

# REPORT FOR DECISION



<b>DECISION OF:</b>	The Cabinet
<b>DATE:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> January 2019
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Outcome of the Corporate Peer Challenge of the Council
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	Councillor Rishi Shori, Leader of the Council
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Geoff Little, Chief Executive
<b>TYPE OF DECISION</b>	NON-KEY
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS</b>	This paper is within the public domain
<b>SUMMARY:</b>	To set out the key findings from the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in November 2018, together with the Council's proposed response and next steps.
<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	Cabinet is asked to consider the findings and key recommendations of the review and to agree the draft action plan that addresses those recommendations.
<b>IMPLICATIONS:</b>	
<b>Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:</b>	Our response to the findings from the Peer Challenge will ensure that we focus our resources on delivering Members' priorities for Bury.
<b>Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:</b>	The recommendations of the review are fully supported. Resources will be identified within the overall council budget to implement recommendations as required.
<b>Statement by Interim Executive Director of Resources &amp; Regulation (including Health and Safety Implications)</b>	

<b>Equality/Diversity implications:</b>	These proposals are in line with equality and diversity policies.
<b>Considered by Monitoring Officer:</b>	Yes.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	None.
<b>Scrutiny Interest:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 In November 2018, we invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge of the Council. The purpose of the review was to help us understand what we are doing well and what areas we could improve. The feedback report from the review is appended.
- 1.2 This is an important report for the Council. It presents an independent external assessment of our capacity to deliver Members' priorities for Bury. The review was conducted by a team of expert Members and officers from other Councils. A wealth of evidence was collected from over 260 hours' worth of information from discussions with Members, officers at all levels, residents and partners.
- 1.3 The report sets out the key findings and recommendations from the review and seeks approval to the proposed response to the Peer Team's recommendations.

## **2. Key Findings**

- 2.1 The report sets out the many strengths of Bury and of the Council. It will be important to communicate these strengths and build our response from them.
- 2.2 Overall, the Peer Challenge Team's view was that 'Bury is a Council and place with genuine ambition to grow its economy and serve its community well', and:-
  - Bury is well regarded within Greater Manchester and is considered as 'punching above its weight' on the sub-regional agenda;
  - The political leadership of the council has prioritised and is driving inclusive growth and increased social mobility – evidenced through the launch of the Life Chances Commission and re-drafting of the Economic Growth Strategy;
  - Bury's ambition has successfully translated into one of the highest new business start-ups rates nationally;
  - The energy, enthusiasm and commitment of staff is one of the council's biggest assets;
  - The priorities put forward by the Chief Executive in his engagement with staff are recognised and supported;
  - The Council and partners, has demonstrated a purposeful focus on accelerating health and social care integration, leading to an increase in the pace of integration that has been recognised locally and regionally.

2.3 The Peer Challenge Team also offered a series of suggestions for how the Council could continue to improve. In particular it highlighted the following key recommendations:-

- Develop a new Corporate Plan which states the priorities for the next three years;
- Strengthen financial management and discipline;
- Co-produce, then consistently live a new workforce culture, reflecting the cultural requirements of a new 'integrated' organisation and empower all to meet the level of sustainable corporate transformation required;
- Centralise relevant support and enabling services into a strong 'corporate core';
- Develop and deliver a single, comprehensive corporate performance management framework;
- Councillors and officers to co-design a considered, deliverable commercialisation strategy;
- Invest in ICT infrastructure in its entirety (hardware, software, connectivity and training) based on clear business cases. Also to define the Council's digital journey and the steps that will need to be taken to deliver it;
- Refresh the approach to community engagement and look at how the resourcing of the voluntary, community and faith sector could have a greater impact on local priorities;
- Review organisational workforce development;
- Review the role of the strategic 'Team Bury' partnership, the outcomes it can deliver for Bury and the governance arrangements required to do this.

### **3. The Council's response**

#### **3.1 Transformation and Reform Programme**

- 3.1.1 The majority of the report's recommendations focus on the internal corporate management processes of the Council. It is important that we act on each of the specific recommendations and this will be part of a much wider transformation and reform programme for all public services in the borough.
- 3.1.2 Progress has been made over the last five months in implementing the Bury Locality Plan to integrate health and social care. Without losing focus on the implementation of the One Commissioning Organisation and Local Care Alliance, we now need to accelerate the wider reform of all public services and we are developing our plans in response to the Greater Manchester New Model of Public Services, which was recently launched. This will enable our first steps towards creating a new narrative that can inspire all staff from all sectors.
- 3.1.3 The objective is a single programme of transformation and reform across all services and all sectors focusing on the relationships frontline staff have with each other and with the people of Bury. A new Corporate Plan which will flow from the Peer Challenge review, will be the Council's contribution to that single programme for all public services.

## **3.2 Co-design**

3.2.1 The review team told us that the feedback from their many discussions with staff at all levels was that the whole organisation is willing to change but must be brought on the journey together. The response to the review will therefore use and build on the recent changes in the way in which we engage with staff. The focus will be on:-

- Empowering staff;
- Giving permission to innovate and to learn;
- Giving and receiving feedback;
- Senior management listening attentively to staff at all levels; and
- Recognising and celebrating success.

