

Corporate Peer Challenge **Rother District Council**

18 – 20 July 2017

Feedback Report

1. Executive Summary

Rother District Council is a local authority that understands the nature of its communities and the challenges facing them, particularly in light of the demand issues arising from its elderly population. The council has a sound financial position, stable services and has identified the need to make significant changes to the way it works.

There is also clarity around the need to provide housing and employment for residents and to regenerate the town centres, particularly Bexhill on Sea. Significant investment has been levered in to the District in recent times, leading to big improvements on the seafront and the delivery of infrastructure which is a pre-requisite for the District's largest housing development in north Bexhill, which will provide over 1500 homes in the next few years.

The Council is seen as a good partner that delivers what it commits to and this aspect of its work has improved in recent years. The team was also impressed with the obvious commitment of both members and staff to the place of Rother, with many speaking in positive terms about working for the Council.

The Council has looked after its resources well and the assets it owns will provide further opportunities to generate growth in the area. However, the council has been cautious about taking risks, particularly in terms of treasury management and this may be a barrier to ambition.

The medium term financial strategy rightly identifies significant challenges which the Rother 2020 programme seeks to meet. The team concluded that more work needed to be done to prioritise the Rother 2020 programme as it was unclear what the outcomes for each workstream were. The focus will need to be on what will deliver the greatest impact and this should be around income generation. Consideration should be given to increase the resources dedicated to the programme as it is clear staff involved in the various workstreams are being stretched. . There are two key high risk IT projects being implemented and delivery of these projects should be the council's other priority area in the shorter term. The council should use its financial strength to build capacity to ensure all projects are delivered successfully.

The team felt that at senior management levels in the Council there was clarity about the direction of travel and a determination to deliver what was needed. More could be done to communicate this to staff at all levels and to build on good recent initiatives such as My Alerts to engage the community.

There seemed to be limited opportunities for senior members and officers to come together outside the formal decision making process to share their thinking. Members would benefit from support to become strategic and to encourage more challenge. The scrutiny function has recently been reviewed but members would benefit from looking at best practice examples elsewhere to ensure the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny.

The council is quite insular and generally does not look beyond East Sussex. It would be of benefit to look elsewhere in the country for innovation and inspiration and how transformational change can be carried out successfully.

Staff value the working environment, with good access to training and development opportunities. It will be important for the council to harness the talent in the organisation going forward. The draft workforce development strategy requires significant changes to ensure that the council has the workforce it needs for the future. An organisational development approach with a specific focus on culture change should be a consideration.

With the dedicated resources, sharper focus, clear outcomes, good communication and keeping its residents at the heart of everything it does, the council will be able to fulfil its ambitions.

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:

- **Prioritise your focus on income generation and IT projects** – The area of income generation is one which should provide the greatest returns as part of the Rother 2020 programme. To do this you should ensure that your investment and other strategies are aligned. Due to capacity issues and the high risk around the two key IT projects, this should be your other priority area.
- **Be clear about what you want to achieve from other strands of Rother 2020** – This means defining exactly what the outcomes of each workstream should be. 'Demand management' in particular is unclear at present – is it about channel shift or decreasing demand on services?
- **Use financial strength to invest in resources to deliver** – Your financial position is good and in order to deliver priority areas there needs to be investment in the capacity of these areas, including the appointment of project managers at an early stage and the use of external experts.
- **Support all members to become more strategic** – There are a range of development opportunities for portfolio holders that can be provided by the LGA (e.g. leadership programmes and mentoring).
- **Develop the effectiveness of Scrutiny** – Although Scrutiny has recently been reviewed, Members need to understand how a good overview and scrutiny function works. Support can be provided through the LGA.
- **Take opportunities to look beyond East Sussex for inspiration and innovation** – At a time of organisational change it is important to look beyond East Sussex to see how authorities have addressed transformational change. The review team and the LGA can provide you with opportunities to do this.
- **Account for risk rather than avoiding it** – The culture of financial risk aversion has led to caution and this is preventing the council moving forward at pace. A robust risk management approach around investment and regeneration will ensure that progress can be made in a measured way.
- **Improve staff communications** – Through greater use of the intranet, face to face communications, and regular weekly bulletins or blog posts. This will help to ensure that all staff are engaged and fully informed. Consider having an internal communications role within the council.

