

# Corporate Peer Challenge East Lindsey District Council

*25-27 June 2019*

## Feedback Report

## 1. Executive Summary

There is a real sense of ambition, change and renewed energy at East Lindsey District Council (ELDC). This is due in no small part to the impact that has been brought by Leader and the new Chief Executive. There is a positive supportive culture which has dedicated loyal staff at its centre. The general sense that the council is seeking to be more forward thinking and wanting to change for the better is very much shared by staff.

ELDC has the benefit of positive member-officer relationships and sound governance. The council's core services are performing well. Through focused and prudent management the council has a strong financial position which provides a foundation for the council's future ambition.

The council's plans to develop a new Corporate Strategy for the district provides an important opportunity which must be seized as a means of clearly spelling out the future vision for East Lindsey as a place. There is a need to develop the evidence base to underpin the Corporate Strategy. This will ensure the council is able to support a strong narrative which will also help with the district attracting inward investment which can be achieved through funding bids developed jointly with partners. It will be important for the council to consider how it secures buy-in and gains traction from all stakeholders through early involvement with all. Clear articulation of the vision within the Corporate Strategy will be key to its future success.

ELDC is demonstrating good leadership in areas such as its lead role on behalf of the whole county on the Health and Wellbeing Lincolnshire contract. The council's leadership is also clear in the council's proactive and ongoing contribution to the work of the Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) which is ensuring resilience in the face of challenges relating to the district's perennial risk around flooding. There is increasing evidence of the council strengthening its joint working with Town and Parish Councils which is key to maintaining connectivity across a district the size of East Lindsey.

The geography of the district creates significant challenges. It will be important for ELDC to balance the challenges of delivering for its different but equally key 'Coastal deprivation' and 'growth' ambitions. This will require the council taking some tough but clearly rationalised decisions about what can and cannot be delivered hence the importance of a strong evidence base for any decisions on future delivery.

The team would encourage ELDC to strive towards a stronger voice and enhanced visibility on the regional stage. The council is therefore encouraged by the Peer review team to consider establishing a Place Leadership Board focused on tackling and delivering against some of the more complex strategic issues ELDC needs to grapple with. Such a structure could contribute to the council better ensuring that the district's agenda is better aligned with those of the LEP, county and other strategic partners in order that East Lindsey is able to fully benefit from future resources and growth opportunities. It will also ensure that the various policy agendas that the council needs to focus on including housing have the right level of coverage going forward.

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ELDC is already making good use of collaborative partnerships to deliver existing services through vehicles and initiatives such as PSPS, Magna Vitae and Health Lincolnshire. Going forward however the growth agenda will need a new approach and there needs to be a clear focus on understanding what is required in order to develop the internal capacity and capability to take on the different ways of 'doing business' that will be required. The council needs to embrace the modernisation agenda, for example in relation to digital technology, in order to progress this.

Once the new corporate plan priorities have been confirmed, there will be the need to further review capacity and skill requirements to deliver. The Review team would strongly encourage ELDC to consider bringing in targeted programme and project management structures as current in-house capacity is unlikely to deliver the scale of ambition ELDC aspires to.

## 2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions, in addition to the conversations onsite, many of which provided ideas and examples of practice from other organisations. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the Council:

**Communicate the process for developing your Corporate Strategy.** Ensure people understand at the earliest possible time what the council's plans are for developing the new strategy. Actively seek to involve stakeholders in the process of developing and shaping the vision for the district in order that they share ownership of the strategy.

**Ensure the Corporate Strategy provides strong narrative for your area that is owned and understood by members, officers and key stakeholders.** Ensure that there is a clear link between all projects and the overall vision for the district. Measure the success of projects by assessing and communicating how they directly contribute to achieving the vision in the new Corporate Strategy.

