



REPORT TO:	Cabinet
DATE:	7 November 2023
SUBJECT:	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge report and action plan
PURPOSE:	To receive the findings of the SHDC LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and an associated action plan
KEY DECISION:	No
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Nick Worth, Leader of the Council
REPORT OF:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
REPORT AUTHOR:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	None

SUMMARY

In July 2023, South Holland District Council welcomed Peers from the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge.

This report brings forward the findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge (Appendix A) and the Council's action plan (Appendix B) in response.

The findings and action plan have been reviewed by a joint meeting of the Council's scrutiny committees – Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the findings from the LGA's Corporate Peer Challenge at Appendix A.
2. To approve the action plan at Appendix B.
3. To note the update regarding the recommendations from the Housing Peer Review (Appendix C)

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure that Cabinet is formally sighted on the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge findings and has an action plan in place to take forward the recommendations.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None

1. Report

- 1.1** In early 2023, South Holland District Council (SHDC) was approached by the Local Government Association (LGA) with a view to confirming timescales for the next Corporate Peer Challenge for the Council. Councils undergo a Peer Challenge from the LGA every few years to support their improvement and development.
- 1.2** The SHDC Corporate Peer Challenge took place between 18 July 2023 and 20 July 2023, with Peers on site at Priory Road each day.
- 1.3** The Peer Challenge process involved Peers – both Councillors and Officers – from other Councils visiting SHDC to meet with Partners, Councillors and Officers, to form a rounded view of the Council’s position on the following themes:
- Local priorities and outcomes
 - Organisational and place leadership
 - Governance and culture
 - Financial planning and management
 - Capacity for improvement
 - The Council’s approach to physical asset
 - Corporate Strategy and Cultural Change
- 1.4** In advance of the Challenge a detailed evidence base and position statement were submitted to the LGA to support the process. This provided pre-reading for the Peers to enable them to hit the ground running when on site.
- 1.5** The findings and recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge are attached at Appendix A.
- 1.6** The Council has produced an action plan to take forward the recommendations (Appendix B).
- 1.7** In developing the action plan, a joint meeting of the Council’s scrutiny committees took place. There were no proposed amendments to the action plan as a result of their discussion.
- 1.8** In 2022, South Holland District Council hosted a pilot Peer Challenge specifically focused on its Housing Revenue Account. The report and recommendations were subsequently published, and the report shared with Members. As the recent Corporate Peer Challenge has referred to the Housing Peer Challenge, the action plan and progress update in delivering the actions identified in the Housing Peer Challenge has been appended to this report (Appendix C) for information.

1.9 We would like to formally thank the LGA and their Peers for visiting the Council.

EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP

The Peer Challenge was specifically SHDC focused, however, learning from the Challenge will be used Partnership-wide.

IMPLICATIONS

SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

As set out in 'Expected Benefits to the Partnership'

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This impacts all corporate priorities.

STAFFING

Capacity, including staffing capacity, was considered by the Peers during the Challenge.

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

DATA PROTECTION

None

FINANCIAL

Financial position and capacity were considered by the Peers during the Challenge.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk Management was considered by the Peers during the Challenge.

STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES

The Peer Challenge process involved discussions with internal and external audiences to shape the findings.

REPUTATION

None

CONTRACTS

None

CRIME AND DISORDER

None

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion are matters identified within the Peer Review feedback.

HEALTH AND WELL BEING

None

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER

MISSIONS	
This paper contributes to the following Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.	
Living Standards	By 2030, pay, employment and productivity will have risen in every area of the UK, with each containing a globally competitive city, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Research and Development	By 2030, domestic public investment in Research & Development outside the Greater South East will increase by at least 40% and at least one third over the Spending Review period, with that additional government funding seeking to leverage at least twice as much private sector investment over the long term to stimulate innovation and productivity growth.
Transport Infrastructure	By 2030, local public transport connectivity across the country will be significantly closer to the standards of London, with improved services, simpler fares and integrated ticketing.
Digital Connectivity	By 2030, the UK will have nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with 5G coverage for the majority of the population.
Education	By 2030, the number of primary school children achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths will have significantly increased. In England, this will mean 90% of children will achieve the expected standard, and the percentage of children meeting the expected standard in the worst performing areas will have increased by over a third.
Skills	By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.
Health	By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.
Wellbeing	By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
Pride in Place	By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.
Housing	By 2030, renters will have a secure path to ownership with the number of first-time buyers increasing in all areas; and the government's ambition is for the number of non-decent rented homes to have fallen by 50%, with the biggest improvements in the lowest performing areas.
Crime	By 2030, homicide, serious violence, and neighbourhood crime will have fallen, focused on the worst-affected areas.
Local Leadership	By 2030, every part of England that wants one will have a devolution deal with powers at or approaching the highest level of devolution and a simplified, long-term funding settlement.

ACRONYMS

- SHDC – South Holland District Council
- LGA – Local Government Association

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A	Peer Challenge findings
APPENDIX B	Action Plan
APPENDIX C	2022 Housing Peer Challenge action plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development joint meeting on 11 October 2023.

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Signed off by:	James Gilbert, Assistant Director - Corporate
Approved for publication:	Councillor Nick Worth, Leader of the Council