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 Rother District Council were:

- Louise Round – Chief Executive, Tandridge District Council
- Councillor John Cotton – Leader, South Oxfordshire District Council
- Sophie Hosking – Executive Director, West Devon Borough Council and South Hams District Council
- Anne-Louise Clark – Head of Transformation and Change, London Borough of Bexley
- Robin Beattie – Shadow Peer Challenge Manager, LGA
- Jill Emery – LGA Peer Challenge Manager

Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges. 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?

In addition to these questions, you asked the peer team to look at the Rother 2020 Programme and to answer some specific questions:

- Is there capacity within the Council to deliver on its Corporate Plan Priorities and the Rother 2020 programme?
- If not, how do we create this capacity?
- Is the Rother 2020 programme about right in what it aims to deliver? Is there anything that is missing?
- Does the Council have the necessary skills/ knowledge (including within its Members) to deliver the 2020 programme? If not what skills does the Council need to acquire?
- Does the organisational structure support the ambitions expressed through the Corporate Plan and the Rother 2020 programme?

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 council's needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. 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 three days on-site at Rother District Council, during which they:

- spoke to more than 40 people including a range of council staff together with councillors, external partners and stakeholders;
- gathered information and views from more than 34 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading; and
- collectively spent more than 180 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than five weeks in Rother District Council.

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 (18 – 20 July 2017). In presenting this 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

The Council's Corporate Plan 2014-2021 has four key aims in priority order:

- An efficient, flexible and effective council
- Sustainable economic prosperity
- Stronger, safer communities
- A quality physical environment

Under these aims, there are 29 corporate priority projects to be delivered by 2021. Seven projects have been completed to date. The plan was developed with a range of stakeholders including employees.

The district is the eleventh most expensive area outside London due to its low wage economy which creates affordable housing issues for local people. The council continues to address this through local affordable housing schemes.

There are clear long-term regeneration aspirations for the district in the corporate plan and the council has a good track record of project delivery. The team heard about the work on Bexhill seafront and the coastal cultural trail. Although projects have often been

controversial, the council has maintained focus and delivered projects that are ultimately viewed positively by residents and the local business community.

Team East Sussex was set up to deliver a six point plan which attracted funding through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). Sea Change Sussex, the regeneration company, has RDC Members on the board and has been instrumental in the delivery of key projects around the development of business parks and sites for businesses.

We saw examples of a number of projects delivered in recent years including the provision and promotion of small and start-up business units, such as Elva Way, that have encouraged economic growth in the district.

Partners told us that they work well with the council in improving the district and that the council is now more outward looking. The Local Plan has been agreed and work on neighbourhood plans is becoming challenging, with the decision on a neighbourhood plan for one area being taken to judicial review.

Homelessness applications are increasing and the district has no local accommodation, which is proving challenging. Eastbourne and Hastings are being used for temporary accommodation. The council is looking for solutions to provide temporary accommodation in the district other than bed and breakfast.

Community engagement needs to be more meaningful and not just rely on historical information about what customer needs and aspirations were. The district will be subject to demographic change and this will be reflected in different service demands. The peer team was often told that the population was made up of people coming to retire in the district and this seemed to inform service delivery. With new housing developments encouraging families to relocate to the district this will impact on the way services are delivered and reviewed. Some early thinking about different ways of engaging with communities has been taking place and there are plans to use 'My Alert' to gauge customer satisfaction and explore ways of using social media. The Citizens Panel has been reviewed recently and the number of residents reduced to make it more representative of the community.. A private Facebook page has been set up for the panel.

There is a perception from some parts of the community that urban areas of the district benefit more from what the council delivers in terms of regeneration. But other parts of the community feel that the rural areas benefit more from council projects. Access to funding through the SELEP has concentrated on the Bexhill area, in accordance with plans to take more housing and commercial development, but work has also taken place in rural communities to meet affordable housing needs. A 'whole district' narrative will help dispel some of these perceptions and members need to have an active role in this.

Generally, core services are satisfactory with few complaints. A total of 18 complaints were made to the Local Government Ombudsman in 2015/16, six of which proceeded to detailed investigations. Of these six, two were upheld. We heard from MPs and constituency managers that the council responded promptly to queries and complaints.

The council has recognised the need for targeted further and higher education provision in order for young people and residents to gain qualifications that will lead to employment and raise aspirations. Work with the universities of Sussex and Brighton to focus on skills development is seen as important. Section 106 agreements have been used to include apprenticeships. However, overall the council has only a patchy reflection of what young people in the district want in terms of services and what their

aspirations are. There has been some work done through sport focussed on young people but there is not a co-ordinated approach to seeking the views of young people.