**Consider your overall approach to the diversity of the district's economy in maximising the Wolds and Coastal visitor economies.** Ensure that the council is clear about the approach it wishes to take in supporting these. Whilst there appeared to be a prevailing view that these economies are distinct and disparate leading to possible tension in allocation of resources, the Council could start to develop with the LEP a much clearer narrative and strategic approach around a single visitor economy.

**Ensure you understand and maximise the social impact from planned investments in physical regeneration.** Ensure you can clearly articulate the link between projects delivering physical infrastructure and economic development and their contribution to addressing wider social priorities (for example wider health outcomes).

**Establish a Place Leadership Board to increase capacity to deliver new growth agenda.** Focus on setting out the priorities for East Lindsey so these are clearly

communicated beyond East Lindsey and are actively contributing to the agenda for Greater Lincolnshire. Prioritise securing buy-in and active engagement from partners in setting and championing local priorities regionally.

**Review the council's overall approach to both internal and external communications.** Utilise group leaders to ensure all members are fully informed of the overarching vision for the district as a whole and their role within it. Whilst an officer member protocol is in place the understanding of it and use of this by both officers and members is lacking and needs re-launching and then enforcing throughout the organisation. Establish a staff engagement forum to support better communications and consider how such a staff group can be empowered to contributing proactively in shaping the council's culture and future direction.

**Share the Corporate Plan narrative and celebrate successful delivery.** Focus on linking any successes back to the achievement of the vision for the new Corporate Plan. Ensure ELDC is clear about how it will communicate the messages about this success. Consider who the various audiences and stakeholders are and assess the appropriateness of the channels used in order to fully understand the effectiveness of each.

**Review Performance management framework and processes.** Ensure that comprehensive data sets that ELDC holds is used to proactively drive delivery and measure success against the strategic intent of the new Corporate Strategy. Utilise this information in any future benchmarking work the council undertakes.

**Develop an organisational development strategy to deliver the ambition in the People Strategy and address workforce planning.** Utilise the content of the current People Strategy as the foundation for a wider, more holistic Organisational Development Strategy. Ensure this Workforce Strategy focuses on staff engagement and empowerment whilst clearly considering ELDC's future challenges and what the council will do to mitigate these. Consider the ways in which this wider Organisational Development strategy might also benefit key strategic partners.

**Establish a professional programme and project management resource.** Ensure that capacity and capability required to deliver future programmes and projects is considered as part of the process of developing of the new Corporate Strategy. Assess how sufficient the current capacity that exists within ELDC will be for future delivery needs and what measures the council will take to enhance this if required.

### **3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach**

#### **The peer team**

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and

expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) were:

- Sheila Oxtoby (Chief Executive, Great Yarmouth Council)
- Councillor William Nunn (Breckland District Council)
- Anne Brinkhoff (Corporate Director - Gloucester City Council)
- Lucie Breadman (Assistant Director of Community Services - Colchester Borough Council)
- Ernest Opuni (LGA Review Manager)

## Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges cover. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
4. 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?
5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

Under these headings you asked the peer team to provide feedback on the following specific questions:

- How well does the council understand its local context and place and how has that been used to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
- How well is the Council achieving against those ambitions? For example, is it really acting and intervening to enable growth and to ensure the most vulnerable are well protected and supported?
- Does the council provide effective leadership of the District, within but also beyond the Council's boundaries and the wider place (such as Lincolnshire,

- Greater Lincolnshire, The East Midlands) through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
- Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term sustainability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
  - How aware is it of its costs compared to similar councils?
  - Is the Council maximising appropriate sharing and “commercial” opportunities to enable reinvestment in services and to contribute further to self-sufficiency?
  - Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance?

## **The peer challenge process**

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual councils’ needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council’s own performance and improvement. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent 3 days onsite at East Lindsey Council during which they:

- Spoke to more than 70 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 25 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 150 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 5 weeks in East Lindsey.

