



South Hams
District Council

Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

2024

Approved by Executive –19/09/2024

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Introduction

Following a Local Government Association peer review in March 2024 the team made a number of recommendations to us. The recommendations being:-

1. Have a relentless focus on the delivery of the council plan
2. Create opportunities for your senior leadership team to focus on the key challenges and opportunities ahead
3. Agree your desired approach to community development and then create a structured approach to delivery
4. Use the opportunity provided by the new council plan to revisit your stakeholder engagement
5. Tell your story louder – which clearly articulates both your vision for place and the impact of your activity
6. Build upon the foundations of your new organisational development plan over the next 2 to 3 years to ensure you can meet new and emerging challenges and opportunities
7. Develop a 4-year member development programme that maximises the input and engagement of your members
8. Review the role, function and purpose of advisory panels and working groups

This document sets out how we intend to take forward the suggestions of the Peer Challenge team.



Recommendation 1 – Have a relentless focus on delivery of the council plan

The Peer team said:- ‘Focus your capacity on delivering your plans – recognise anything new will require a review of council plans and activity.

Action Plan

Acti on Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
1.1	Implement our enhanced performance management reporting processes to ensure effective oversight of delivery	Re-commence Integrated Performance Management Reports to Executive	Completed July 2024	Leader / Chief Executive
		Reinstate Thematic deep dive reports to Overview and Scrutiny	Completed June 2024	Executive Leads / Assistant Director Strategy
		Refreshed Key Performance Indicator reports to Overview and Scrutiny	Early Autumn	Executive Lead - Performance and IT /Deputy Chief Executive/ Director of Governance
1.2	Develop a change control process for the Council Plan	Agreed process and ownership with Exec Members to make any additions/ amendments to the delivery plans	Completed - agreed July 2024	Leader / Director of Governance
1.3	Ensure our delivery plan remains appropriately resourced	Review of draft Year 2 delivery plan aligned to budget setting for 2025/26	Commence review Autumn 2024 Year 2 Delivery Plan agreed alongside budget – Feb 2025	Leader/ Chief Executive/ Director Finance

Key partners for this activity: None



Recommendation 2 – Create opportunities for your senior leadership team to focus on the challenges and opportunities ahead

The Peer team said:- ‘Consider how senior officers create space to continue their strategic thinking / horizon scanning – you want to be a sector leader and this space is key’

Action Plan

Action Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
2.2	Work with key stakeholders in local government	<p>Senior officers will continue to participate in sector led improvement schemes such as the LGA Peer Challenge and in the work of the District Councils Network to ensure we remain at the forefront of Local Government thinking</p> <p>Continued engagement with Local Government Association, Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and peers.</p>	Ongoing	Leader / Chief Executive

Key partners for this activity: Local Government Association



Recommendation 3 – Agree your desired approach to community development and then create a structured approach to delivery

The Peer team said:- ‘This will help you to both articulate your plans, creating a clear narrative for communities and partners alike and allow you to focus on developing the social capital within your council areas’

Action Plan

Action Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
3.1	Develop a medium-term community focused strategy including 'arts and culture'	Understand from others what they are doing including conversations with other councils and attendance at events such as New Local	June/July 2024	Deputy Leader/ Exec Lead Arts and Culture/ Assistant Director Strategy / Community Development Manager
		Commission Asset Based Community Development training for the newly formed Community Development Team	June – October 2024	
		Hold a Member Policy Development group to consider priorities for the next 3 years	October 2024	
		Draft strategy in consultation with key partners	October – Dec 2024	
		Consideration of Strategy by Executive	January 2025	

Key partners for this activity: South Hams Community Action (including Health and Wellbeing Alliances)
Devon Communities Together
Town and Parish Councils
Public Health Devon



Recommendation 4 – Use the opportunity provided by the new council plan to revisit your stakeholder engagement

The Peer team said:- ‘You can maximise your influence and engagement within SHDC and across Devon as a whole ’

Action Plan

Action Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
4.2	Reassess our key partners and how we want to work with them in the future	<p>Develop our key partnerships framework setting out our high-level principles and governance around partnership working</p> <p>Map out existing key partners and future partners that we wish to work with</p>	Autumn 2024	<p>Deputy Leader / Director Governance / Assistant Director Strategy</p> <p>Exec Leads / Heads of Service</p>

Key partners for this activity: None – although will provide an overarching framework for how we intend to work with partners in the future.



Recommendation 5 – Tell your story louder – which clearly articulates both your vision for place and the impact of your activity

The Peer team said:- ‘By doing this well, you will help the delivery of the other recommendations listed in this report ’

Action Plan

Action Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
5.1	Develop a strategic communications plan	<p>Develop a prioritised communications plan setting out key messages for the council for the next 12 months</p> <p>Forward plan of public sector awards and consider where we want to apply in order to ‘shout about’ the work we are doing in South Hams.</p> <p>Work with members to identify areas where the council wants to focus its lobbying energy</p>	<p>Completed with a high level plan agreed with the leader July 2024</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2024 - 'Ten Asks of Government' prepared for discussion with MP's Ongoing activity e.g. South West Water motion to Council</p>	<p>Leader / Head of Strategic Communications</p> <p>Director Place / Director Governance</p> <p>Leader / Senior Leadership Team</p>

Key partners for this activity: Local Media

National publications – Municipal Journal and Local Government Chronicle



Recommendation 6 – Build upon the foundations of your new organisational development plan over the next 2 to 3 years to ensure you can meet new and emerging challenges and opportunities.

The Peer team said:- ‘You have set in place a solid plan, it addresses the here and now, and you can and should keep iterating and developing this through time, so it remains purposeful and relevant’

Action Plan

Action Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
6.1	Develop our single year Organisational Development Plan into a 3-year plan with a clear vision of the organisation we want to be	3 Year Organisational Development Plan and single year delivery plan developed and communicated to employees	September/October 2024 – launched with staff	Chief Executive/ Head of HR & OD

Key partners for this activity: Staff engagement is key to delivery of a successful OD plan



Recommendation 7 – Develop a 4 –year member development programme that maximises the input and engagement of your members.

The Peer team said:- ‘You have a great opportunity a year into the new administration to revisit and engage your membership afresh with the new council plan and make the most of the added value your membership group creates’

Action Plan

Action Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
7.1	Develop a comprehensive member learning & development plan for the next 4 years	Member development steering group to be held to shape and have overall responsibility for the plan and its implementation. LGA and DCN	September 2024	Leader / Member Development Group / Head of Democratic Services

Key partners for this activity: Local Government Association Member development team



Recommendation 8 – Review the role, function and purpose of advisory panels and working groups.

The Peer team said:- ‘Members welcomed their close working and engagement but were not sufficiently clear how your current arrangements add the value you want’

Action Plan

Action Ref	Description	Specific Actions	Timescale	Owner
8.1	Review the purpose and terms of reference for Advisory Working Groups	Member development steering group to consider the purpose Agreed Terms of Reference for refreshed ‘Policy Advisory Groups’ to be agreed by Executive	September 2024 Exec – Autumn 2024	Lead Member Governance / Head of Democratic Services

Key partners for this activity:

