



COMMITTEE TITLE: Ordinary Council

DATE: 13th December 2023

REPORT TITLE:	Partnership Peer Review
REPORT OF:	Greg Campbell – Director Policy & Transformation
REPORT IS FOR:	To Note

REPORT SUMMARY

The following report informs Members that a Partnership Peer challenge will take place between the 4th and 8th March 2024. This Peer Challenge will be undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) and will be a Corporate Peer Challenge with a specific focus on Brentwood Borough Council's One Team Partnership with Rochford District Council.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Brentwood Borough Council had a Peer review in November 2021. This was undertaken just as the Partnership with Rochford was beginning to be formed. The last Peer review enabled Brentwood Borough Council to create a path towards strong financial foundations and governance. Since this time much has occurred including changes at the senior level of the organisation and the development of the strategic partnership with Rochford District Council.

This strategic partnership with Rochford District Council looks to create significant improvement by bringing the teams of the two councils together whilst maintaining independent decision making and therefore each Council's sovereignty. This partnership would have been in 'being' for just over two years when this Corporate Peer Challenge commences.

It is good practice to review how well the organisation is performing on a regular basis and to have an external view of the Councils services, its performance and functions. On this occasion the PEER Challenge will concentrate on the partnership, its governance, its progress and direction.

It has been decided that after two years of the strategic partnership being in place that it is right to carry out a Peer Challenge of this partnership. The Peer Challenge will gather and review information, undertake interviews with stakeholders, officers and members to corroborate and triangulate information gathered in order to determine where the Council has progressed to along on its partnership journey,

where improvements can be made and identify where issues need to be addressed. This will enable a roadmap to be developed that will identify where the Council can improve, develop the effectiveness of the Council and its partnership with Rochford.

Peer Challenges are a tried and tested method to deliver improvement and it is reported that 98% of Councils who had a Corporate Peer Challenge said that it had a positive impact on delivery of the Council's priorities.

The detailed scope of the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is set out in Appendix 1. However, the five key themes of this Partnership Peer Challenge are set out below:

- Local priorities & Outcomes
- Organisational and Place Leadership
- Governance & Culture
- Financial Planning & Management
- Capacity for Improvement

The Corporate Peer Challenge will take place between the 4th and 8th March 2024 with a final report expected in April / May 2024. Further it is expected that the key findings and subsequent action plan are published and made available to the public.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

No other options outside of the LGA have been considered to undertake a Partnership Peer Challenge. The LGA as an organisation undertake Corporate Peer Reviews for local government organisations at no cost. It would therefore be appropriate for this body to undertake our Peer challenge which in turn gives the findings credibility.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

That the findings of the review are not actioned or given the credit that they deserve

The Council, its officers and stakeholders do not engage in the process and the Council lose the opportunity for positive feedback from an independent body.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

This will form part of the Corporate Peer Challenge

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Tim Willis, Director – Resources & Section 151 Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

5.1 None arising from the recommendations

6.0 LEGAL/GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Claire Mayhew, Acting Joint Director – People & Governance & Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312500 / Claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager - Communities, Leisure and Health

Tel & Email 01277 312500 kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- c. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionate adverse impact on anybody with a protected characteristic and the themes are cross cutting across the Council's services.

8.0 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

Name & Title: Phil Drane, Director - Place

Tel & Email 01277 312500 / phil.drane@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Name & Title: Henry Muss, Sustainability & Climate Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312500 henry.muss@brentwood.gov.uk

10.1 There are no environmental implication arising from this report

REPORT AUTHOR:

Name: Greg Campbell

Title: Director Policy & Transformation

Phone: 01277 312500

Email: greg.campbell@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Corporate Peer Challenge Detailed Scope

BACKGROUND PAPERS

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date