This report provides a summary of the peer team’s findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit 27 June 2019. In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing

## 4. Feedback

### 4.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting

ELDC has a good understanding and appreciation of the district's local context. There is evidence of engagement in county wide fora such as the Lincolnshire County Chief Executive's group. ELDC is also active within the Lincolnshire 2050 programme which seeks to proactively address the challenges of climate change. There is a clear recognition by the Chief Executive that looking beyond the boundaries of the district is important for ELDC's future ambitions in engaging with initiatives in geographical areas such as the Humber Estuary.

The council's plans to develop a new Corporate Strategy for the district provides an important opportunity for ELDC to clearly spell out the vision for East Lindsey. However in order to maximise this opportunity the new Corporate Strategy needs to tell a story, have a clear evidence base and be grounded in engagement with members, staff and other stakeholders. At the time of the peer challenge being undertaken there was more for the council to do in articulating a clear vision with priorities informed by a clear evidence base. The council was fully aware of this and was explicit in stating that the dates of the peer challenge were deliberately timed to make the most of the peer challenge within this process.

The council's leadership responded positively to the team's message that ELDC's strong focus on financial sustainability and ideas for income generation need to be a part of this wider story of the place going forward. Priorities in the new strategy should be based on how they contribute to delivering this broader vision. An example of this is the need for a clear link between physical regeneration and delivering social benefits in the Corporate Strategy. Realising the potential of the new strategy will depend to a large extent on a deliberate approach and clear action to make sure these links are explicit.

The ambition of ELDC is clear in the current list of projects it is developing. It will be important for the council to recognise that these projects on their own will not be representative of a robust economic strategy within a dynamic and effective Corporate plan. Their delivery ought to link explicitly to clearly stated outcomes in order that their impact can be measured in this wider context. Again the council was aware of the importance of this and the need to remove any risk of confusion in the future.

The team would encourage ELDC to share the process for developing the Corporate Strategy with other partners and stakeholders. This will ensure wider ownership and understanding of what the council is seeking to achieve. It will also put the council in a better position to deliver the sustainable positive impact it wishes to deliver. The council has some understanding of the issues relating to deprivation that it wishes to address for the communities of East Lindsey. The Corporate Strategy development process offers the opportunity to articulate a clear strategy on how it intends to address this including its approach to addressing the infrastructure needs such as Information Technology (IT) and connectivity requirements.

To ensure that there is synergy and coherence of the narrative underpinning the new Corporate Strategy, there is an opportunity for the Executive members of the council to work more closely together and meet more regularly to ensure that they own the vision and corporate plan. This will avoid the risk of a narrower focus on individual portfolios only as this would cause silo working across ELDC's directorates.

Given the multiple challenges of delivering for diverse communities across an extensive geographical area it is clear that prioritisation of projects will be important. This process is likely to involve the council taking some tough but clearly rationalised decisions about what can and cannot be delivered. The different but equally important 'Coastal deprivation' and 'growth' ambitions will need to be carefully defined and linked to the whole system of assessing what is to be delivered.

## **4.2 Leadership of Place**

ELDC is demonstrating good leadership in areas such as its lead role on behalf of the whole county on the Health and Wellbeing Lincolnshire contract. This is a significant contribution to the whole of the county's work in addressing its health and wellbeing ambitions, supporting Lincolnshire's older population and delivering on the prevention agenda among other outcomes.

ELDC's leadership is also clear in the council's proactive and ongoing contribution to the work of the Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs). This was evident in the emergency flood planning work the council was making a major contribution to in the week preceding the peer challenge taking place where inclement weather caused major flooding in the town of Wainfleet. The council is highly respected and valued as a key partner in this work by many partners including the Environment Agency. The Local Industrial Strategy provides an opportunity for the Council to bring forward innovative water resource management schemes.

The team received positive feedback from partners about overall standards of service delivery and the council has developed a good relationship with TED (a Rural Community Council) to deliver the 'Ageing better' programme. This work includes valuable investment through lottery resources which are helping to deliver a breadth of support, advocacy and enabling initiatives.

