

Scrutiny Overview Committee

Agenda
Item No.

DATE: 20 April, 2023

7.

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Findings and Action Plan

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr M Bird - Leader

Report:

The Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) process is an opportunity for Councils to engage with peers and elected members from other areas who have experience on specific areas or issues. It is recommended that Councils undertake a CPC every 5 years to allow the organisation the space for reflection, stocktake and consideration of its future direction. The last peer challenge assessment in Walsall was undertaken in 2017 and was the catalyst for the Proud transformation programme that has delivered a fundamental shift in Council services and delivery.

From 16-19 January 2023, we welcomed a team of peers to Walsall, including senior officers and one Member from leading Councils across the country. During their visit the peer team spoke to 120 staff, Members, volunteers, and partners through group workshops, focus groups, 1-1 conversations and examination of Council strategies and plans.

The peer team's final report, including 11 recommendations for further consideration, was shared with the Council in February in draft form. The final version went to Cabinet in March 2023, alongside an Action Plan (appendix 2) that was developed to highlight the Council response to the report's recommendations. The responses and actions we have set out highlight that many programmes and specific activities that address the recommendations were already planned before the CPC or indeed are already underway. However, the review gives the Council a valuable external perspective, and is an opportunity to reflect and consider how we might add to our existing plans to strengthen the next stage of our transformation journey.

The final report was very positive on the progress Walsall Council has made across a number of challenging areas. Some of these are highlighted in the report (appendix 1) and presentation. Members were singled out for praise for their broad local knowledge of the communities they serve and the trusting and effective relationships that exist between officers and Members across the Council.


Recommendations:

That:

- Members note the findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge and the successes that it highlights.
- Members note the recommendations that the LGA put forward, and the Action Plan produced as a response that sets out all the activity already planned or in progress.


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