

**16 September 2015**

**Ordinary Council**

**Peer Review – Action Plan Status**

**Report of:** *Phil Ruck, Head of Paid Service*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Brentwood Borough Council invited the local Government Association to conduct a follow up Peer review in November 2013.
- 1.2 The full details of the report of the Peer Review team were detailed in a report to Council 7 April 2014. The purpose of this report is to advise of the current status of the action plan contained within that report.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That progress of the action plan (attached as Appendix A) be monitored by the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation committee over the next 18 months.**
- 2.2 To agree that a full transformation agenda be prepared by the Head of Paid Service and be presented to the November Policy, Finance and Resources committee for approval then monitored by the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation committee.**

**3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 Brentwood Borough Council invited the Local Government Association to conduct a follow up Peer Review in November 2013.
- 3.2 Peer reviews are conducted by experienced Member and Officer peers from across local government who are chosen to reflect the requirements and focus of the review.

#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

4.1 The outcome letter of the November 2013 review highlighted a number of positive areas since the last peer review in 2011:

- i. Major projects have been advanced.
- ii. Finances are much improved, with a clean bill of health for the accounts and less dependency on reserves in setting the revenue budget.
- iii. Efficiency savings have been delivered.
- iv. Our staff are loyal and committed.

4.2 However there were a number of areas of concern that the Council needs to address in order to meet the challenge of delivering on our commitment to change:

- a) Poor ethical behaviour
- b) The organisation needs to display respect for each individual and demonstrate that values are being upheld throughout the organisation. Develop constructive relationships between Officers and Members and CLB  
Disproportionate amount of time spent on Member issues;  
Officers need to be released to focus on the needs of the business rather than day to day involvement in governance issues.
- c) CLB need to act as a single team with a strategic focus

4.3 An action plan was developed to address many of the issues raised and is attached (Appendix A)

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

5.1 The Peer Review action plan has been implemented where actions could be completed. However many of the actions are such that they need regular review/attention.

5.2 The on-going work should be monitored as part of the Council's Transformation agenda by the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation committee.

## **6. References to Corporate Plan**

- 6.1 The action plan assesses the impact of and effectiveness of the Council to deliver its commitments as a whole

## **7. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312 542 christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 7.1 None directly arising from the report.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Chris Potter, Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312 860 christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk**

- 7.2 None directly arising from the report.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 7.3 None

## **8. Appendices to this report**

- Appendix A – the Peer Review Action Plan

### **Report Author Contact Details:**

**Name:** Philip Ruck, Head of Paid Service

**Telephone:** 01277 312569

**E-mail:** Philip.ruck@brentwood.gov.uk

# Appendix A - ACTION PLAN

|   |                         |  |          |      |
|---|-------------------------|--|----------|------|
| <b>TITLE: PEER REVIEW</b><br><b>LEAD OFFICER: Philip Ruck</b> | <b>PROGRESS UPDATE:</b> |  | 25/08/15 | V4.0 |
|   | <b>R</b>                | Target date likely to be missed. Caution   |          |      |
|   | <b>A</b>                | On target to meet completion date. Monitor |          |      |
|   | <b>G</b>                | Action completed.                          |          |      |

This action plan has been developed from the findings of the peer review 2013 and supports the Council's People and Organisational Development Strategy. Each action can be linked to one or more of the following themes:

**A - Leadership, Management & Vision**

\* inspirational leadership, strong and consistent management and clear vision.

**B - People Matter**

\*creating a learning / training environment for employees and Members, offering appropriate career progression and opportunities for personal development, welcoming diversity and new ideas, and providing opportunities for these to be brought forward.

**C - Workforce / Capacity Planning**

\* recognising the diverse needs of our workforce and planning for staff movement (secondment, retirement, flexible working requests, turnover). Where appropriate, working with a range of partners and key agencies who are central to the improvement and growth of the borough. Influencing decisions that make a difference to our communities.

**D - Culture**

\* developing and practising the values and behaviours that we need to achieve our vision. Being a role model to communities and enhancing our reputation.