Representatives from the Town and Parish Councils that the team met see ELDC as a responsive organisation and welcome the prospect of the council's plans to further devolve services to a town and parish level. Overall it was clear to the team that relationships between ELDC and the district's Town Councils have improved over recent times. The work that ELDC is doing through its Planning officers to support Town Councils to develop and write neighbourhood plans is valued. There appears an opportunity to do further such work and the review team would encourage ELDC to work jointly with Town Councils to explore the potential for further opportunities to collaborate. There is a well-informed community of town councillors who could be brought together more effectively to promote not only their towns but the district as a whole.



The review of the Local Plan and the development of the 2019-2023 Corporate Strategy provide opportunities for all councillors at ELDC to shape and own a wider district narrative. ELDC clearly defining what the council means by 'community enabling' as part of the work on the new Corporate Strategy will be critical in providing clear direction for the future. The council have been bold in recognising and reflecting the need to restrict development in the coastal areas (due to the flood risks which cannot yet be fully combated) and this theme will be is a key part of the Local Plan review. Overall the council has a much needed focus on coastal deprivation but there is more to do in fully formulating a plan that takes into account the multiple dimensions of the challenges faced by these communities. Due to the council's already strong performance base ELDC aiming to be an exemplar in dealing with flooding and water management appears a realistic future aspiration.

There is a need for a more positive policy on housing growth which effectively engages all members. The council has plans to create an arm's length Housing Company to positively disrupt the district's housing market. Focusing on open market sale and rent and delivering a list of targeted development sites would enhance the impact the council could deliver through this work.

The team would encourage ELDC to strive towards a stronger voice and enhanced visibility on the regional stage. In order to do this ELDC will need to have a more coherent, district-wide narrative which will allow it to influence discussions at a county level. The council will need to speak to partners with one voice which provides a needed clarity of purpose for East Lindsey on bigger more strategic issues. This would strengthen ELDC's ability to help drive the agenda at this level and potentially secure further funding and resources for the district. This will be important in ELDC utilising all of the opportunities it might have by taking a more proactive role in place leadership with the county and Local Enterprise Partnership. This will allow it to contribute to the vision of driving economic growth and providing support for manufacturing in a Greater Lincolnshire context. ELDC not being a part of the Coastal Group appears to undermine the council's ability to influence discussions at this level. The council may wish to assure itself that it is fully utilising all of the opportunities that exist by being more involved in such partnership working.

One way of achieving this enhanced influence would be to put in place a Place Leadership Board focused on tackling and delivering against some of the more complex strategic issues ELDC needs to grapple with. The team feels that such a structure could contribute to the council better ensuring that the district's agenda is better aligned with those of the LEP, county and other strategic partners in order that East Lindsey is able to fully benefit from future resources and growth opportunity. The Chief Executive is clearly focused on driving a culture of raised ambition, increased productivity, enhanced investment whilst looking outside of East Lindsey for learning and practice. Having a Place Leadership Board in place could contribute positively and significantly to achieving this goal.

Whilst some businesses felt more positive about portfolio holder engagement, the team feels that the council linking and working with businesses is an area in which ELDC would benefit from further and focused attention. The overall engagement with businesses needs

to be stepped up significantly. A key part of any work would need to focus on more effective communications founded on a coherent vision and narrative that local businesses can buy into. An effective way of moving this forward could involve closer joint working through the instigation of a Business Forum which could devise a shared strategy. This will need a more proactive engagement with businesses than can currently be evidenced. Such a forum could be an integral part of a Place Leadership Board to ensure a joining up of local aspiration and a stronger, united voice.

### **4.3 Organisational leadership and governance**

The Leader and Executive Board model is working well and more widely there are good member and officer relationships at ELDC. Members indicated overall that they viewed officers as approachable and committed.

