

Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council – Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

Key Recommendations

Recommendation	Response / Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pause and reflect on the shared service journey to date – celebrate your success – use the 10 year anniversary as a moment to do this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a Management Team we recognise that we don’t take enough time to celebrate our successes very often and we need to be more proactive of this generally. We will address this moving forward by developing and keeping under review a communications plan to ensure we address this (internally and externally as appropriate). The next set of staff briefings and staff forum will be used as an opportunity to reflect on the journey to date and to celebrate how far we have come. 	Kevin Dicks / Communications Team Kevin Dicks	September 2018 and ongoing September 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prioritise the work on tightening financial processes so that they provide the most up to date profiling, model the best in the sector and support strong decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The external auditors have recognised significant improvements (in both Councils) as part of their review of the Statement of Accounts. Much remains to be done and this will be mostly addressed through the implementation of the new Enterprise System – the business case for which has been approved by both Councils. Specification has been drawn up to ensure that all feedback from both 	Jayne Pickering	October 2019

Appendix 2

	<p>internal customers and auditors has been taken into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure that the improvements in our financial processes will be based on our systems thinking approach. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend more time together – introduce more joint informal meetings at political level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working does exist across the County through the Worcestershire Leaders although it is accepted more needs to be made of this given the ongoing financial challenges faced by all councils. • 6 weekly meetings are in place for the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both Councils to meet with the Chief Executive. • Regular informal meetings of the Executive / Cabinet to be introduced from November. 	<p>Leaders / Kevin Dicks</p> <p>Leaders / Kevin Dicks</p> <p>Leaders</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2018</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create space to have conversations about the future with your valued partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will predominantly be undertaken with the Leaders of the other Worcestershire Local Authorities at the Worcestershire Leaders Board and through Partnership Executive Group. • Discussions to be held with Clinical Commissioning Group through the Alliance Board as to further transformation work with a focus on prevention. 	<p>Leaders</p> <p>Kevin Dicks</p>	<p>November 2018</p> <p>November 2018</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redefine the shared future journey and ambition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Council will be reviewing their 	<p>Leaders</p>	<p>November</p>

Appendix 2

	<p>strategic purposes as part of their annual refresh of the council plan. This will help clarify the direction of travel for each council which will then lead to review of shared future journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will lead on to portfolio holder joint discussions (across both councils) under strategic purposes • Agreed by the Leaders (notwithstanding the above) that we should look to expand the shared services arrangements and expand them to take in other partners and using this as a basis for further transformation of services and ability to look at things more commercially. 	<p>Portfolio Holders</p> <p>CMT</p>	<p>2018</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define a new shared culture from the bottom up – with input from officers and members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work has been going on since the last but one staff survey around the culture of the organisation seeking input from all staff as to what the culture of the council(s) need to be going forward. Whilst there have been improvements in the last staff survey there is still more to do and an action plan will be developed to move this forward. 	Sue Hanley	November 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share this emerging culture with partners and collectively shape the future community leadership role for the councils and partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our priority has to be internally to staff / members. We will focus on our principles and share / discuss them 	Sue Hanley	December 2018

Appendix 2

	<p>with partners as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions will be held at Worcestershire Leaders Board around community leadership role. 	Leaders	December 2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a single workforce and reduce duplication and time spent navigating two structures and systems of governance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Corporate Management Team does not feel there is a significant benefit to moving to a single organisation at this point in time for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is ongoing around the harmonisation of policies and procedures which will address some of the issues that gave rise to this recommendation. This will include delegations (particularly in Redditch) around the HR delegations. Work is ongoing around the harmonisation of the Job Evaluation schemes and the potential costs associated with this – dependent on this consideration will be given to the pros and cons of moving to a single employer. The culture work is ongoing (covered above). 	<p>Deb Poole</p> <p>Deb Poole</p>	<p>September 2018 and ongoing</p> <p>January 2019</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having established the above use this re-energised culture to enable officers and members to design services to meet and pre-empt customer needs within your financial envelope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure departments adopt a systems thinking approach to designing and improving delivery of services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link the use of a systemic 	Deb Poole / CMT	January 2019