**E - Communication**

\* keeping good communication at the heart of everything we do, recognising that it is pivotal to our image and reputation both internally (with staff and Members), and externally (with customers, partners, media, stakeholders) and acknowledging that everyone has responsibility in achieving this.

|                    |             |                     |             |                  |    |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|------------------|----|
| <b>START DATE:</b> | 01/APR/2014 | <b>FINISH DATE:</b> | 31/DEC/2015 | <b>NO. WEEKS</b> | 88 |
|--------------------|-------------|---------------------|-------------|------------------|----|

| REF  | TASK DESCRIPTION   | RAG | TARGET FINISH DATE | Completed | LINK TO ADDITIONAL OD PRIORITIES | RESPONSIBLE                             | PROGRESS UPDATE   |
|--|--|-----|--------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>A – Leadership, Management &amp; Vision</b> |  |     |                    |           |                                  |   |   |
| PR1  | Establish regular meetings between Statutory Officers and Group Leaders as part of the annual cycle of meetings. | G   | 11/06/2014         | YES       | D                                | Corporate & Democratic Services Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly meetings in place for Group Leaders;</li> <li>Fortnightly meetings with the Leader of the Opposition;</li> <li>Daily/Weekly meetings with the Leader of the Council.1</li> </ul> |

|                          |  |   |   |            |      |   |   |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|------------|------|---|---|
| PR2                      | Agree and establish with opposition group leaders a system of engagement that meets theirs and the organisation's needs, reducing the need for members' requests and other requests for information.   | G | 31/05/2014  | YES        | C, D | HoPS                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fortnightly meetings with the Leader;</li> <li>Monthly meetings with Shadow Chairs.</li> </ul>   |
| PR3                      | Develop a comprehensive training programme for Chairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Managing meetings</li> <li>Leading portfolio areas</li> <li>Role of lead members</li> </ul>  | G | Agree programme: 30/06/2014<br>Delivery: 30/09/2014   | YES        | D    | Corporate & Democratic Services Manager | Training course delivered on 31/6/2014 by Bevan Brittan (Olwen Dutton) and training resource available electronically for on-going use.   |
| PR4                      | Develop a comprehensive training programme for members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Induction</li> <li>The Local Government arena</li> <li>Role of the ward member</li> <li>Role of committee members</li> <li>Role of officers and Statutory Officers</li> <li>Role of Administration</li> <li>Role of Opposition</li> <li>Codes of Conduct</li> </ul> | A | Induction agreed and implemented by 11/06/2014<br><br>Agree programme: 30/06/2014<br>Delivery: 30/09/2014 | On - Going | D    | Monitoring Officer                      | Induction programme complete for new members (elected May 2014).<br><br>Training programme devised in conjunction with Members and models delivered and on-going.<br><br>Further member training programme launched from March 2015 for existing members<br><br>Induction programme complete for new members (elected May 2015) |
| PR5                      | Review all Member Working Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are they effective?</li> <li>Do they deliver clear outcomes?</li> <li>Do they deliver VFM?</li> </ul>   | A | 28/02/2015  | On-Going   | C    | Monitoring Officer                      | Member working groups reviewed as part of the revision of the Constitution project with recommendation for training as to meaning, clear specification of terms of reference when set up.   |
| <b>B - People Matter</b> |  |   |   |            |      |   |   |
| PR6                      | Develop, agree and implement an organisational workforce strategy and talent management strategy that covers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attracting and retaining staff</li> <li>Supporting staff into new roles (secondments etc)</li> </ul>  | G | 30/04/2014  | On - Going | C, D | Head of Customer Service                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategy agreed by Finance &amp; Resources on 30 June 2014.</li> </ul>   |