4.2 Leadership of Place

It was clear that cultural regeneration is very important in the district. The continued financial support to the De La Warr Pavilion and to a range of cultural activities, including the promotion of heritage assets and developing a cultural corridor, are among the ambitions of the council. Work with the SELEP to improve the infrastructure to aid this and other regeneration projects is seen as positive. The completion of the Link Road was a major part of this.

There is strong partnership working which is appreciated by partners. We were told that the council can be 'trusted to deliver what they say they will deliver'. The council has a good relationship with Sea Change Sussex as the delivery partner for the regeneration and economic development programme. The council knows what needs to be done and are ambitious and prepared to be part of projects. This has been a significant shift as we were told that there was a time when the council was excluded from projects on the basis that they were not willing partners.

The use of 'My Alerts' has been well received by the community as a way of keeping them informed of what is happening in the district. This includes news of events, planning applications, consultations and refuse and recycling information. The team was told that alerts went out to over 25,000 e-mail addresses.

The council has maintained the Community Grants Scheme and has contributed over £65k to organisations across the district in 2016/17. The grants scheme provides small grants up to £500, medium one-off grants of up to £5000 and a large grants scheme of up to £30,000. These grants provide £130,000 per annum into the community and are valued by the voluntary and community sector.

More could be done to incentivise developers to build sites that have already received planning approval which would begin to address the housing issues in the district although it is recognised that is an issue across the country.

A very significant grant from the Community Housing Fund will enable the council to look at further affordable housing in the rural areas of Rother and how housing can be delivered in the future through either co-operatives, community interest companies or community land trusts. The use of exception sites has enabled homes to be built in rural locations for people with local connections. One example was 13 homes in Brede.

There are a number of schemes that are currently stalled for a number of reasons. One case in particular is the Leisure Centre where there are a number of unforeseen challenging land issues to be resolved. Members, especially those who are also County Councillors, could use their influence to move this and other projects forward. Progress is also slow on the introduction of civil parking enforcement and this is becoming a real issue in Rye and Camber Sands and Members could take a more pro-active role in progressing this.

4.3 Organisational leadership and governance

Staff value the open and friendly working environment and RDC has a very loyal workforce. The council has a significant number of long-serving employees. We heard that

managerial leadership had improved in recent years. Partners, staff and members said that the Executive Director leadership was appreciated and that Directors are accessible. Recent restructures, although difficult, have created new ways of working which were seen as positive by staff.

The team were told that staff often identified areas for improvement but were not always supported to take these forward. The council should explore (as part of its new way of working) whether there are any blockages to new ideas and empower staff to implement improvements and new ideas within a clearly communicated and understood risk management framework.

The Leader of the Council has been prominent in the organisation for a number of years and has a clear sense of the challenges facing the organisation. He is well informed about the day-to-day activities of the council and can readily pull these different strands together to form a more strategic narrative about both achievements and future potential.

Cabinet members are keen and well-versed in their portfolios and want to do a good job. There are good member/ officer relations, however the respect members have for officers may lead to occasions where there is insufficient challenge from members to officers. More opportunities for debate about key future developments need to be created. It is suggested that regular meetings between Executive Directors, Service Heads and Portfolio Holders will enable members to be familiar with future projects and service issues. Members need to be encouraged to use their political drive and energy more frequently. It is suggested that member development should focus on strategic leadership to assist members fulfil their strategic community role.

On a number of occasions we heard that Rother was 'sedate' and that there was 'corporate dithering' on Rother 2020 which gives the impression that there is no sense of urgency in driving projects and programmes forward. Political caution is one of the key factors in the pace of change.

The council's Forward Plan is limited and it is questionable whether it is compliant in relation to key decisions that the council or cabinet members will be taking in the future. The current plan only has two items, one of which (devolution) is no longer relevant. The council needs to make sure that the Forward Plan is both compliant and accessible to give councillors and residents the opportunity to see what major decisions are planned to be taken and consider how/ if they wish to contribute to the debate.

Similarly, the council would benefit from Scrutiny having an enhanced role. The peer team understands that changes have been made to the Scrutiny process but this is a very recent development and is yet to have an impact. Members would benefit from visits to other authorities where Scrutiny is seen as being innovative and working well.

Currently there is a lack of a single narrative that brings together the council's Corporate Plan and the Rother 2020 programme which means that staff and members are unclear about how everything joins together. Consideration could be given to including Rother 2020 as part of the delivery of the council's priority – 'an effective, efficient and flexible council' which may help in communicating its purpose.