	<p>approach to commercial plans where appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support staff to enable them to know how to redesign services to meet customers needs ○ Customer strategy – statement of intent 	Amanda Singleton	December 2018
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Further Recommendations

Recommendation	Response / Action	Lead Officer	Timescale
1. Be clear about how you identify when something is no longer a corporate priority – and what it means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be addressed as part of corporate and budget planning for 2018/19 – this will cover both budget and also key projects / initiatives 	Leader / Kevin Dicks	February 2019
2. When change is introduced guarantee that it is introduced with greater pace and rigour – with clear lines of accountability at the officer and political level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business case proforma, using the five case model, is used for all business cases • All major initiatives will be subject to a business case with clear lines of accountability assigned (at officer and political level). • Regular monitoring of these will be included as part of performance reports (adopting a risk based approach) to ensure they are delivered with greater pace and rigour. Heads of Service will ensure initiatives are monitored using the Councils adopted approach to project governance 	CMT	In place
		Cabinet / CMT	September 2018
		Cabinet / CMT	December 2018

Appendix 2

<p>3. Invest more time in considering what role all levels of the organisation contribute towards corporate aims – transformation is everyone’s role. Ensure that transformation is adequately resourced with clear programme and project governance, and appropriate skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that systems thinking approach is embraced / adopted in everything that we do • Culture programme to focus on identified priorities supported by leadership and team development and support • Transformation programme to be refocused and widely shared and understood and embraced throughout the organisation • Clarify direction of travel for the organisations and the way we operate • Project governance approach to be implemented and used across the Council 	<p>Deb Poole</p> <p>Sue Hanley/ CMT</p> <p>Kevin Dicks/ Deb Poole</p> <p>Kevin Dicks/ CMT Deb Poole</p>	<p>December 2018</p> <p>March 2019</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018 November 2018</p>
<p>4. Management approaches need more consistency to support the development of a single corporate culture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is being undertaken with regard to the review of the HR policies and procedures. Training and guidance documentation relating to the revised policies will be made available to all managers 	<p>Deb Poole</p>	<p>November 2018</p>
<p>5. Establish greater consistency in the foundations of shared services – ICT, HR, Finance should all be enablers of change</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling services have all been an integral part of the project groups in relation to Leisure Company establishment, HRA business case and development of an Housing Company • Workshops to be held with customer groups (e.g. managers forum) to understand what is required to enable 	<p>Deb Poole / Jayne Pickering</p>	<p>November 2018</p>

Appendix 2

	<p>a fundamental change in the approach and culture of enabling services to ensure they proactively support change based on systems thinking principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how services can ensure the enablers can provide them with the support and advice they need 		
6. Re-examine your existing commitments and have an honest conversation about whether they are sustainable, relevant or appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All partnership activity to be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate, relevant and sustainable following review of our clarified strategic priorities 	CMT	December 2018
7. Evaluate the opportunities for maximising your influence – and focus your energy and leadership on where you can be most effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of 6 above review where the focus will be and where there is capacity 	Leaders	January 2019
8. Take action at Bromsgrove District Council to raise the conduct of political debate so that it is constructive and does not undermine the council's reputation, as well as the local government sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility of all Councillors to support and act in accordance with codes of practice and community leadership principles. If this doesn't happen Group Leaders to challenge and resolve. 	Group Leaders	November 2018
9. Review processes for supporting members at council meetings, and where necessary, implement change to ensure members are well supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental review of the Constitution at Redditch to ensure decisions taken at the most appropriate level • Further development of Cabinet / Exec members to ensure they are fully 	<p>Leader / Claire Felton</p> <p>Leader</p>	<p>September 2018</p> <p>November 2018</p>