3.2.2 The new arrangements for staff engagement are now being accelerated and from the spring, will be joined up with similar arrangements now being rolled out for CCG and Council staff within the scope of the One Commissioning Organisation.

## **3.3 Phasing and prioritisation**

3.3.1 The level of our ambition for Bury is acknowledged by the report. There is a determination to meet the challenges to deliver on those ambitions. However the advice in the report is clear: we cannot do everything at once. A key requirement now is to agree the phasing of what we will do, in what order and over what timescales. This will be key to delivery of a new Corporate Plan.

## **3.4 Resources**

3.4.1 The biggest and most urgent challenge facing the Council is the budget. Along with the LGA review of financial management, the Peer Challenge report contains clear recommendations to improve our financial planning, including connecting the budget to the new Corporate Plan and the new approach to public service reform.

3.4.2 In setting a budget for 2019/20, we need to consider investment in transformation, particularly ICT, and workforce development. This will, to a large extent, determine the pace and phasing of transformation.

## **4. Framework for the Council's response**

### **4.1 Phasing**

4.1.1 It is proposed that the action plan responding to the review should be in three phases:-

- January to March 2019.
- 2019/20.
- 2019 - 2022.

### **4.2 January, February, March 2019**

4.2.1 Actions are being taken to use the Peer Challenge report to create a momentum for change. These immediate actions include:-

- Agreeing and communicating our high level response to the review.
- Some early improvements visible to staff.
- Staff engagement in co-designing the changes needed.
- Continuing to strengthen member and officer relations, for example, through the staff engagement sessions held with the Leader and the Chief Executive and Member Development.
- Begin designing the corporate infrastructure i.e. a new Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan, business planning and workforce development processes.
- A three month review of HR/OD. This review will produce a plan to improve our workforce and organisational development capabilities which will underpin everything else that we do.

4.2.3 The choice of some early visible improvements will be an important decision. Some suggestions from staff feedback are:-

- The five LCA Integrated Neighbourhood Teams will go live in April.
- ICT:-
  - Resolving log-on problems.
  - Providing better kit for mobile/home working for priority groups of staff.
- New ways of working to go with the planned office moves.
- Step-up training and development opportunities.
- Use the three month review of HR/OD to identify and change processes that most restrict managers/staff.

## **4.3 2019/20**

4.3.1 The decisions on the budget for 2019/20 will require some investment in transformation. The challenge will be using that investment to deliver changes next year. During 2019/20 we will develop our three year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which will determine the scale of investment in transformation and therefore the pace and phasing of change. This will include investment in ICT, workforce training and development and new ways of working.

4.3.2 2019/20 will also see a significant step change in the way we engage with partners in the private, public and voluntary and community sectors. This will involve co-designing the roll-out the Local Care Alliance (LCA), the One Commissioning Organisation (OCO) and the New Model Public Services, with a specific focus on reducing demand for reactive services. This will include the refresh of our approach to community engagement and strengthening our relations with the voluntary, community and faith sector.

4.3.3 Finally during 2019/20 the Council and the CCG, working together as the OCO, will design and implement new commissioning, business planning, and workforce development performance processes. These will include the corporate infrastructure of:-

- Creation of corporate core for the Council and the OCO.
- New Corporate Plan.
- MTFP.
- New approaches to commissioning via the OCO.
- Capital Programme.

- New ICT and Digital Strategy.
- Workforce development plan for the OCO and Council focussed on a new workforce culture.
- Performance management and reporting for the Council and CCG together. This will include the measures of success covering outcomes for the people and place of Bury, service demand and budget pressures.

#### **4.4 2019/2022**

4.4.1 The work described above during 2019/20 will strengthen the improvement capability of all Bury's public services, focussing on workforce, technology, performance and financial management. But these processes have to have purpose in better outcomes for Bury's people, environment and economy. The outputs from 2019/20 will therefore provide a strategic framework for the three year period 2019-22 comprises:-

- A renewed vision and strategy for Bury developed with communities and partners. This will replace the current Vision, Purpose and Values 2015 – 2020.
- A continued strengthening of Bury's role as part of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Health and Social Care Partnership.
- A new approach to public service reform supported by the GM new model of public services and driven by new relationships between front line staff and with bury people and businesses.

4.4.2 The Council will be expected to have a further Corporate Peer Challenge in 4 or 5 years' time. It will be helpful as we develop our response to this review over the coming months, to keep asking the question; what do we expect the difference to look and feel like in 5 years' time?

4.4.3 In the meantime there will be a light touch follow up visit by the LGA within the next 2 years to assess progress. With this in mind one of the key areas of development will be a stronger performance framework to provide Members with short and medium term evidence of impact.

### **5. Conclusion**

5.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge report is key report for the Council, as it presents an independent external assessment of our capacity to deliver Members' priorities for Bury. It is important that Members' consider the findings of the review and shape our response.

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#### **List of Background Papers:-**

Corporate Peer Challenge Report  
(Appendix 1)

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