Internal and external communication was found to be limited. Staff from across the council told us that there was an annual briefing with Executive Directors, but that there was no regular mechanism for the Executive Directors to communicate on a regular basis with staff. Communication was left to service heads cascading information to staff and the peer team was told this was inconsistent. There could be a better use of the council's intranet or a regular e-mail bulletin from the Executive Directors. The peer team gave examples from their own councils on the use of blogs or a Friday Bulletin. The lack of internal

communication has meant that not all staff had a full understanding of the Rother 2020 programme.

External communications is managed by East Sussex County Council and it was not clear if all staff were aware of the protocols for external communications. Some of the peer team had been following Rother on Twitter prior to the review and it was noticeable that many of the 'tweets' were retweeted East Sussex information, rather than RDC-led news.

Although there is good networking across East Sussex, there have been no visits to councils where there is inspirational work taking place around transformation. Staff and members would benefit from seeing how other councils have addressed similar issues.

Although the peer team did not look in depth at risk management the team was told that there was a lack of consistency around risk management across different services. A mandate for all services to review risk will ensure a corporate approach to risk.

4.4 Financial planning and viability

The council is in a sound financial position with large reserves, a good asset base of over 300 assets, and a healthy balance sheet. It has a reputation for being financially prudent which demonstrates that the council is not seen as spending money unnecessarily. This has however resulted in unplanned underspends in recent years.

There is now a new approach to budgeting which has stripped out underspending and provides a true budget picture and generally there is a positive new approach to addressing the financial future of the council.

The peer team heard from officers and members that the council has been cautious around investments, partly as a result of issues with the banking system in the past. This has led to the council being reluctant to take risks which has impacted on financial planning and viability. There needs to be clarity around the council's appetite for risk in order to achieve its ambitions.

With the ending of Revenue Support Grant in 2018/19, the council needs to look at other income streams. Part of this will be to see how an asset strategy, investment strategy and treasury management strategy can be integrated and developed. Income generation can come from a number of sources but there needs to be a clear direction on how current and future assets can be used – will it be a source of income, a contribution to the regeneration of the district and housing provision or a combination of both?

Many local authorities are looking to be more commercial as a means of generating income and there is a growing body of practice and examples from across the public sector that can inform the debate, including a range of information and case studies on the LGA website at: <http://www.local.gov.uk/commercialisation>.

In terms of Treasury Management the council will need to decide about areas of investment and review its strategy on borrowing, use of reserves, investment returns and approach to risk. This will enable the council to be flexible and make the best use of its financial resources.

A review of fees, charges and costings should be undertaken to ensure that where possible services are being charged for on a full cost recovery basis. This includes the back office and hidden costs such as processing payments by cheque. Car parking charges and garden waste collections are also areas where more income could be generated. Overall there is caution about charging and finances.

There a range of formal and informal shared services with other local authorities. The peer team heard of examples of Rother running services with other local authorities. The costs of other local authorities administering these services and the associated costs should be reviewed. The council must ensure that these shared services provide value for money.

The Capital Programme for 2016/17 was £5.2m, but only £2.6m was spent. The peer team understand that this was due to delays with the former Bexhill High School site and the land swap issues with East Sussex County Council and the proposed Leisure Centre scheme being delayed because of land ownership difficulties. For 2017/18 there is very little capital spend planned and this would not seem to reflect the Council's plans for housing and growth. If major projects such as the Leisure Centre do commence in 2017/18 then this will result in significant capital spend.

4.5 Capacity to deliver

Rother is proactive about sharing services and achieving good results which is resulting in improved capacity, resilience and cost savings. A number of services are shared with Wealden, including equalities, procurement, environmental health and licensing and legal services. The implementation of a new finance and HR IT system is being shared with Hastings Borough Council. There are also informal working arrangements with Hastings BC around elections to increase resilience across the two authorities. The council is also part of SE Shared Services e-procurement portal. Rother is the administering authority for the current joint waste contract, comprising Eastbourne, Hastings, Wealden and Rother and work is also progressing on the procurement of a new waste management contract with Hastings, Wealden and Rother.

The peer team saw energy, enthusiasm, collaboration and commitment across some middle managers and key staff who are keen to deliver projects and the Rother 2020 Programme. However, there is an apparent lack of a performance management culture to deal with under performance. This can impact on staff morale, although we were told that morale was generally good. There has been a 46% increase in overall sickness absence in the council, with a 180% increase in short-term sickness absence. The council will need to explore the reasons for this and whether it is related to staff undertaking a number of roles.

Currently there is an expectation that staff will participate in elements of the Rother 2020 programme as well as carrying out their day-to-day duties. There does need to be greater clarity on priorities so staff are clear and they are not conflicted in their roles.