There is a genuine excitement about the new Chief Executive and the Leader and the energy they bring. The new Chief Executive is well liked, trusted and respected by members and officers alike and his appointment is widely viewed as an opportunity for positive change in the district. Staff also feel positive about recent changes and the acceleration of pace in taking forward a new vision for East Lindsey. The general sense is that the council is seeking to be more forward thinking and wanting to change for the better.

Elected members are supportive however they have a tendency to be ward focused. This means councillors do not engage as fully as they might in developing and delivering corporate priorities due to a focus on local issues. There is an opportunity to involve members more in corporate planning. The development of a clear vision for the council overall and for East Lindsey as a place as part of the development of the new Corporate Strategy could contribute positively to councillors becoming more involved at a level other than their local wards.

Scrutiny is seen to be effective and keeping track of all recommendations. The Leader and Executive are very supportive and actively engage with scrutiny meetings which is regarded as very positive leadership. Also the ability of members to scrutinise the council's business before decisions are made is welcomed by members. However greater member involvement in scrutiny panels is still needed and on this there is a role for the various Group Leaders to encourage better engagement from their backbenchers. The Review team would question the need for direct reporting to council and ELDC may wish to look at how it could streamline decision-making with scrutiny reporting to the Executive rather than full Council. In general there is a real desire to speed up decision-making but this needs to be balanced with proportionate governance and a clear understanding of the impact of the decisions taken.

The Future Leaders Programme is a clear example of ELDC's commitment to investing in its staff and has been received very positively across the council. ELDC benefits from a positive culture demonstrated by its loyal and committed staff. The programme is a key building block in helping the council develop skills and put in place more effective succession planning.

The council's ambition has grown very quickly and while this is positive, it must be balanced with clear communication, well-rationalised prioritisation and a focus on creating the capacity and capability needed to deliver change positively.

The pace of change presents an organisational risk of staff not feeling engaged due to limited time for assessment of the potential impact of decisions. An example of this was the introduction of new staffing structures. Another example was the decision for ELDC to withdraw from the county-wide procurement partnership. ELDC needs to assure itself that the reasons for any decisions can be clearly rationalised and articulated and that there is time to assess and mitigate the impacts of these decisions.

Whilst communication with staff is happening in many forms it seems messages are not being heard consistently. There is also an appetite from staff for the council's leadership to be more visible across all of the council. ELDC could find the establishment of a Staff Focus or Staff Engagement group to be a valuable means of staff better understanding all that the People Strategy aspires to deliver. Such a forum could be a useful means of testing how well the communication channels with staff are working. Actively involving staff in the development of the new Corporate Strategy would also yield benefit in terms of securing wider buy-in and ownership. There would also be value in ELDC considering a wider Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy to support those teams with higher than average levels of sickness.

ELDC's Performance framework is comprehensive. However there may be some value in the council considering some form of exception reporting on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in order to maintain focus on delivering key priorities. There may also be some value in ensuring that all teams are approaching performance management function consistently as there was some evidence that there is a variance from team to team. There seems an abundance of KPIs and data but it was not always clear how well this is being used or how well staff understand the about added value of this information.

Performance information could be better used in challenging performance management of staff. There are policies and processes in place however these are not currently being used consistently across the board at ELDC. It appears resources could be better utilised through ensuring the existence of a 'Golden thread'. This would embed a more effective approach to corporate planning that ensures service plans are actively driving delivery; this link is not always apparent at present.

#### **4.4 Financial planning and viability**

The council is in a strong financial position given the current local government climate. ELDC benefits from good financial planning and awareness and the council has successfully delivered a four year cost reduction exercise. ELDC is in a strong financial position and is moving towards becoming a council well-placed to identify new commercial opportunities. The council has robust financial systems and processes and currently has an assured financial position.

The main observation from the team is that there is a mixed understanding of the financial position of the council both internally and externally. This has led to not all staff and stakeholders being as clear as they might be about the strong position of the council and this has led to some unwarranted and unhelpful uncertainty. There is an opportunity for clearer communication of the positive position that the council has worked so hard to achieve.

