

Cabinet

28 February 2023

LGA Peer Progress Review – September 2022

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Flower, Leader of the Council

Local Councillor(s): All

Executive Director: M Prosser, Chief Executive

Report Author: Matt Prosser, Chief Executive
Email: chiefexecutive@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Report Status: Public

Brief Summary:

In September 2022 Dorset Council invited back an Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Team, made up of peers who had taken part in the Council's previous peer challenges. Prior to the Review, the Peer Team spoke with key senior officers to gather information, before meeting on site for one day with a selection of focus groups and a roundtable feedback session.

Recommendation:

That Cabinet welcomes the report from the LGA team and approves the action plan which has been prepared in response to the findings set out in the LGA Peer Progress Review report.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure the Council acts on the LGA Peer Team's recommendations.

1. Executive Summary

In September 2022 Dorset Council invited back an LGA Peer Team, made up of peers who had taken part in the previous challenges (particularly the Corporate, Finance and Planning Peer Reviews) to provide an overview of progress and challenge by peers who had been involved in Dorset Council's improvement journey since its formation in 2019. The Peer team spoke with

councillors, officers and partners who had been involved in the previous peer reviews or who work in or directly with the directorates and services involved.

- 1.1 Appendix 1 contains the Team's written report from the 29 September Progress Review setting out key topics, themes and peer reflections.
- 1.2 Appendix 2 contains a summary of the findings and a proposed action plan setting out how the Council intends to respond to these findings.

2. Financial Implications

No direct financial implications from this report.

3. Environmental Implications

No direct environmental implications from this report.

4. Well-being and Health Implications

None.

Other Implications

None.

Risk Assessment

- 6.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

Equalities Impact Assessment

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dorset Council Progress Review from LGA Peer Team

Appendix 2 – Dorset Council Overview of Peer Review and Action Plan

Background Papers

None.

10. Corporate Peer Challenge – Background

- 10.1 Peer challenge is a proven tool for improvement that the Local Government Association (LGA) provides. It involves a team of local government officers and councillors spending time at the council as peers to provide challenge and share learning. The process involves engaging with a wide range of people connected with the Council.
- 10.2 In the months before the Review the peer challenge team spoke with key senior officers from Dorset Council utilising the previous reviews and action plans, offering the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon the improvements that had been made, and these were then tested out on site in Dorset on 29 September 2022 to review progress with a range of councillors, employees, partners and stakeholders.
- 10.3 The team was made up of officers and councillors who had previously been involved in the Corporate, Finance and Planning reviews since Dorset Council was created in 2019.
- 10.4 The peers involved in the progress review were:
- Gavin Jones, Chief Executive, Essex County Council
 - Cllr Rachel Bailey, Former Leader, Cheshire East Council
 - Brian Glasson, Service Director (Planning), South Gloucestershire Council
 - Paul Clarke, Principal Advisor, Local Government Association
 - Kathryn Trant, Advisor, Local Government Association
 - Mark Wynn, Head of Finance, Cheshire West and Chester Council (provided input prior to the one day review)

11. LGA Peer Progress Review – Report and Action Plan

- 11.1 Appendix 1 contains the final report from the Peer Review Team. The report is a good reflection on progress made by the Council, and it contains a set of helpful recommendations.
- 11.2 Appendix 2 contains a summary of the findings and a proposed action plan setting out how the Council intends to respond to these findings.
- 11.3 Once Cabinet has agreed the action plan, officers will share both the findings report and the plan with colleagues and stakeholders who took part in the Peer Progress Review.
- 11.4 Progress in delivering the actions will be monitored and reported with our corporate performance and the relevant scrutiny committee be asked to review progress as appropriate.