

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 6 September 2023

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Follow up report on adopted Council Motion - Actions to provide a strong, united and informed managerial and political leadership.

Report summary:

Council agreed at its meeting on 19th July a Motion on actions to provide a strong, united and informed managerial and political leadership.

This comprised 5 key actions summarised as:

- A skills and knowledge audit of members in order to provide necessary support where required.
- Bring together Cabinet and Senior Management Team to become a unified team working together to meet challenges faced by the Council.
- Request the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge.
- Ask the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to conduct a review of the Council's scrutiny process.
- For South West Employers to undertake a training and support review of the Senior Management Team and how it functions as a coherent team.

The Motion also requested that the Council's S151 officer in conjunction the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets present a report outlining the costs to Council of these actions and to ascertain any risks associated with them.

This report addresses this last requirement and also outlines a timeline and plan for the other actions agreed.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

1. That Cabinet ask Council to agree a budget of £25k to be met from the Transformation Reserve to meet actions already adopted by Council.
2. That Cabinet note and agree the timeline for delivery of identified actions from the Council's adopted motion.

Reason for recommendation:

To meet the adopted Motion of Council as outlined in the report.

Portfolio Holder & Officer: Paul Hayward, Finance and Asset Portfolio Holder & Simon Davey, Director of Finance

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; The actions adopted by Council are to ensure the Council is working in the most effective way for its residents. Any review is likely to identify weaknesses and recommendations for improvements, this needs to be acknowledged and the findings used in a positive way. This is essential for a healthy organisation, to do otherwise could be a risk reputation and risk continuous improvements for the Council.

Links to background information Council Report with adopted motion: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Council, 19/07/2023 18:00 \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

1. Motion to Council.

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 19th July 2023 Council agreed to a Motion to provide a strong, united and informed managerial and political leadership with key actions adopted. The Motion can be found in full here [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Council, 19/07/2023 18:00 \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#).

1.2 In summary those actions were to:

- Carry out a skills and knowledge audit of members in order to provide necessary support where required.
- Bring together Cabinet and Senior Management Team to become a unified team working together to meet challenges faced by the Council.
- Request the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge.
- Ask the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to conduct a review of the Council's scrutiny process.
- For South West Employers to undertake a training and support review of the Senior Management Team and how it functions as a coherent team.

1.3 The final part of the Motion was that the Council's S151 officer in conjunction the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets present a report outlining the costs to Council of these actions and to ascertain any risks associated with them. This report addresses this aspect and also outlines a roadmap of the actions contained in the Motion.

2. Estimated costs, assigned Leads and suggested timelines.

2.1 Discussions have been held with the Leader, relevant Portfolio Holders, external bodies, the Director for Finance and the Director for Governance & Licensing to understand the costs and suggested timeline of actions. This has been summarised below along with a suggested member and officer lead.

Action	Member Lead	Officer Lead	Budget needed	Timescale	Comments/ Further reports required
1. Skills & Knowledge Audit of Members	Portfolio Holder Communications & Democracy	Director for Governance & Licensing	Initially Internal resources	Audit completed by Nov 23 Report to Cabinet Feb 24 on training proposals	Once training requirements are reviewed then a report will be prepared on how best to deliver, over what timescale and costs involved. This will come as a separate decision to Council.
2. Bring together Cabinet and Senior Management Team to become a unified team working together to meet challenges faced by the Council.	Leader	Chief Executive (covered by Director for Finance during Chief Executive's period of leave)	LGA supported with funding available for external facilitation.	1 st session to be arranged by end of Sept 23	Working with LGA to find suitable support.

3. Request the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC).	Portfolio Holder Council & Corporate Co-ordination	Chief Executive (covered by Director of Finance during Chief Executive's period of leave).	LGA Funded	On site by end of Feb 24	Support provided by Principal Advisor for the South West LGA. 3 to 4 months lead in time. Sessions for familiarisation and buy in, preparatory work and CPC team assembly.
4. Ask the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny to conduct a review of the Council's scrutiny process	Portfolio Holder Communications & Democracy	Director for Governance & Licensing	Part funding likely to be available from LGA. At this stage assume EDDC budget £5k	TBD in consultation with PH	It has been suggested that review can take place independently from the CPC but the implications on internal capacity will need to be considered
5. For South West Employers to undertake a training and support review of the Senior Management Team and how it functions as a coherent team.	Portfolio Holder Council & Corporate Co-ordination	Corporate HR Manager.	It is estimated a budget should be set aside of £10k	Report to Cabinet Feb 24 on review outcomes and to report any further budgetary implications such as training proposals	Any implications requiring Council decisions such as training proposals will come as a separate decision to Council. Links with the wider leadership and management development review work set out in the 2023/24 HR Service Plan, which is likely to continue into 2024/25.

2.2 The work involved in the above is significant and will cross over the work planned in delivering a new Council Plan. It is envisaged that an early draft of the Council Plan can be prepared to be available for CPC team to review and can be influenced with any key findings from their review before final adoption of the Plan by Council.

2.3 The adoption of the 2024 to 2028 Council Plan is likely to be outside the window available to significantly affect the 2024/25 budget which needs to be prepared in draft to meet committee deadlines by mid December 2023. Resources can be reallocated in year if deemed necessary to reflect the new Council Plan but any significant shift in resources required by the Plan is likely to be from 2025/26. This will need to be reflected in any Outcome Target dates contained within the Plan. This position is not unusual and it does take a period to shift a Council's direction if major but in reality the majority of objectives are achieved through existing staff and resources and it is where they are focused.

- 2.4 In summary from the above table an initial budget requirement for EDDC has been identified of £15k, it is proposed that a contingency of £10k is added to allow Lead Portfolio Holders and Officers the ability to employ temporary resources to help deliver an ambitious timetable alongside the delivery of the Council Plan and the day job. To prepare for Corporate Peer Challenge alone requires significant time in document preparation, statements to be produced and time for interviews and liaison with the Peer Team. It is proposed the spending of the overall budget of £25k is delegated to the Director for Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Assets. It is proposed that the budget is funded from the Council's Transformation Reserve.
- 2.5 As can be seen in the table above there is a significant contribution from the LGA in the form of direct funding to assist Cabinet and Senior Officers to work effectively as a Team, a contribution to support the associated costs with the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the substantial resource of providing a Peer Review Team. This support and guidance has come from the Principal Advisor for the South West LGA (Paul Clarke) and his involvement has been appreciated.

3. Associated Risks

- 3.1 The Motion also asked for any associated risks both financially and reputationally to be considered.

Financial Risk

The direct costs associated with the Motion have been identified and estimated. The Council has a Reserve set aside to fund Transformation one off costs and the direct costs identified can be accommodated within that Reserve. It is likely a review of member and officer training needs may require an additional budget to be allocated going forward but this will have to be considered when the details are known and it is likely this will have to be prioritised and scaled to what is practical and affordable but can be delivered in a plan over time.

The findings and recommendations from the external reviews are also unknown at this stage and there is a risk they may have financial implication, but again this will have to be considered by Council when the details are known and options for delivery can be considered.

Reputational Risk

The Motion adopted by Council is to ensure the Council is working in the most effective way for its residents. Any review is likely to identify weaknesses and recommendations for improvements, this needs to be acknowledged and any findings used in a positive way. This is essential for a healthy organisation, to do otherwise could be a risk to reputation and risk to continuous improvements for the Council.

Financial implications:

Details included in the report

Legal implications:

There are no substantive legal issues to be added to this report.