

Tonbridge & Malling Peer Challenge Review - Action Plan in Response

March 2022

In September 2021, the Council contacted the Local Government Association about having a Peer Challenge Review. In January 2022, the Council was delighted to welcome the Peer Review Team to take a critical look at the Council's performance. The team spent 5 days looking at how the Council operates and reported these findings back to the Council's Leadership Team.

The final report of the Peer Review Team was published in March 2022 and sets out a series of 10 recommendations for actions designed to complement and add value to the Council's own performance.

No	Recommendations	Actions	Completed By	Lead Cabinet Member	Lead Officer
01	Establish a regular 'safe space' for the MT and Cabinet to strengthen relationships and build strategic policy together; be proactive in building workable options.	To establish fortnightly meetings of MT and Cabinet with an agenda setting focus on strategic policy and transformation (Tuesdays from 4-6pm). Agenda and minutes to be shared on Teams, with meetings mostly being virtual but with face-to-face meetings taking place every quarter. To reinforce Director and Cabinet Member relationships through monthly catch ups and easy access on day-to-day items.	Meetings commence March 2022.	Council Leader	Chief Executive
02	Co-develop a refreshed Corporate Strategy, based on resident engagement, with clear outcomes, focussed on delivering for the community – not just finance.	To set out and plan a process of community engagement Formulation of new Corporate Strategy 2023-2028 to be undertaken by Cabinet.	Undertake March-June 2022 Completed September 2022.	Council Leader	Chief Executive

		Reported to Council	June 2023		
		Undertake annual review of the Corporate Strategy	Ongoing		
03	Ensure strategies and policies have SMART objectives, and establish a Corporate Performance Framework which provides visibility and a formal mechanism to track your progress. Benchmark and learn from good practice elsewhere.	Service Management Teams to review existing strategies and amend where required to incorporate SMART objectives. Establish a central system for the collation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which are reported to MT and Cabinet (as per Recommendation 1) on a monthly basis (possibly supported by LG benchmarking club or any suggestion from LGA that allows for comparison with other areas) and then reported to all members. Publish KPIs on the TMBC website for transparency purposes.	May 2022	Deputy Leader	Management Team
04	Establish a shared and ambitious narrative for TMBC and re-energise your partnerships, focussed on delivering outcomes, not sharing information.	To undertake a review of all Council partnerships and Member allocations to outside bodies to ensure that they are delivering positive outcomes for the Borough. Members of partnerships to report to O&S on a six-monthly basis to demonstrate value to tax payers. Re-invigorate the West Kent Partnership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the Case for West Kent; • Refocusing work streams and instilling a more strategic focus; and 	May 2022 Ongoing May 2022	Council Leader	Chief Executive

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing political leadership. <p>Plan an exit strategy for the Local Strategic Partnership.</p>	April 2022		
05	Develop a Communication Strategy which strengthens two-way engagement with residents, markets services, promotes place, and celebrates successes.	<p>Review of existing external communications in partnership with the LGA.</p> <p>Corporate Communications to attend MT/Cabinet session to pull together outline of a new Communication Strategy, which considers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resident email newsletter Targeted use of social media Measures to pro-actively promote the borough and the Council's achievements. 	<p>June 2022</p> <p>June - October 2022</p>	Council Leader	Director of Central Services
06	Be clear on what kind of council TMBC wants to be and make that the focus of your transformation agenda; more than just savings.	<p>Undertake resident/community engagement (as per recommendation 2), to ensure we are delivering for our communities.</p> <p>Undertake a facilitated workshop involving MT and Cabinet to look at our vision for the council and the borough (this will also feed into a number of the other recommendations, especially 1 and 2).</p> <p>Ensure that the outcomes from these exercises are then used to steer the approach to the other recommendations.</p>	March - May 2022	Council Leader	Chief Executive

07	Re-calibrate the Council's approach to risk and explore opportunities to be more commercial and collaborate with others.	<p>Dedicate a MT/Cabinet session to discussing the Council's approach to criteria setting for opportunities.</p> <p>Establish a framework setting out our key financial, socio-economic and placemaking criteria to assess new opportunities arising in the borough with referral to Council as necessary.</p> <p>Engage with partner organisations to highlight willingness to discuss commercial opportunities.</p> <p>Investigate the potential to establish a centrally-based Transformation and Innovation Team.</p>	<p>May 2022</p> <p>June 2022</p> <p>September 2022</p> <p>May 2022</p>	Deputy Leader	Management Team
08	Develop internal communication, build a shared sense of purpose beyond finance and compliance, and recognise the good work across the organisation that happens every day.	<p>Initial session involving MT and HR and to investigate ways to strengthen internal communication and recognise staff achievements.</p> <p>Undertake audit of existing internal communications/ agree detailed action plan.</p>	<p>March 2022</p> <p>April-September 2022</p>	Deputy Leader	Director of Central Services
09	Recognise and reinvigorate the workforce, with a focus on the right skills and right resources in the right place to deliver the transformation agenda. Develop a new Comprehensive Workforce Strategy incorporating the Council's new ways of working post COVID-19.	Produce a Comprehensive Workforce Strategy, using the existing Human Resources Strategy (incorporating the pay and workforce strategy) as a starting point. This policy was reported to GP Committee on an annual basis until the pandemic, with the last version being considered by GP on 19 June 2019.	Commence work in May 2022 with adoption by Council in October 2022	Deputy Leader	Director of Central Services

		<p>The post-covid-19 elements of the strategy to be produced in partnership with the Working Arrangements Officer Study Group.</p> <p>Undertake a review of resource allocations in line with new corporate priorities.</p>			
10	<p>Review the Council's governance arrangements, with particular attention to area planning committees and the impact of Advisory Boards on decision making and the role of Overview & Scrutiny.</p>	<p>Undertake full review of governance arrangements, in liaison with informal Cabinet, including analysis of arrangements at other Councils, with a particular focus on strengthening the role of Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the number of Area Planning Committees. Matters will be referred to Council as necessary.</p>	<p>By September 2022</p>	<p>Council Leader</p>	<p>Director of Central Services</p>