

## Peer Challenge Improvement Plan – Appendix A

Areas for Consideration	Actions	Progress against Improvement Plan Actions (February 2014)
Removing silos and working as One Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive to assess the merit of individual Portfolio Holders taking on sponsorship role for each of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Executive had some concern regarding this recommendation as it was of the view that the Council was functioning in a joined-up fashion with matters being addressed from a One Council perspective. Nevertheless it agreed to examine the issue. It therefore asked officers to consider whether there would be any business merit in individual Portfolio Holders taking the sponsorship lead on different SCS themes. Officers quickly came to the conclusion that there would be an immediate problem with this suggestion as it was considered that the current SCS was too broad and lacked focus. Consequently, Executive asked the SCS to be refreshed and a new SCS was agreed by Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2014. Officers have now put in place arrangements whereby a Service Area Head is taking the lead on a SCS theme and regular dialogue will take place with Executive upon progress with an annual report to Council as part of the Fit For the Future (FFF) reporting arrangements. Members of CMT will continue to take the lead on Town Centre development - Kenilworth (CE); Leamington (BH); Warwick and Whitnash (AJ) – and focus on the deprived wards – Leamington Brunswick; Leamington Crown; Warwick West – will continue to take a cross-Council approach.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposals following Service interventions to receive peer challenge from other Service Heads</li> <li>Senior Management Team to review its meeting arrangements to ensure cross-cutting issues is regularly addressed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Service Area Heads have now completed <i>Service Interventions</i> across the whole of the Council's Service structure with the exception of Phase II of Housing &amp; Property Services which is expected to be concluded in the early summer. For those Service Areas that had not concluded their respective intervention, their service proposals were critically challenged by peers and this was felt to have had a positive impact on the process.</li> <li>The Senior Management Team (SMT) meets on a monthly basis and has a set meeting agenda. A review of this agenda identified that some of the Council's key issues were not being discussed at SMT level although the Corporate Management Team would discuss the issues on a weekly basis at their Monday meeting. Consequently it was agreed that the following matters would be standing items on the SMT meeting agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Plan</li> <li>City Deal</li> <li>Major Projects</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>It is felt by officers that this has had an immediate benefit in enabling Service Heads to be more up-to-date in respect of significant cross-cutting issues.</p>
Improving the effectiveness of Community Forums and understanding the needs of our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers are working with Warwickshire County Council (WCC) to mitigate any impact on Community Forum arrangements as a consequence of the County's staffing review. Work is ongoing with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In late 2012 WCC undertook a staffing review which reduced the level of resource being invested in the WDC/WCC Community Partnership Team (CPT). However, by working closely with WCC the Team was able to mitigate the impact of the resource reduction and the level of service</li> </ul>

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	<p>the Portfolio Holder to reduce the bureaucracy involved in supporting the Forums;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of Mosaic citizen classification system to be more widely used with a training programme put in place for senior managers and training for Members to be offered as part of the Member Development Programme.</li> </ul>	<p>has not been affected. However, the Portfolio Holder was of the belief that further work could be undertaken to further reduce the level of bureaucracy required to provide the CPT's services. A further review led to discussions with the Community Forum Chairs and it has been agreed for 2014/15 that the Chairs will have more freedom as to how they manage their Community Forum arrangements and good practice will be shared on an on-going basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mosaic is a tool which enables an understanding of customers at a Street level. It is not an inexpensive tool and requires a level of understanding that is difficult to harness on an ad-hoc basis. Consequently, when officers have considered service re-design and improvements, they have tended to use other methods such as surveys and consultation. Given the current financial climate, it is not considered value for money to continue to subscribe to Mosaic and so that tool will no longer be used. However, officers will be reviewing how they can ensure that they have a good understanding of customer need and desires.</li> </ul>
Ensuring Members receive a complete picture of service delivery performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce new corporate measures and report to Members through Fit For the Future and Portfolio Holder Statement updates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate Measures have been introduced; however, these are currently only reported to SMT and not Members. Officers have recognized that the move away from Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting on a monthly basis to half-yearly updates through the FFF</li> </ul>

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		<p>arrangements has made it difficult for Members to keep up-to-date on how the Council is performing against the Service measures it has put in place. Therefore in accordance with the transparency agenda and subject to Executive approval, officers are proposing that Service and Corporate Measures are published on-line on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>Clarifying the roles of and relationships between Corporate Management Team and Senior Management Team</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of CMT/SMT arrangements to led by Chief Executive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMT and SMT have spent a significant amount of time examining how the two teams work together including an Away Day and dedicated time for discussion. CMT also procured an independent trainer to observe and comment on how the teams interacted. Officers feel that good progress has been made and there is now a more honest and open approach to discussing the Council's key issues.</li> </ul>
<p>Delivering the cultural change strand of Fit For the Future and being clear about what the "new" culture looks like</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Executive to initiate programme of awareness/engagement covering SMT, Senior Officers Meeting, Executive, Council;</li> <li>• "New" Culture to be agreed and signed-off by SMT/Executive/ Council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FFF is made up of three strands – Money; Services; People – It is the last of the strands (previously cultural change) which has been the most difficult to address as it has been a challenge to precisely define exactly what the Council needs to "look like" in the future. Officers have put in place a matrix which describes what officers need to do "more of", "less of" and "continue with" which has also enabled a "cultural barometer" to be put in place as a tool for measuring the progress of cultural change. However, it is recognised that this is still work in progress and officers have recently started a new programme of engagement to better define and</li> </ul>

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		<p>communicate the new culture that is trying to be achieved. This work is being hampered by the difficulties in recruiting a new Human Resources/Organisational Development Manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Improving communication to members of staff emphasising the Fit For the Future programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create staff Focus group;</li> <li>• Regularly report findings to CMT and CMT to act on those findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication has improved markedly with the organization and an Action Plan is place which is monitored by the Corporate Management Team. A Senior Officers Meeting on the subject of FFF in November 2013 was particularly well received.</li> </ul>
Ensuring the development of a sound local plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the plan is based on sound evidence with full engagement of Executive/Group Leaders/Party Groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work continues on the development of the Local Plan and the Council is on track for draft submission in April 2014.</li> </ul>
Ensuring achievable savings are included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual budget process to be robust with full involvement of Leader/Deputy/Portfolio Holder for Finance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council continues to manage its budget very effectively with no impact on service provision. Despite further reductions in Government funding the proposed deficit is "only" £1m. Officers are exploring further initiatives to address this gap.</li> </ul>