

Corporate Policy & Resources



20 April 2022

Title	LGA Corporate Peer Challenge
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	Daniel Mouawad Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	N/A
Corporate Priority	Community Affordable Housing Recovery Environment Service delivery
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Agree to a Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge being undertaken in September/October (indicative timing dependant on Peer availability).
Reason for Recommendation	The Council's last full Corporate Peer Challenge was undertaken in 2014 with a more focused Finance Peer Review undertaken remotely in 2020. It is therefore considered that the time is right for a new Corporate Peer Challenge to take place.

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 This report seeks to obtain authority for a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) to take place in the autumn.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 It is an expectation of the LGA that a Council will receive a CPC at least every five years. The Council undertook its last CPC in January 2014 and in the intervening time has invited the LGA to conduct a Finance Peer Review in late 2020. This was undertaken remotely due to the pandemic. The Council has undergone many changes in the past few years, with a change in political

control, the move to a Committee System, and the launch of new Corporate Priorities earlier this year. It is therefore considered that the time is right for a new CPC to take place.

- 2.2 In the words of the LGA “Peer challenges are an established tool that supports councils to drive improvements and efficiency.” A CPC brings together political and managerial leadership, using both officer and member peers.
- 2.3 A CPC provides a robust, strategic and credible challenge and support to the Council. Each CPC covers five core elements being:
 - (a) Local priorities and outcomes
 - (b) Organisational and place leadership
 - (c) Governance and culture
 - (d) Financial planning and management
 - (e) Capacity for improvement
- 2.4 The CPC can also cover any local needs or specific challenges.
- 2.5 It is important to stress that a CPC is not an inspection, rather Peer Challenges are improvement-focused and tailored to meet the Council’s needs. They are designed to complement and add value to the Council’s own performance and improvement focus.
- 3. Options analysis and proposal**
 - 3.1 It is recommended that the LGA undertakes a CPC in September/October (exact timing will depend on the availability of Peers). If the CPC process was commenced now the review is likely to take place during the summer holiday period which would hinder access to key Councillors and Officers. Commencing in the autumn also allows the Corporate Priorities to embed.
 - 3.2 The Council could take the decision not to request a CPC, but this would be against the LGA expectation of periodic challenges taking place.
- 4. Financial implications**
 - 4.1 There are no additional costs for the LGA to undertake a CPC as the Council pays an annual £10,000 LGA subscription.
- 5. Equality and Diversity**
 - 5.1 There are no direct equality or diversity impacts.
- 6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**
 - 6.1 There are no direct equality or diversity impacts.
- 7. Timetable for implementation**
 - 7.1 If the Committee approve the recommendation, the LGA will be approached to provide available dates and times during the requested time period.
- 8. Contact**
 - 8.1 Daniel Mouawad, Chief Executive dcm.cex@spelthorne.gov.uk

Background papers: There are none.