support might be needed.</p>	<p>November 2023 - July 2024</p> <p>January 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

				<p>We agree that capturing reflection and learning will be important in embedding good participation practice and have captured learning from a number of key participation projects to date (e.g. Wood Green Voices, Parks and Green Spaces Strategy).</p> <p>The upcoming iteration of the participation toolkit will include a section on evaluation and learning, to help capture and embed learning practice.</p> <p>As part of Borough Vision development, we will speak to residents and partners about how they would like to work with us as part of the Deal and will use these conversations to inform the development of a set of Deal ‘metrics’. These can be used to assess the ‘success’ of specific participation projects, but we will also how we can measure change over time at borough level.</p>	<p>April 2024</p> <p>November 2023- July 2024</p>
<p>4. The Council should develop and embed mechanisms to improve oversight and management of the Council’s capital programme.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhance oversight and management of capital programme, including the planning and implementation of major projects and investments ➤ Robust processes should be put in place to ensure effective financial planning, risk management, and resource allocation ➤ Balanced MTFS should be developed and owned across the council, and be a 	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Investment</p>	<p>A new approach for overseeing capital projects has been introduced with quarterly reviews at a performance focused meeting of the Council Leadership Team.</p> <p>In light of the rising cost of borrowing and wider financial pressures the authority’s entire capital programme is being reviewed in autumn 2023 to feed into the budget for 24/25 and MTFS.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>September 2023- March 2024</p>

	framework for financial decision making			<p>Additional regular reporting on the entire programme will be brought to the Cabinet to allow collective oversight and prioritisation of the programme.</p> <p>Appropriate information will be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to enable them to effectively scrutinise the capital programme as part of their budget scrutiny work.</p>	<p>Quarterly</p> <p>This is work in progress and we are engaging with Scrutiny.</p>
<p>5. LB Haringey should look at ways to strengthen and embed performance and programme management arrangements across the Council</p>	<p>➤ Strengthen performance and programme management arrangements, including established and clear performance measures to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes</p>	<p>Assistant Director for Digital and Change</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Private Renters and Planning</p>	<p><u>Performance management and measurement</u></p> <p>We have already introduced a new way of reporting progress and performance under the Corporate Delivery Plan – with a report presented at Cabinet in September and Overview and Scrutiny in October. This seeks to track the delivery of activity and outcomes – as well as metrics where they are relevant. The next round of reporting will be in March 2024.</p> <p>As we develop the Borough Vision and the next Corporate Delivery Plan we will build on and finesse this approach to ensure we are measuring and tracking the most meaningful things.</p> <p>We believe that transparency is crucial for accountability and commit to regularly publishing information on our performance.</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p>September 2024</p> <p>On-going</p>

				<p>We have already recognised that particular challenges require bespoke management, oversight and reporting arrangements for instance our Housing Improvement Plan, overseen by a Housing Improvement Board chaired by the Chief Executive. We will continue to initiate such bespoke arrangements when required.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
				<p>We recognise the introduction of Oflog and the enhanced role for the Care Quality Commission. We will actively seek to embrace the opportunities that this provides to benchmark ourselves against other authorities.</p>	<p>On-going</p>
				<p>We recognise that complaints are an important source of performance information for us as an organisation. As part of our feedback improvement plan we will be ensuring we embed the reflection and learning from complaints across the council.</p>	
				<p><u>Programme management</u></p> <p>We are currently reviewing our corporate approach to programme management. The purpose of this is to ensure we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify project governance and reporting, reducing the proliferation of ad-hoc boards and structures and providing better oversight and grip to senior managers. This will be linked with the performance management above. 	<p>April 2024</p>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refocus project management toward product management and a focus on outcomes rather than delivery mechanisms in order to deliver genuine change. • Build a group of permanent project managers and business analysts to provide in house expertise – reducing our reliance on contractors. • Ensure a consistent approach to programme management through standardisation of Business cases, PIDs, monitoring, reporting and benefits realisation. Provide support to the organisation to create these products. • Have appropriate and proportionate corporate oversight of projects and programmes based on risk, significance, budget. <p>In addition, to the Vision and Corporate Delivery Plan we will be ensuring that all services have annual service plans from April 2024 onwards. This is something that has not been consistently in place since Covid 19.</p>	April 2024
<p>6. Strengthen member/officer relationships within the Council by creating time and space for members and officers to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continue efforts to build wider and better member-officer relationships ➤ Create opportunities to for members and officers to develop a deeper understanding of each other’s responsibilities 	Director of Placemaking and Housing	Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Environment and Transport, and Deputy Leader of the Council	<p>A session will be held with all councillors – hosted by the Leader and Chief Executive – to co-produce actions in response to this recommendation.</p> <p>A second session on the ‘Role of Members’ will be held for the council’s Leadership Network. An initial session was held in early 2023. This will support the aim of</p>	<p>By November 2023</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p>

