

Audit & Governance Committee

22 June 2022

LGA Finance Peer Challenge update

For Review and Consultation

Portfolio Holder: Cllr G Suttle, Finance, Commercial & Capital Strategy

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: A Dunn, Executive Director, Corporate Development

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

That the Committee receives and reviews the letter from the LGA finance peer challenge team that revisited Dorset Council to consider the work done to implement the action plan following the original finance peer challenge visit. The letter will also be going to the Cabinet on 21 June 2022.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure that the council has acted upon the peer team's recommendations.

1. Executive Summary

Dorset Council is committed to continuous learning and improvement. During the Spring of 2021, the council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a peer review of the council's financial arrangements and in particular, the approach to managing the high needs block element of the dedicated schools grant (DSG).

The LGA peer challenge team spent three days speaking to Councillors, officers and partners. Before that, the team reviewed a range of documents, including a financial position statement the council had provided. At the end of the site visit, the team provided a presentation setting out their findings and a full [report](#) was submitted to Cabinet on 5 October 2022.

The report was accompanied by a set of key recommendations alongside responses from the Council; effectively forming an action plan. Council officers have taken this action plan forward and the work done since the initial visit was carried out has been considered again by the peer team and is the subject of the letter attached at Appendix 1.

2. Financial Implications

The report endorsed the progress made in establishing the Council and made a series of recommendations to further develop the council's financial arrangements. An update on the action plan is covered in the attached letter from the LGA peer team.

3. Well-being and Health Implications

No wellbeing and health implications have been identified.

4. Climate implications

No direct implications from this report.

5. Other Implications

None.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: low

Residual Risk: low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dorset Council finance peer update letter

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.