|  |   |   |            |            |      |   |  |
|--|---|---|------------|------------|------|---|--|
| PR7                                      | Implement and invest in a Strategic Leadership Course for CLB and Middle Managers.  | G | 30/04/2014 | YES        | C, D | Head of Paid Service                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed – Strategic Leadership Course commenced on 23 July 2014 for 27 Senior and Middle Managers.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>C - Workforce / Capacity Planning</b> |   |   |            |            |      |   |  |
| PR8                                      | Produce a refreshed Corporate Plan for 2016-2019 with a supporting delivery plan.   | A | 31/07/2015 | No         | A    | CEO   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work has commenced on drafting key themes for a refreshed Corporate Plan.</li> <li>Consultation on this has just concluded</li> </ul>   |
| PR9                                      | Produce a refreshed MTFP that goes beyond 2016 and is in line with the Corporate Plan.  | G | 31/03/2015 | Yes        | All  | Finance Director                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A MTFP projected to 2017/18 was agreed by Council in March and revised in June 2015.</li> <li>A 5 year MTFP has also been developed to provide a longer term view.</li> </ul>   |
| PR10                                     | As part of the transformation work stream revisit the operational model as agreed in 2013 and ensure that it is fit for purpose beyond 2016.  | A | 31/03/2015 | On - Going | A    | Head of Business Transformation (Customer Services) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This will depend on the recruitment of the CE and any further restructuring plans that they may have.</li> </ul>  |
| PR11                                     | Introduce a comprehensive Programme and Performance Management framework that relies on relevant PIs and timely data intelligence, including benchmarking data and owned by CLB to better manage and inform the business. | G | 30/04/2014 | YES        | D    | Contract and Corporate Projects Manager             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Programme/Project Management framework is in place and being used to monitor high level corporate projects and KPIs. This has been refreshed with the new priorities of the new Administration.</li> </ul>  |
| PR12                                     | Identify suitable local, county, regional and national partnerships that will add and which the organisation can learn from and commit to resourcing those partnerships.  | A | 30/06/2014 | 31/03/2015 |      | CLB   | Members of following Essex Groups – Pollution Control, Occupational Health & Safety, Private Sector Housing, Food Safety, Licensing, Community Safety Partnership, Essex Community Safety Network, Safer Essex, Brentwood Nightlife Action Group, Essex Regional Health & Safety Advisors Forum, South Stay Safe Group, District Safeguarding Leads, South West Children Partnerships Board, |

|                          |   |   |            |            |   |                            |  |
|--------------------------|---|---|------------|------------|---|----------------------------|--|
|                          |   |   |            |            |   |                            | Brentwood Youth Strategy Group, Active Brentwood, Active Essex, Essex Chief Leisure Officers' Group, Essex Network of Arts Culture & Tourism, Brentwood Health & Wellbeing Board, Essex Health & Wellbeing Board. Essex Online Partnership, Essex Revenues & Benefits Managers' Group, Essex Communications Group. Essex Air Quality Consortium, Essex Contaminated Land Consortium. |
| PR13                     | Explore available technology that would facilitate the reduction of evening meetings (non-committee).   | A | 31/03/2015 | On-Going   | D | Monitoring Officer         | Modern.Gov has been implemented making remote access to relevant papers easier. HoPS and MO met Modern.Gov new Customer Manager July 2015 to explore further options User Group meetings.. Next December 2015. ICT to be approached to see how links with current ICT projects (including new telephone system being rolled out) and potential for improved video conferencing.      |
| <b>D - Culture</b>       |   |   |            |            |   |                            |  |
| PR14                     | Develop agreed values to complement the Member/Officer Protocol and communicate this across the organisation ensuring officer and member sign up. | A | 27/02/2015 | On-Going   | A | CE/Monitoring Officer      | Developing within the revision of the Constitution project.<br>Member/Officer Task and Finish Group underway.  |
| PR15                     | Revise Protocol on Member/Staff relations, circulate to all Members and officers and ensure Members/Officers adhere to it.                        | A | 30/06/2014 | 31/12/2014 | A | Monitoring Officer         | Developing within the revision of the Constitution project and (re) training on Nolan Principles and the Constitution once agreed to be rolled out. To include emphasis on media relations Cultural and behavioural change programme being considered.   |
| PR16                     | Identify and develop champions for change who can role model positive behaviour and be catalysts within service areas.                            | G | 30/06/2014 | YES        | B | Corporate Leadership Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved through the Corporate Brief and the Strategic Leadership Programme.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>E - Communication</b> |   |   |            |            |   |                            |  |

|      |   |   |            |     |      |                      |   |
|------|---|---|------------|-----|------|----------------------|---|
| PR17 | Deliver a comprehensive comms plan that is based on the Corporate Plan and uses key messages as a basis for all comms.  | G | On-going   | YES | D    | Senior Comms Officer | A new Corporate Plan is currently being developed   |
| PR18 | Pro-actively focus on success stories both internally and externally.   | G | On-going   | YES | D    | Senior Comms Officer |   |
| PR19 | Review communication channels and exchanges of written information between officers and members to enable the free flow of information to support Members in their role and to free up officers to run the business of the Council. | G | 31/05/2014 | YES | D, C | Monitoring Officer   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As before on PR 1 &amp; 2.</li> <li>Agenda items are also designed to bring early policy ideas to allow input from Members.</li> </ul> |