There is an opportunity for the council to undertake more benchmarking if there is a desire to compare costs to similar councils. This could be achieved through benchmarking of service costs assessed in the wider context of overall productivity. This has not so far been done and ELDC will need to invest in the tools required if it to do this effectively.

The review of the Corporate Plan and its priorities provides an opportunity to define the commercial ambition for the council as a whole and must include the role of core services in this overall picture. It would also give ELDC the opportunity to clearly spell out the purpose of its ideas for income generation and how this contributes more widely to longer term, strategically-driven financial sustainability.

#### **4.5 Capacity to deliver**

The new Growth Directorate has created additional capacity and the council's performance framework suggests good overall service performance.

Once the new corporate plan priorities have been confirmed, there will be the need to further review capacity and skill requirements to deliver. The Review team would strongly encourage ELDC to consider bringing in targeted programme and project management structures as current in-house capacity is unlikely to deliver the scale of ambition ELDC aspires to. The staff the team met were very keen for more business-like approach and recognise that there will be value in a clearly rationalised approach to income generation. Harnessing the energy that exists among managers and staff to help deliver the vision requires greater clarity of direction to yield all the benefits that could be achieved.

ELDC is already making good use of collaborative partnerships to deliver existing services through vehicles and initiatives such as PSPS, Magna Vitae and Health Lincolnshire. Going forward however the growth agenda will need a new approach and there needs to be a clear focus on understanding what is required in order to develop the internal capacity and capability to take on the different ways of 'doing business' that will be required.

The Review Team did not get a clear sense that the council is fully positioning itself to attract external funding and other resources which will contribute to its future aspirations. There will be a need to focus the Corporate Strategy on containing a narrative which outlines and prioritises this. This would move the council towards having a portfolio of projects which can clearly demonstrate their value in contributing to an overarching East Lindsey vision.

There is a recognition of the need to invest in management development and the Future leader programme is an example of this. However there would be benefit from an Investors in People framework or similar to fully realise the benefits the council is so keen to unlock. ELDC has a strong base of skilled and competent managers and staff operating in a culture which supports them. A fuller and more comprehensive approach to staff development delivered in the context of a clear framework would contribute positively to what the council wants to achieve through its people.

The digital and accommodation strategies will both need to be considered to enable the council to modernise and realise the full benefits. With regard to the use of technology and Artificial Intelligence there remains more work to do. However with a clear focus on linking this to the achievement of a clear Corporate Strategy vision this will not be insurmountable.

It will be important for ELDC to balance the growth agenda ambition with core service delivery. The ambitions of the council are shared by all staff but it will be very important to ensure that none of them feel left behind. The council's solid reputation is linked intrinsically to its effectiveness in core service delivery and it is important that the narrative of the new Corporate Strategy reflects the equal importance of both.

Ensuring all staff feel involved with, and able to contribute to, the new direction for the council will be important in recruitment and retention of ELDC workforce going forward. Again this is an area in which some more formal staff engagement structures would have some definite value.

Procurement risks are known in relation to the council's contracts register and aggregate spend but capacity and skills issues and the longer term approach does not include the growth agenda or opportunities including savings or social value. The new Corporate Strategy should put this part of ELDC's delivery into the wider context it will be contributing to.

ELDC has a collaborative Audit Partnership and there is a positive partnership approach to building capacity and resilience. This again represents good foundations on which the council can build for the future.

## **5. Next steps**

### **Immediate next steps**

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Mark Edgell, Principal Adviser is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). His contact details are: [mark.edgell@local.gov.uk](mailto:mark.edgell@local.gov.uk)

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the Council throughout the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of practice and further information and guidance about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform ongoing consideration.

### **Follow up visit**

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 2 years.

### **Next Corporate Peer Challenge**

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a Corporate Peer Challenge or Finance Peer Review every 4 to 5 years. It is therefore anticipated that the Council will commission their next Peer Challenge before 2024.