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| Item No. 7. | Classification: Open | Date: 5 February 2024 | Decision Maker: Audit, Governance and Standards Committee |
| Report title: | | Southwark Council Corporate Peer Challenge | |
| Ward(s) or groups affected: | | All | |
| From: | | Althea Loderick Chief Executive | |

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the committee note:
 - The Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Report
 - Council action plan agreed by Cabinet on 17/01/24

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. In October 2023, Southwark Council welcomed a team from the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers.
3. Southwark's Peer Challenge Team was led by Tom Riordan CBE, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council and Cllr Bev Craig, Leader, Manchester City Council.
4. All councils are given the opportunity to have one of these reviews every 4 – 5 years as part of a local government approach to sector led improvement and mutual support.
5. The LGA team spent three days on site, and prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing.
6. During their time on site, they gathered information and views from more than 35 meetings, in addition to further research and reading. The CPC team spoke with more than 100 people, including a range of council staff, members and external stakeholders.
7. Some team members were given a tour of Peckham Rye station and parts of the wider Peckham area, including Peckham Library and key community assets

8. The report attached at Appendix 1 provides a summary of the peer team's findings, including the eleven recommendations.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

9. There is an expectation that all councils undertaking a Corporate Peer Challenge will commit to publishing the feedback report and produce an action plan which responds to the recommendations in the report.
10. The recommendations are important in supporting the council's commitment to continuous improvement and transparency.
11. The action plan at appendix 2 sets out what the council will be doing to respond to the recommendations, including specific actions, the timeframe for delivery and which senior officer will be responsible for delivering them.
12. The recommendations reference the ongoing priority of housing repairs and the HRA. The report notes the progress being made in these areas, and provides a recommendation that this focus and work continue at pace.
13. Amongst the early actions that the council will take is the establishment of a programme to improve services and support to members, including improved processes for members' enquiries and a member's support team.
14. In response to the recommendations, we will also develop a new internal change programme called Future Southwark. This will ensure that staff are supported to ensure that they have the skills, tools and processes to do the best job possible for our residents.
15. The CPC team will return in the summer to discuss progress.

Policy framework implications

16. The CPC report responds to the themes in the Council Delivery Plan, the upcoming 2030 Strategy, and the council's approach to organisational development. The report and action plan require no changes or alterations to the Policy Framework.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

17. The CPC process focuses on the council's ability to serve and work with its residents. The recommendations will be utilised to support the council to deliver more efficient, resilient and resident focused services.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

18. The CPC Report reflects the council's current practices for tackling inequalities and Southwark Stands Together and makes recommendations for improved practice. The feedback from the report will be used to improve practice and reporting.

Health impact statement

19. There are no direct health implications from this report.

Climate change implications

20. There are no direct climate change implications from this report.

Resource implications

21. The response to the CPC recommendations will be carried out within existing resources.

Legal implications

22. There are no Legal comments.

Consultation

23. The LGA produced the CPC report as a result of multiple conversations with residents, staff, members and stakeholders.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Head of Procurement

24. There are no procurement implications or decisions resulting from this report.

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

25. The Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance has been consulted in the drafting this report.

Strategic Director of Finance

26. The Strategic Director of Finance has been consulted in the drafting this report.

Other officers

27. Members of the Council's Corporate Management Team have been involved in the creation of the action plan.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

| Background Papers | Held At | Contact |
|---|------------------------------|---------|
| Title of document(s) LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Process | Local Government Association | |
| https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/council-assurance-and-peer-support/peer-challenges-we-offer/corporate-peer-challenge-4 | | |

APPENDICES

| No. | Title |
|------------|---|
| Appendix 1 | LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report |
| Appendix 2 | Southwark Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan |
| Appendix 3 | Southwark Council Corporate Peer Challenge Position Statement |

AUDIT TRAIL

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|---|---|--------------------------|
| Cabinet Member | Cllr Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council | |
| Lead Officer | Althea Loderick, Chief Executive | |
| Report Author | | |
| Version | Final | |
| Dated | 03/01/24 | |
| Key Decision? | No | |
| CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER | | |
| Officer Title | Comments Sought | Comments Included |
| Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance | Yes | Yes |
| Strategic Director of Finance | Yes | Yes |
| Cabinet Member | Yes | Yes |
| Date final report sent to Constitutional Team | 25/01/24 | |