

# **Local Government Association**

## **Corporate Peer Challenge**

### **Action Plan**

18 to 20 July, 2023

# LGA Peer Review themes

1. **Local priorities and outcomes:** Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities?
2. **Organisational and place leadership:** Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture:** Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management:** Does the council have a clear understanding of its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
5. **Capacity for improvement:** Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?
6. **The Council's approach to physical asset** and property management, considering this through the lens of how this helps drive financial sustainability, deliver SHDC's ambitions people and place, and aligns to any potential future changes.
7. **Corporate Strategy and Cultural Change**

# Key messages

- The **new Leader and Cabinet** have brought a fresh focus and approach, which are being understood and welcomed across the organisation
- SHDC **aspires to be ambitious**, and there are some examples of innovative practice
- Nevertheless, a strong focus on the Leader’s priority to “**get the basics right**” will be necessary to ensure there are strong foundations to build ambition
- **Strengthening** informal and formal **governance** and investing further in **transformation, data, intelligence, and community insight** will be important building blocks to achieve this
- Similarly, articulating a clear **savings, efficiencies, and income plan beyond 2023/24** and taking steps to ensure **PSPSL** operates as an **enabling service** for SHDC are important priorities
- The **financial operational and reporting arrangements** are a cause for concern and need to be addressed as a priority
- SHDC is seen as a positive place to work, with a **committed, talented workforce** who are proud to work here – there is a desire from staff for **clarity on the future direction of the Partnership**
- There is wide recognition of the **positive value the Partnership** has brought to SHDC – consider whether there is sufficient capacity and governance to deliver SHDC’s ambitions
- The emerging Partnership Strategy and new Cabinet present an opportune time to develop overarching **Place and Economic Strategies** articulating SHDC’s **narrative, ambition, and priorities** for its places and people

# Action Plan Monitoring arrangements

- Leadership Team (monthly governance meeting)
- Briefing to Leader of the Council each quarter
- Performance Monitoring Panel six monthly

Action Status	
Completed	
Not started	NS
On plan	
Off plan but mitigation in place to get back on plan	
Off plan and no mitigation	

# Action Plan

Recommendations	Position on recommendation / Action(s) to be taken	Evidence of action taken	Lead Officer	Timescale	Status
1. Review SHDC's constitution to consider greater delegations, and where appropriate, consistency and alignment with other SELCP authorities.	A review of the constitution Partnership-wide to be undertaken in line with the recommendation. This is a piece of work that will take some time to complete.	Paper taken to September 23 Partnership Stakeholder Board to outline opportunities the Partnership Councils may wish to consider. Several areas identified for further consideration.	Assistant Director - Governance	Ongoing	
	Consider whether the Governance and Audit Committee would benefit from increased Lay Member representation.		Assistant Director - Governance	January 2024	
2. Working with fellow SELCP authorities, develop and clearly communicate a service-wide Target Operating Model.	Our existing approach to service reviews provides choice and flexibility and an appraisal of options. Rather than adopting a Target Operating Model, which we believe have limitations, we will establish principles to underpin all service reviews being undertaken and communicate these principles.	<p><b>Principles approved by Leadership Team:</b></p> <p><b>Strength</b> - Reduce service risk and increase service resilience.</p> <p><b>Efficiency</b> - Reduced costs and/or increased income.</p> <p><b>Learning</b> - Build on best practice from within the sector – this means looking outside the Partnership as well as inside the Partnership.</p> <p><b>Community</b> - Improve performance/outcomes for service users.</p> <p><b>Partnership</b> - Seek to create service alignment across the South &amp; East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership through an identified operating mode – Section 113, Goods and Services Acts, or via an external contract.</p>	Assistant Director – Corporate	November 2023	
3. Develop a Transformation Strategy and Programme which is clearly communicated and understood throughout the organisation and align adequate strategic and operational resources to support.	<p>Transformation initiatives will feed from the Annual Delivery Plan and Service Review processes.</p> <p>For each project in the Annual Delivery Plan its potential to generate either income or savings will be identified. Service Reviews will identify the same as and when they take place (identified in ADP). Planned savings/income will feed into the MTFs (action 5 in this plan).</p> <p>Additional opportunities above and beyond those in the ADP will be identified via the Efficiency and Innovation Board.</p>	<p>24/25 Annual Delivery Plan is into development and the first draft will be ready for late October. This will include Service Reviews that are planned.</p> <p>A column has been added for savings/income.</p>	Assistant Director – Corporate	March 2024	

