

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 10 July 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Update on the Peer Challenge recommendations and delivery plan

Report summary:

This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the Peer Challenge recommendations and the delivery plan to implement the recommendations.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

- (1) That Cabinet receive the Peer Challenge recommendations and endorse the delivery plan and the actions set out in it.
- (2) That Cabinet give delegated authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Director of Governance and Licensing and the Portfolio Holder Council and Corporate Co-ordination to purchase and implement a new performance, risk and complaints monitoring software system/s. Using monies from the Transformation Fund up to the amount of £250k.

Reason for recommendation:

To ensure that the recommendations from the Peer Challenge are actioned and delivered appropriately.

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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; There are reputational and organisational risks if we do not ensure that we address the recommendations from the Peer Challenge.

Links to background information [Appendix a – Peer Challenge delivery plan](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

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

The feedback report following the Peer Challenge 6-8th Feb 2024 set out a series of suggestions and recommendations for the council. The main recommendations were.

- Recruitment of a Chief Executive.
- Consideration of Cabinet working arrangements.
- Invest in councillor and officer development.
- Streamline the actions in your new Council Plan.
- Resist the temptation to undertake further external reviews.
- Develop a programme of external engagement and make outwardly focused work a priority for the new Chief Executive.
- Consider using councillor and officer ambassadors.
- Review visibility with housing tenants.
- Provide direction for leisure and culture provision.

In addition, there were other recommendations and suggestions throughout the feedback report all of which have been collated into a delivery plan at appendix a. Council officers have then provided information about how we can deliver those recommendations.

Currently we are looking to progress actions in all of the areas set out in the plan and updates on these actions are also included for information.

One of the main areas for transformation within the delivery plan is a project to commission a new performance, risk management and complaints monitoring system/s. This project would support the delivery of a range of recommendations including improvements to performance and budget monitoring, risk management, monitoring of review recommendations, improvements to reporting to Committees and the monitoring of the Council Plan actions and measures. We are in the beginning stages of this project and are working with Strata to identify business requirements and undertake some soft market testing.

In order to proceed with this project through the summer we are recommending that Cabinet provide us with the authority to progress the project to commission stage so that the system can be implemented as soon as possible. At this stage the costs are not fully known so we would be looking for authority to be given to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Council and Corporate Co-ordination to agree spend on this project for the first-year implementation phase of up to £250K. This budget would be to cover the system upfront cost, annual cost, Strata project implementation costs, and our own project implementation costs. The funding of this we could take from the Transformation Fund as this work will transform our management of performance and risk across all of our services bring much needed business insight.

Financial implications:

This is supplementary budget request of up to £250k to allow this project to progress at haste. Unfortunately, at this stage we do not have the details to produce an accurate estimate, but it is considered this sum should be sufficient. As this is implementation and year one costs and fits with our Financial Sustainability Model objectives it is felt appropriate, if agreed, that the budget is met from the Transformation Fund, however it likely that ongoing costs will have to be found through savings.

Legal implications:

The performance system will need to be procured in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules.