

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transformation and Performance

Annual Council – 19 May 2015

WLGA PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN

Purpose:	To report the Action Plan and progress to date in response to the WLGA Peer Review.
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FOR INFORMATION	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) peer review for Swansea took place between 29 September and 1 October 2014. Three key areas of focus were agreed for the Peer Review:

Governance	The effectiveness of our internal arrangements in providing sound, robust and transparent governance for our changing requirements
Change	Our ability to manage change across the organisation, to communicate & engage staff in change. Especially the Innovation Programme
Delivery	Our capacity and capability to deliver: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improvement Priorities• Policy Commitments• And in particular <i>Sustainable Swansea – fit for the future</i>

- 1.2 The Review Team fed back the headlines at the conclusion of the process. The Review Report was received in December 2014 and reported to Cabinet and Council in February 2015.

2.0 Peer Review Report

- 2.1 The Peer Review report is attached as **Appendix A**. The report contains both areas of strength and areas for improvement, against the 3 themes and 20 recommendations.
- 2.2 The Team found a clear sense of pride in the city and the council and a commitment to improving the lives of residents. Equally they found a Council that provides good services, is aware of the scale of the challenges ahead and has evident talent to lead the transformation required.
- 2.3 Whilst the Team were positive about the Council's self-awareness and our plans for change, they were less convinced that the vision and detail behind this is in place. A key recommendation from the Review, which is an area where work has already started, is the need for a "Swansea Story".
- 2.4 The findings on Governance, Change and Delivery equally show areas of real strength as well as areas where we need to improve. The dominant themes from this are:
- Quicker and smoother decision making with a greater focus on action, not meetings
 - Working as "one Council" and breaking down service silos, particularly in implementing change, sharing resources and fostering innovation
 - Establishing a single and consistent narrative for change, linked to visible and empowering leadership at all levels, shared learning and greater staff engagement
 - Develop the Council's role as a city and community leader and a stronger presence for Swansea, working with partners
 - Becoming a more commercial organisation, developing skills, developing opportunities for trading and exploiting our assets
 - And finally - and perhaps most importantly - the theme that is woven throughout the report is that of the need for **cultural change to underpin, enable and drive the transformational changes** we have to make across the Council in the next few years

3.0 Action Plan

- 3.1 The Peer Review Team acknowledge in their report that the Council is already implementing a number of their recommendations and, in that sense, the report reinforces our direction of travel.
- 3.2 That said, it is imperative that we respond positively and swiftly to the report's recommendations. An Action Plan is attached as **Appendix B**, with actions grouped by the three themes of Governance, Change and Delivery, with a link to the relevant recommendations in the Review report.
- 3.3 Clearly, because the Peer Review was concluded some time ago, a number of actions are already in hand, but can, of course, be added to.

3.4 The key actions are:

- A governance review... how we make decisions as Members and Officers
- Review of the role of the Local Strategic Board... and other city partnerships
- Developing the “Swansea Story”... and how we engage everyone in this narrative
- Redoubling our efforts on employee engagement... as part of the Innovation Programme
- Agreeing a change plan for the delivery of *Sustainable Swansea*... working as one Council
- A plan to deliver our community leadership ambitions... including city centre regeneration and local area management
- Developing a commercial organisation... to exploit every opportunity to increase income

4.0 Implementation

4.1 As part of our implementation arrangements we will:

- Communicate the actions to Members, (via Council), staff and partners
- Develop detailed actions to implement the changes, ensuring accountability, clear measures and timescales
- Ensure that the actions integrate with existing major plans, in particular:
 - Revised Corporate Plan
 - *Sustainable Swansea – fit for the future*
 - Innovation Programme
 - Other key plans, such as the Poverty Strategy
- Dovetail the actions with the findings from the Welsh Audit Office Corporate Assessment, which we expect to receive in April 2015
- Incorporate relevant recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel report on Corporate Culture, due to report in the next few months
- Quarterly updates on progress

4.2 There are also a number of key themes that need to guide our implementation over the next 12 months:

THEME	COMMENTS
Cultural Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All aspects of the action plan relate in some way to the need for the Council to change the way it works • The change plan “Working Together, Working Differently” will provide a framework for this • This will involve Members as well as Officers
Pace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that we make progress on the key areas quickly • This means that not all the detail will necessarily be in place at the outset, but it is vital that there is a clear message to the organisation the changes are being made
Celebrate Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Peer Review commented on the amount of good work that is going in Swansea, but found that we didn't do enough to publicise this within and outside the Council • We need, therefore, to take every opportunity to do this as part of our actions and to share good practice across the Council
Learning from Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the implementation of the action plan and other things that we do, we will look to learn from good practice elsewhere (and share our own) • The visit to Nottingham City Council was part of this learning and the Executive Board is also meeting with Cardiff's management team

5.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

5.1 As part of progressing some pieces of work in the action plan consideration will be given to whether the EIA process needs to be utilised including any requirements for engagement.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, delivery of a number of the recommendations will assist the Council to achieve savings and additional income.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix A – City and County of Swansea Peer Review 2014
Appendix B – Peer Review Action Plan