

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.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Budget process aligned some financial limits across the Partnership. Several areas identified for further consideration. In the process of commissioning legal support for the detailed work on the constitutions. Next stage of alignment due to be considered at July 2024 Council. 	Assistant Director - Governance	May 2024	
	Consider whether the Governance and Audit Committee would benefit from increased Lay Member representation.	Agreed by Council. Went to G and A on 14 March to proceed recruitment.	Assistant Director - Governance	January 2024	COMPLETED
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>Principles approved by Leadership Team:</p> <p>Strength - Reduce service risk and increase service resilience.</p> <p>Efficiency - Reduced costs and/or increased income.</p> <p>Learning - Build on best practice from within the sector – this means looking outside the Partnership as well as inside the Partnership.</p> <p>Community - Improve performance/outcomes for service users.</p> <p>Partnership - Seek to create service alignment across the South & 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	COMPLETED
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>Service Reviews will identify the savings/efficiency/customer impact 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 has been approved by Council. The timescales within the Plan are set based on known resourcing within services and those setting the timescales for each strand of work consider them achievable.</p> <p>The Plan has been widely shared internally and with partners.</p>	Assistant Director – Corporate	March 2024	COMPLETED

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<p>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>	<p>PSPS has recruited more experienced resource, which has strengthened their finance team and is resulting in improved financial management / performance. There is still work to do but positive direction of travel.</p> <p>Regular meetings take place between the s151 and the lead client officer for PSPS.</p>	<p>Head of Financial Services in place, along with 3 Senior Finance Managers (including one for SHDC).</p> <p>Monthly meetings with CFO (PSPS) and S151 to monitor progress.</p> <p>Roll out of 1/4ly financial management documentation moving towards completion. All Q3 reports prepared in line with reporting timelines.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer / Chief Finance Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>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>	<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>Phase 1 savings - locked into budget for 24/25.</p> <p>Phase 2 savings - identified and being monitored monthly in conjunction with the Leader and Finance PFH. To be reported monthly to Leadership Team.</p> <p>Organisational capacity session has been arranged with all senior officers to consider how we ensure we have the capacity needed to deliver our work programme.</p> <p>Monthly Transformation Board meetings taking place to support transformation initiatives.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	

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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. Scrutiny will receive information on how the Council is performing as a landlord.	Assistant Director - Housing	September 2023	COMPLETE
	c) Develop a Housing Strategy in partnership with stakeholders and residents	Approved.	Assistant Director - Housing	Q3 24/25	COMPLETE
	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	1. KPIs and reporting mechanisms to SLT and Members established including Housing Compliance Clinic with Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing and Deputy Chief Exec (Corporate Development). 2. Risk Register and reporting mechanisms to SLT and Members established including Housing Governance Clinic with Portfolio Holder for Communities and Operational Housing and Deputy Chief Exec (Corporate Development).	Assistant Director - Housing	Ongoing	COMPLETE
	e) Undertake a data assurance exercise on compliance measures	Internal Audit completed September 2023. HRA Transformation Board to determine whether additional audit is required.	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.	Support has been engaged and kick off meeting has taken place. Very large piece of work that looks at service delivery models.	Assistant Director - Neighbourhoods	Q1 25/26	
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	This will be Partnership-wide. Timeline mapped. Going to next round of scrutiny committees before Cabinets.	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.	Work has commenced.	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.	Will launch in April with a period of completion for officers and members.	Assistant Director - Corporate	February 2024	
	Adopt an updated Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and communicate the policy organisation-wide	Approved by Council on 29 th February.	Assistant Director – Corporate	February 2024	C

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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.	Destination Management Plan commissioned. Research is underway and is externally funded. Adoption will now be Q2 24/25.	Assistant Director – Economic Growth	Q4 23/24	
	Develop and deliver an Economic Strategy and Inward Investment Plan for the sub-region	Due to the committee timetable this will be considered in Q1 24/25 by Cabinet. The slippage is due to the scheduling of member engagement sessions.	Assistant Director – Strategic Growth and Development	Q4 23/24	