<p>interact outside of formal meetings to understand each other's roles and responsibilities and build trust</p>				<p>increasing the 'political literacy' of council officers.</p>	
<p>7. Maximise your links with partners and stakeholders using your place leadership role to build coalitions that help with the delivery of local priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capitalise on strong relationships and good will built through partnership work with communities during Covid, by proactively engaging with stakeholders and partners ➤ Look for opportunities to re-establish/take a leading role in bringing partners together around issues and policies that we both have a role in delivering 	<p>Director of Culture, Strategy and Engagement</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing</p>	<p>We anticipate that the Borough Vision (see recommendation 1) will articulate a shared set of priorities for the borough, developed through active engagement with range of stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>In addition, the council will continue to invest in existing partnership work. For example, the Coordinating Group for Tackling Racism and Racial Discrimination and the launch of a new 'Young People at Risk Partnership Network' with statutory and community partners, focussed on reducing serious youth violence in the borough.</p> <p>The Haringey Borough Partnership brings together all those that plan, provide or influence health, mental health and wellbeing for people in Haringey. It has a particular focus how we can provide early, coordinated care at locality level, making use of our shared community assets to increase equity of access and contribute to a reduction in population health inequalities. The priorities and governance arrangements for the Borough Partnership</p>	<p>By November 2023</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2024</p>

			<p>have been refreshed over recent months. The next phase of this work will focus on improving active engagement with, and participation of our communities within both the Borough Partnership structures and through our Health and Wellbeing Board.</p> <p>We will also continue to invest in our relationship with our local VCS partners, with a view to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting the sector so that it is more resilient, sustainable and collaborative; • establishing a new, fair, equitable and transparent approach to working with the sector; and, • ensuring the sector has a stronger voice in council decision making and strategy development. <p>This work will be achieved through a range of activity, but most significantly through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the commissioning of a new VCS Strategic Partner; and, • the production of a new VCS Strategy (Jan/Feb 2024) <p>We will also be relaunching the Debt and Financial hardship partnership, with a view to strengthen our systems wide response to this urgent issue.</p>	<p>January/February 2024</p> <p>October 2023</p>
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				<p>In addition to the above, the council will be convening partners to consider any further actions to implement this recommendation.</p>	<p>November 2023</p>
<p>8. Review the scrutiny function within the Council and look at opportunities for building mechanisms that enable the Council to measure the impact of scrutiny activity.</p>	<p>➤ Work on strengthening the scrutiny function in the Council</p>	<p>Head of Legal and Governance</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families</p>	<p>A joint session will be held with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, members of the Cabinet and senior officers to co-produce actions in response to this recommendation.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of active scrutiny of our decision making and service provision more broadly. We want to be an organisation that welcomes constructive scrutiny and challenge. We will seek to learn from relevant reviews and reports into issues including in other parts of the public sector.</p>	<p>November 2023</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p>9. Continue the work on developing the key lines of business systems to increase efficiency in operations and enhance customer service.</p>	<p>➤ Investing in key line of business enquiry systems, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customer Relationship Management (CRM) ○ Procurement management 	<p>Assistant Director for Digital and Change</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Resident Services and Tackling Inequality</p>	<p>Work underway to review Think Haringey First Programme, including the Getting the Basics right workstream. This is a wide-ranging programme of work that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A redesign of the way we think about and deliver an excellent digital customer experience. This will include user centred design, journey mapping and user testing to design new online portals for residents so that they can self-serve and better back office processes to complement • Implementing a CRM that allows us to provide better digital solutions for 	<p>The plan will be delivered by November 2024</p>

			<p>residents and improve back office workflows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of HR & finance policies and processes with a view to improving and simplifying them as we explore a procurement of a new ERP solution. • Improvements to our complaints management process and platform. • Shift further to digital first approach and away from paper-based solutions. • Further roll out of workflow management systems such as HALO and Monday.com <p>We have a Procurement Modernisation Plan in place. This will deliver the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised operating model to centralise procurement above £25k. • New technology to consolidate our procurement and contract management activity into a single platform. • Simplified and efficient 'source to pay processes'. • Preparation and readiness for the new Procurement Act due to come into force in 2024. • Introduce corporate contract and performance management standards. • Revised Contract Standing Orders to support new ways of working and the Procurement Act. • Education and transformation programme to embed the new ways of working. 	<p>The plan will be delivered by November 2024</p>
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