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4. Urgently address the financial planning and management performance of financial service arrangements and ensure PSPSL acts as an enabler of wider transformation for SHDC and SELCP.	<p>Concerns have been raised with PSPS by the s151 formally. PSPS has recruited more experienced resources to assist and have more recruitment underway with a focus on ensuring local government experience is added to the team.</p> <p>Regular meetings to take place between the s151 and the lead client officer for PSPS.</p>	<p>Letter to PSPS and response to be regularly monitored by the s151.</p> <p>Regular updates to be made on progress with resourcing within the service by the lead officer at PSPS for client services.</p>	Section 151 Officer / Chief Finance Officer	Ongoing	
5. Develop a robust plan for delivering the savings within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which is supported by a Savings Tracker with regular SLT and Cabinet oversight	<p>This will flow from Action 3 and be incorporated into regular finance reporting cycle.</p> <p>Budget process is being enhanced to ensure a full review of all budgets and opportunities takes place. Savings plan been developed via Efficiency and Innovation Board.</p> <p>SLT and Cabinet oversight via Portfolio Briefings and Quarterly financial outturns.</p>	<p>Initiatives schedule has been developed and is being extended.</p> <p>A high level reviews of budgets/services has taken place to provide content for discussion with members.</p> <p>Regular reports to SLT and Cabinet are planned.</p>	Section 151 Officer	Ongoing	

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6. Develop a standalone action plan to address the recommendations of SHDC's 2022 Social Housing Management Peer Challenge, including urgently addressing SHDC's social landlord housing compliance data and assurance approach, and reporting arrangements.	a) Develop a standalone action tracker for Housing Peer Review	Action tracker now in place.	Assistant Director - Housing	August 2023	COMPLETE
	b) Establish comprehensive monthly compliance reporting and assurance, with SLT and Scrutiny considering these reports on a regular basis. <i>As an example, this governance may include a Housing Board.</i>	Reporting in place.	Assistant Director - Housing	October 2023	
	c) Develop a Housing Strategy in partnership with stakeholders and residents	HRA to be included as a chapter in the overall Housing Strategy.	Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership	Q3 24/25	
	d) Keep under review the new 2023/24 housing KPIs to ensure they reflect all aspects of service delivery to tenants and leaseholders and the risks associated with managing an HRA	Internal review to be undertaken with the Transformation and Innovation Team.	Assistant Director - Housing	Ongoing	
	e) Undertake a data assurance exercise on compliance measures	External assurance report to be commissioned to ensure data is robust and reliable.	Assistant Director - Housing	March 2024	

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7. Undertake a review of the Waste Strategy.	The council is signed up to the countywide Lincolnshire Waste Strategy. SHDC is reviewing service delivery to ensure it aligns with the Lincolnshire Waste Strategy. The options presented will identify how SHDC can improve service delivery to meet both the LWS action plan outcomes and the emerging requirements of the EA 2021. Any changes to service delivery will include learning from the services in place at BBC and ELDC and realise the opportunities in doing so.		Assistant Director - Neighbourhoods	TBC	
8. Strengthen how the voice of residents and communities systematically inform future service delivery and unlock the potential of voluntary community sector.	Adopt a Public Engagement Charter		Assistant Director - Corporate	Q1 2024/25	
	Develop a Voluntary and Community Strategy that strengthens the strategic relationship between the local voluntary and community sector and council.		Assistant Director – Wellbeing and Community Leadership	Q2 2024/25	
	Ensure that during policy, service and strategy development, consultation is considered at an early stage.	This will be underpinned by the Public Engagement Charter.	CMT/ Service Managers	Ongoing	
	Launch Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Training for Members and Officers.		Assistant Director - Corporate	February 2024	
	Adopt an updated Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and communicate the policy organisation-wide	Document being drafted by HR for adoption Partnership-wide.	Assistant Director – Corporate	February 2024	



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9. Develop and communicate a clear place narrative and vision for South Holland, aligned to an economic strategy and inward investment plan	Develop and deliver a Place Strategy for the Partnership sub-region and communicate the vision to stakeholders and communities.	Can feed from Destination Management Plan work ongoing in wider-Lincolnshire	Assistant Director – Economic Growth	Q4 23/24	
	Develop and deliver an Economic Strategy and Inward Investment Plan for the sub-region	Will align to sub-regional strategy that is being developed.	Assistant Director – Strategic Growth and Development	Q4 23/24	