

South Ribble Council – LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan – 2021/22

All actions to be owned by Senior Management Team

Recommendation	Description	Action	Timescale
1: Embed a culture of good governance	<p>SRBC need to build on their momentum and progress regarding governance. This includes ensuring that their existing reforms have embedded within the organisation's processes, practice, and culture, as well as considering further areas that may not currently be within the scope of the Council's existing action plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refresh the governance action plan alongside the production of service assurance statements Monitor progress through the Corporate Governance Committee Refresh governance training and support for staff and new starters Build awareness and strong governance culture through the 'Passport to People Management' course to be completed by all managers 	<p>By March 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>By January 2022</p> <p>By April 2022</p>
2: Provide full clarity on the ambition and plans for shared services	<p>One of the strongest themes to emerge during this peer review was the shared services arrangement with Chorley Council. It is the view of the peer team that the Council needs to be clearer on the overarching vision, aims and timescales relating to shared services including the processes that will be used to achieve these. This presents the opportunity to build on the progress that SRBC have made on shared services to-date and generate further staff support for future phases. This issue was also highlighted in the LGA revisit to SRBC following their 2017 Corporate Peer Challenge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage political leadership at both councils to determine the aspirations for future shared services Maintain effective internal communication around future changes and develop a specific comms plan for future change if appropriate Consolidate phase 1 and 2 shared services by delivering the service development plans and completing benefits realisation 	<p>By November 2021</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

3. Programme Plan for future work and political priorities	<p>There are several key priorities that exist at SRBC simultaneously. This includes a corporate commitment to governance improvements, an ambitious capital programme, COVID-19 recovery proposals, and future ambitions for shared services. Whilst this ambition is laudable, there is a need for the Council to carefully programme manage interdependencies and ensure that there is appropriate corporate capacity to deliver this breadth and depth of work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforce the Corporate Strategy as the key document setting out the vision, priorities and long term outcomes • Ensure that the council's budget and medium term financial strategy plans and resources the priorities identified in the corporate strategy • Embed the performance management framework through mandatory training, a network of officers and internal audit programme • Quarterly Senior Management Team programme board meetings to monitor Corporate Strategy programme delivery and business plan delivery 	<p>Corporate Strategy programme to be approved by Council November 2021</p> <p>Budget set up end of February 2022</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing, with quarterly SMT meetings</p>
4. Medium Term Financial Strategy	<p>The Council has managed their finances well in responding to the immediate issues of COVID 19. However, the Council's current MTFs contains a rising budget gap through to 2024, and further work is required to assure proposals already contained and develop further policy options for future years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deliver the transformation programme of actions to address future budget challenges 	<p>February 2022</p>
5. Assurance on capital programme delivery	<p>The Council plans to significantly increase their capital delivery programme over the next four-years. However, this is a largely borrowing funded programme and the minimum revenue provision of these plans should be built into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Further research should also take place on capital funding for this programme as borrowing from PWLB is more difficult than it has been in the past and cannot be used for any form of financial yield.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a methodology for assessing capital programme projects that may require PWLB funding to ensure it meets the new requirements • Continue to ensure that the budget accounts for the minimum revenue provision required by the capital programme 	<p>December 2022</p> <p>February 2022 and ongoing</p>

6. Organisational development and Management Practice:	<p>The Councillors and Officers of SRBC have worked extremely hard to support residents throughout the Coronavirus pandemic and political and managerial leaders are rightly proud of these achievements. As the country moves through the national roadmap to ease restrictions, SRBC should consider how these achievements are recognised, managing the wider workforce in returning to the workplace, and introductions for those who may have joined the Council during this period. There is also a need for more standardised practice to HR across council directorates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the staff thank you and recognition event in October 2021 • Roll out the new corporate induction process to ensure comprehensive training for new staff • Deliver the Passport to People Management programme to ensure consistent management standards 	<p>October 2021</p> <p>December 2021</p> <p>March 2022</p>
7. Community Hubs	<p>SRBC have developed a community led approach to resident engagement through their Community Hubs. This model has real potential to reshape the Council's dialogue and relationship with its residents. This approach also has the potential to support improved engagement with residents, and SRBC should consider the impact of Community Hubs on their wider methods and channels of engagement, including the approach to incorporating questions at physical meetings. These issues should be included in the review of Community Hubs in the Autumn of 2021 to ensure that this opportunity is not treated in isolation and is instead considered alongside wider impact on the Council's relationship with residents and all the Council's work. These community hubs provide a new opportunity for the Council to raise the profile of their wider services with residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete an interim review of community hubs in autumn 2021 with full review in March 2022 • Implement the recommendations of the review 	<p>November 2021/March 2022</p>
8. Political engagement in a balanced authority	<p>The finely balanced politics of SRBC places further emphasis on the need for effective cross-party working relations. Given the challenges ahead it is important to ensure, where possible, a strong cross-party consensus on many of the priority and long-term issues that are facing the borough. This should include consideration of the contribution that Scrutiny can make to provide constructive challenge on issues and building on the sharing of information across political groups that has been developed during the COVID pandemic.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular all party Leader meetings • We will work with the LGA and CfGS to examine our approach to our committee meetings to ensure they reflect best practice. As part of this we will also consider the effectiveness of the scrutiny function. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By March 2022</p>