The Corporate Plan contains 29 projects and the peer team were unclear whether the resources required for these projects had been identified and what the impact would be on individuals and other services. A clear resource allocation against projects, taking into account day to day service delivery will help identify shortfalls in capacity. In addition, staff were being asked to carry out work that might be better achieved through external experts. For example finance staff are involved in net present value calculations and due diligence for property and investment projects and this may not represent the best use of their time or reflect the current skills mix.

Staff really value the personal and professional development opportunities they are given. We heard numerous examples of individual staff being supported through degrees and diploma programmes in addition to skills-based training. Rother manages the Sussex Training Consortium for all the authorities across Sussex which provides a range of development opportunities. The council has also 'grown its own' staff in skill

shortage areas such as planning. A shortage of planners nationally is having an impact on this service and the council needs to explore a range of recruitment initiatives to attract staff. Options have been discussed on how the issue might be addressed.

It was clear that there has been no cultural diagnostic carried out to ascertain whether the current council culture is the right culture for the future. It will be important for the council to work with staff to identify which parts of the culture need to be retained and what needs to be done to create a culture for the future. Staff engagement appears to be limited and there have been no staff surveys for several years. This should be addressed to provide a baseline for future measurement and to obtain staff views.

We could not determine in the short time available to us whether the headcount for the council was right for the delivery of the projects in the corporate plan and what is required for the Rother 2020 programme. What will be important is for the council to be clear what skills are needed and whether the current workforce has the right skills and are doing the right things in the right place. The workforce development strategy we saw needs further development to be able to define what is required in terms of a workforce for the future. Overall there appears to be a gap in organisational development capacity in the council which is hindering progress on organisational change and a holistic view of the Rother 2020 programme.

4.6 Rother 2020 Programme

The council has developed the Rother 2020 Programme as a means of meeting a £1.8m funding gap. There are a range of workstreams which present a sensible suite of solutions to meet the financial challenges. The programme has a narrow focus and if the council wants to transform the way it works this will also need investment.

Staff working on the Rother 2020 programme workstreams are committed and optimistic about delivering the savings. There has been some progress on the programme since the launch in September 2016 and some staff feel it will be difficult to achieve all the targets by 2020 due to capacity issues.

Although the staff involved in the workstreams knew about the programme there was an apparent lack of awareness of the programme amongst the workforce as a whole. Briefings for all staff took place in the Autumn of 2016 and there have been no regular updates on progress to the staff. This reinforces the need to improve internal communications. There was a real concern from some staff that the programme would lead to future redundancies. The programme had been developed with Service Managers and the Senior Leadership Team in conjunction with an external consultancy which has resulted in a lack of engagement and ownership by all staff.

Members were less clear about the programme than should be the case and it would be helpful if there was member sponsorship for Rother 2020 going forward.

The programme contains a list of efficiency projects which are not prioritised. This makes it difficult to identify resources to deliver the programme and maintain services. We also felt that the targets for the lean workstream (£500k) and demand management (£300k) to be unrealistic and too high. There may well be merit in a programme of service reviews using lean principles but officers seemed to accept that once complete, this should free up capacity to focus on other areas, rather than lead to the ability to reduce staff numbers and thereby reduce cost. We were also struck by the absence of reference to customer (or resident) needs when this aspect of the programme was being described.

There is however a great deal of scope to increase the target for income generation, currently £600k, to £1m. The council may wish to review the whole programme against a matrix of Impact/Achievability and then prioritise accordingly.

As the council embarks on the introduction of a range of new ICT systems; the new Agresso (U4BWO) system, a new CRM system (Firmstep) and document imaging and workflow there is a real capacity gap and low resilience. These projects will need additional capacity and support from the senior leadership to avoid the risks associated with not hitting the scheduled deadlines.

In addition there is a demand on HR services to deliver a workforce strategy and address the HR issues surrounding the programme and reskilling staff for the future. External communications is outsourced to East Sussex County Council leaving a gap in internal communications. All of these factors will impact on the successful delivery of the programme and the delivery of the council corporate plan.

Throughout the peer challenge we heard that people were committed to making the district better for residents yet there was no real focus on customer needs in the Rother 2020 programme. Customers were rarely mentioned in the interviews throughout the peer challenge. All the workstreams will have some impact on customers but they appear to have a silent voice.

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. Mona Sehgal, Principal Adviser is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). Her contact details are: 07795 291006 and Email mona.seghal@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 2022.