Appendix 2

	<p>briefed on their portfolios / reports on the agenda (ownership)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconsider the position in BDC to allow officers to speak to clarify points of detail in order to make informed / speedier decisions 	Group Leaders	December 2018
10. Ensure that boundaries between officers and members are publicly clarified and that their implementation is regularly reviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point 9 refers • Undertaken as part of the review of the Constitution 	Leader / Claire Felton	September 2018
11. Review Council Procedures to ensure that they can support constructive debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Point 9 refers • Undertaken as part of the review of the Constitution 	Leader / Claire Felton	September 2018
12. Ensure that report proofing procedures are 'watertight' and errors are not published	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report writing training to be provided to all managers. • Portfolio Holders and HoS to ensure reports are discussed and signed off at regular briefing sessions to ensure greater ownership 	Claire Felton	December 2018
		Portfolio Holders / CMT	September 2018
13. Establish clearer lines of accountability for the leadership and delivery of major programmes and projects – that is appropriately dispersed throughout the organisation to mitigate potential risk in investing too much in one role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be clearly identified within business cases • Project management and monitoring will be undertaken as part of performance report on a risk based approach • Responsibility will be dispersed around portfolio holders and CMT 	Deb Poole / CMT	December 2018

Appendix 2

<p>14. Financial accountability needs greater ownership across the organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions to be held at Managers Forum • Enterprise system implementation will include a full training package for staff • Finance Officers attending DMT meetings to support the change in approach and culture and to clarify the understanding of where the accountability sits • Clear message to be passed on to managers as to responsibility for budgets • Managers to understand potential consequences if accountability not taken 	<p>Jayne Pickering / HOS</p>	<p>November 2018</p>
<p>15. Budget planning needs to be more focused on future financial sustainability and not simply meeting service needs and short term demands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 year budget planning to include more scenario and forecasting of potential impact of change • Aim to remove unidentified savings to ensure all funding is identified within the 4 year plan • Assess savings achievement based on risk assessment • Reporting to be presented against MTFP 	<p>Jayne Pickering / HOS</p>	<p>November 2018</p>
<p>16. Be clearer about how you track progress and manage risk – on delivering savings and key projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings to be shown against a risk assessment of delivery • Highlight key projects and risks associated to CMT 	<p>Jayne Pickering</p>	<p>November 2018</p>

Appendix 2

<p>17. Establish a transparent, regularised and proportionate system of reviewing and amending recharges between the two councils – rather than leaving it to specific service areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental review of basis for sharing costs of overheads / charges • Cost recovery to be reviewed to ensure overheads do not include any direct costs to teams 	<p>Jayne Pickering</p>	<p>February 2019</p>
<p>18. Expedite the business case and implementation of a new finance system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business case for the Enterprise System has been approved by both Councils. Implementation by October 2019. • Tender out to suppliers 	<p>Jayne Pickering</p>	<p>October 2019</p>
<p>19. Consider how to meet customer need and expectation within your financial options using the systems thinking approach. This will help you identify what matters to the customer and design efficient processes to meet this need, removing service boundaries where required.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refocus the transformation programme and commercialisation programme • Development of a Customer and Digital Strategy as part of the ongoing transformation programme. Publish “statement of intent” – enable people to do business on line in order to release resources to focus on understanding and delivering against customer need (in line with our principles) 	<p>Deb Poole</p> <p>Amanda Singleton /Deb Poole</p>	<p>September 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p>
<p>20. Consider how to re-align your customer strategy to most effectively meet customer need within your identified priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 19 above 	<p>As 19 above</p>	<p>As 19 above</p>
<p>21. Consider the impact that digital transformation of services can have, releasing capacity whilst improving the customer experience – develop and implement a single digital strategy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 19 above 	<p>As 19 above</p>	<p>As 19 above</p>

<p>22. Develop a clear plan to assess what high volume low complexity transactions can be directed towards more cost effective channels. There is no tension between this and a systems thinking approach - many customers expect and are happy to access council services by means other than face- to-face- as indeed they do for services from other public and private organisations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 19 above 	<p>As 19 above</p>	<p>As 19 above</p>