

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

Transformation Advisory Board

19 February 2019



TAB are asked to:

- Review Tower Hamlets Action Plan that has been prepared to respond to the recommendations made in the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) Review and consider which areas they think TAB can add most value. These areas will be built into the TAB Forward Plan.
- The final report and action plan has been provided alongside this presentation



LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

18 – 22 September 2023

Feedback report



Background



- Between the 18th and 22nd September, Tower Hamlets Council participated in an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) review.
- CPC's are coordinated by the LGA on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and is an effective and well-regarded sector-led improvement tool. The review provided the Council with robust challenge and support across five core strategic areas. It highlighted areas of good practice and identified areas for improvement and ongoing support that would feed into the Council's transformation journey.
- The review team undertook over 75 meetings and spoke to over 175 people including staff, external stakeholders and Councillors from all representative Parties.

Strategic areas of focus:

Local priorities and outcomes

Organisational and place leadership

Governance and culture

Financial planning and management

Capacity for improvement



Since the Peer Review, we have already delivered:



New Tower Hamlets Partnership Plan agreed

Budget consultation complete and new draft Medium Term Financial Strategy developed

Commissioning independent specialist to support performance management through data cleansing and analytics

Initiated review of the Mayor's Office structure

Partnership task and finish group nearing completion of partnership review

Planning for a Women's Commission and the LGAs 'Be A Councillor' campaign

Audited accounts - 18/19, 19/20, 20/21 and 21/22 and 22/23 due this month

Annual Governance Statement approved by Audit Committee and published on our website

Real progress made on Corporate Director and Director appointments



Key findings: strong foundations but need to develop long term strategic vision



The CPC review confirmed that:

“Tower Hamlets is a council with an ambitious set of priorities that are widely understood by members, officers, and partners. The new Administration, elected in May 2022, has brought a fresh impetus to the council. It is clear that the Mayor’s manifesto commitments have translated into the key areas of focus for the council, as highlighted in the Council’s Strategic Plan (2022-2026)”.

In relation to development of a longer-term strategic vision, the CPC review recommended that:

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy is aligned

A new workforce strategy is developed

Work to improve our relationships with partners

Our People First Transformation programme is accelerated



Key findings: Develop the Corporate Centre: so that it is genuinely a strategic enabler.



- Recommended to improve working between senior management and the Mayor's Office. The review found that the disconnect here is creating bottlenecks in the operation of the council's business and impacting negatively upon the speed and effectiveness of decision making.
 - Recommended the council should review the roles, functions and deployment of some of the staff within the Mayor's Office to ensure streamlined decision making, remove barriers and duplication elsewhere in the council.
- Recommended to introduce a robust process for the Small Grants Fund and the Emergency Grants Fund similar to the Mayor's Community Grant scheme which was highlighted as good practice by the Team
- Formalise the Mayor's involvement in decision making process around transfer of property to third parties
- Enhance the existing performance framework, making better use of data to inform decision making and policy development



Key findings: how the voices of women and those from different backgrounds are directly influencing policy



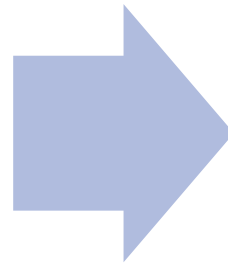
- Lack of female representation on Cabinet – impact on views from women internally and externally
- The council should consider best practice in relation to the chairing, membership and cross party working in and of key committees
- Given the relative inexperience of the majority of the Cabinet (many are first-time councillors) the council should also look to enhance its member development programme
- Conduct an urgent review of the internal governance arrangements including the board structures to ensure focus on the delivery of priorities, clarity of reporting and clear lines of accountability.



Approach to developing the Action Plan



Action plan responds to 18 high level recommendations + over 70 detailed suggestions in the body of the report.



Corporate Directors and Senior Officers engaged in scoping exercise for each action.



Next Steps

As part of the LGA CPC Review process, the Peer team will be returning to the Council in the Summer to complete a progress review in order to assess how well we are delivering on the recommendations made in their final report

This progress review has provisionally been scheduled to take place in **July 2024**.

It was recommended in the final report that as well as reporting through normal council channels, **the council should also report improvement against the LGA CPC action plan to the Transformation Advisory Board**



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