

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25 March 2014

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Executive Non Key Decisions

1 PEER CHALLENGE

To set out proposed arrangements for the forthcoming Peer Challenge.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 A corporate peer challenge, led by a team organised by the Local Government Association, is to take place over a three day period between Monday 28th April and Wednesday 30th April 2014.

1.1.2 The peer challenge will focus on economic regeneration as one core theme but will also cover the following corporate issues:

- Understanding of local context and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and has it established a clear set of priorities?
- Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
- Political and managerial leadership: Does the council have effective political and managerial leadership and is it a constructive partnership?
- Governance and decision-making: Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place to respond to key challenges and manage change, transformation and disinvestment?
- Organisational capacity: Are organisational capacity and resources focused in the right areas in order to deliver the agreed priorities?

1.1.3 The review process will involve the following:

- The submission, 2 weeks prior to the challenge, of a short self-assessment addressing the above issues, supported, as necessary by any background reading eg corporate plan, budget statement, agendas and minutes etc.

- The first two days of the challenge will involve the review team in a series of meetings with Members, Management Team and other relevant staff, and with agencies external to the Council.
- The final day of the challenge will involve the team preparing the feedback from the review and delivering this to the Council.

1.2 The Peer Challenge Team

1.2.1 The independent team undertaking the review will comprise of the following:

Council Leader – Tony Jackson, East Herts BC

Chief Executive – Janet Waggott, Ryedale DC

Senior Officer - Matt Prosser, Strategic Director at South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse councils

Senior Officer - David Green, Director of Sustainable Communities, Chelmsford City Council

LGA Lead – Chris Bowron (Programme Manager) also supported by a member of the National Graduate Development Programme.

1.3 Arrangements for the Review

1.3.1 A detailed programme for the review has been drawn up in consultation with the LGA. This is attached as Annex A to this report. There will be a range of interviews and discussions over the first two days of the review including one to one interviews with the Leader, the Cabinet Members for Finance, Innovation and Property, and for Economic Regeneration, the Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group, the Chief Executive and Directors. Round table meetings will also be held with other Cabinet Members, senior staff, front-line staff, and non-executive Members.

1.3.2 In terms of external groups, the Peer Challenge will involve meetings with the CEs from Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells Councils, and focus group meetings with economic partners, with members of the Local Strategic Partnership including voluntary sector representation, and with nominated parish and town councils.

1.3.3 Copies of the self-assessment will be circulated to all parties in advance of the review.

1.3.4 It is intended that the outcome of the review, including any specific recommendations from the peer challenge team, will be reported to the next Cabinet meeting being held on 25th June 2014.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 None

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 To be addressed as part of the Peer Challenge.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 N/A

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That the arrangements for the forthcoming Peer Challenge, as set out in this report, **BE ENDORSED**.

Background papers:

contact: Mark Raymond

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	n/a	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	n/a	
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.