

**COMMITTEE REPORT**

**CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**30 JUNE 2016**

**COUNCIL IMPROVEMENT PLAN – INITIAL REPORT**

**PAUL STEPHENS – HEAD OF PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to:
  - the reasons why a Council Improvement Plan has been developed;
  - outline work to date that has been undertaken to create the Plan; and
  - seek the Committee's approval for its proposed role in relation to oversight of this plan.

**BACKGROUND**

2. In January 2016 the Council underwent a Corporate Peer Review process. The purpose of the peer review was to provide an independent assessment of the Council's current position, and identify where improvements could be made to improve governance and key outcomes for the town.
3. The review identified many positives during their time on site including:
  - strong management arrangements;
  - a clear vision;
  - the 'outcome-based' management structure;
  - managers positive about innovation and change, the 'Middlesbrough Manager' programme is well-regarded, and staff were empowered;
  - strengths in financial stewardship, a track record in delivering savings, and plans in relation to performance, programme and project management were positive developments, though at an early stage; and
  - the Council's level of self-awareness.
4. In addition, the review made nine 'key recommendations', mainly around the corporate governance framework of the Council which were also replicated within other inspection and reviews that had taken place recently.
5. In a report on the Corporate Peer Review submitted in March 2016, Executive agreed that one overarching Council Improvement Plan should be created to ensure that findings from the Corporate Peer Review and the other reviews and inspections were

captured within one document. This would ensure a coherent approach was taken on overall improvements to the governance framework.

### **Creating and Refining the Plan**

6. The draft Council Improvement Plan (CIP), attached at Appendix A, was created and submitted to Executive in May 2016. At that point, Executive approved the appointment of Deloitte to review the content of the draft plan. Deloitte will recommend any amendments that may be necessary to ensure that the proposed actions within the plan will effectively address the issues identified by the various reviews and inspections. This piece of work is due to be completed in July 2016.
7. If changes are required, the CIP will be revised by the end of July. In addition to reviewing the content of the CIP, Deloitte has also been asked to identify areas where it believes the Council would benefit from additional specialist support in order to achieve improvements to elements of its governance framework. If this is required it will be reflected within the revised CIP.

### **Monitoring delivery of improvement actions**

8. Once finalised the CIP will be subject to regular member monitoring to ensure effective oversight. Executive agreed that this would be undertaken as follows:
  - quarterly progress reports to the Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee (subject to the Committee's diary planning process); and
  - six-monthly progress reports to Executive.
9. The first progress reports will be taken to Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee on 29 September 2016 and Executive on 6 December 2016.

### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. There were costs associated with the appointment of Deloitte; however they were agreed by Executive in the May 2016 report.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

11. It is recommended that Corporate Affairs and Audit Committee agree the proposed monitoring schedule for implementation of the Council Improvement Plan and note progress to date.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

12. Executive reports:
  - Corporate Peer Review – final report and draft action plan – 12 March 2016
  - Council Improvement Plan – 10 May 2016.

### **AUTHOR**

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