

Eastbourne Borough Council

Corporate Peer Challenge 10- 13 July 2012

Background and scope of the peer challenge

This report is a summary of the findings of a corporate peer challenge organised by the Local Government Association and carried out by its accredited peers. Peer challenges are managed and delivered by the sector for the sector. They are improvement oriented and are tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus.

To do this the peer team considered the ability, resilience and capacity of the council to deliver its future ambitions by looking at:

- Understanding of the local context and priority setting
- Financial planning and viability
- Leadership and governance
- Capacity to deliver

The council also asked the team to provide specific feedback on:

- challenge and advise the council on its ambitions for economic development and regeneration within the borough, including 'brand building' for Eastbourne; and
- how the council may become increasingly entrepreneurial (and commercially aware) in order to develop a 'mixed-economy' and income streams to create sustainable service delivery in the longer-term.

Peers were:

- Steve Beynon, Chief Executive, Isle of Wight Council
- Councillor Ric Pallister, Leader of South Somerset District Council
- Councillor Peter Fleming, Leader of Sevenoaks DC
- Mark Sturgess, Director of Regeneration and Planning, West Lindsey DC
- Sam Davey, Director Luton Excellence Transformation Programme, Luton Borough Council
- Alanna Coombes, Head of Liberal Democrat Group Office, LGA
- Andrew Winfield, Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by Eastbourne Borough Council and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions.

Summary of key conclusions

Eastbourne Borough Council has been on a huge journey of improvement in recent years.

The Liberal Democrat administration elected in 2007, and again in 2011, had a determination to address the council's shortcomings and it had a clear vision for the future of Eastbourne. A new management team took up post in 2009 and these were the final elements necessary for the council to undertake a programme of change.

Understandably the initial priorities were to focus on internal shortcomings, for example on financial management, the inadequate working arrangements on performance management, and the need for new ways of working to increase productivity and achieve financial efficiencies and savings. This coincided with the formula grant reductions for local government which meant that the agenda of change had to also include significant financial efficiencies. The council has not only met these challenges but it has done so without reducing front-line council services.

With the council priority being on first addressing internal shortcomings there are understandably some areas of the strategic framework that now need attention and consolidation. For example, the council is engaged in various pieces of community engagement and consultation but this is not set out in a single coherent documented approach. This will need development as communications – internal and external – will become even more important for the next stages of change.

The Corporate Plan is a comprehensive document that serves primarily as an internal working document and, as a result, is not in a form that promotes use by external stakeholders. It will be important for the council to produce an overarching version of this that sets out priorities and goals, which can be accessed and used by residents and partners. For the former this will be important to be engaged in the changes planned for the borough and for the latter so that they can work with the council on the delivery of these changes.

At the same time the council will need to give further attention to anticipating the changes to the local government landscape, for example on local government finance, Localism, welfare changes etc. and to assess the opportunities and risks that these present.

The council is aware that it has to look at the future 'brand' for Eastbourne. This is important to move away from the popular but outdated image of the town as a 'Victorian seaside resort'. The future brand will be important for the town to present itself to the UK and to describe Eastbourne to visitors and potential businesses and investors. It will also be important for residents to understand, recognise and identify with this new brand.

Crucial to the development of this 'brand' and future Eastbourne will be the use of the considerable property assets owned by the council. There is the legacy of a history of under-maintenance of these assets that now require works which carry significant revenue and capital costs. The council recognises that it will be important to assess how these assets might be used to be part of Eastbourne's future economy and also how some of these assets might be used to leverage resources to provide the council with the capacity

to deliver this. The importance of this is recognised by the council and it is a priority project for the political administration and management team.

A term that resonated for the peer challenge team while on-site was that the council had been “running away from the past” by its investment of considerable energy and commitment to addressing the serious situation it found itself in 2007. These difficulties have been successfully addressed and for the peer challenge team the analogy now was that of a ship that has had all the work completed to address its shortcomings, is fully rigged and ready to sail. Now it needs to decide on its destination.

The recent journey of improvement

The council recognised that it had been underperforming for some time and the need for change was reinforced by a poor CAA rating from the Audit Commission in 2009. A heightened sense of urgency was given by the public spending pressures introduced in 2010.

In 2007 a new Liberal Democrat administration was elected for a four year term. This was the first whole-council election at Eastbourne. Previously, borough elections were conducted by thirds and led to frequent changes of administration and a short term approach. In the autumn of 2009, a new corporate management team and departmental structure was put in place headed by newly recruited Chief and Deputy Chief Executive.

The improvements since 2009 provide the foundations and positive momentum to continue the improvement journey. The extent of this improvement being recognised by a Government Office South East (GOSE) peer challenge in 2010 and the Council of the Year award by Improvement and Efficiency South East (iESE) in March 2011. Council and service transformation has been led by the DRIVE programme (Delivering Real Innovation and Value for Eastbourne), which council staff were empowered to lead on and shape. This has supported and directed the significant progress made by the council on: clarity of objectives and good performance management arrangements; new ways of working (Agile); new ways of delivering services (Sustainable Service Delivery Strategy), including working with partners; and delivering services more efficiently (Future Model Programme).

Financial stability has been achieved. In 2009 there were serious financial concerns: accounts qualified by audit for six successive years (up to 2008-2009); a poorly performing Revenues and Benefits service; funding shortfalls from incorrect calculations of the Council Tax collection base and losses of revenue funding from theatres owned and managed by the council.

Since 2009 there has been a balanced budget each year with prudential management to establish a buffer of reserves (with efficiency savings of circa £1.3m in each of the last three years and a further £4m projected by 2015). Not only is this an achievement but it is notable that this has been achieved without cutting services. A Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) clearly sets out the financial strategy for a three year period. This has been supported by a new Corporate Plan, informed by political priorities and consultation with stakeholders. The joined-up sequence of consultation informing political priorities, aligned to a MTFS and corporate plan for resourcing and delivery, along with staff understanding of service priorities, demonstrates the strategic planning ‘golden thread’.

A range of stakeholders recognise the impact of a strong united leadership team - political and managerial - and the role it has played to stabilise and move the council forward. Performance management, identified as an earlier area of weakness, has improved markedly through the introduction and extensive use of Covalent to align priorities and resources to projects and activities and the monitoring of these. Sickness and absence rates at 4.2 days per year are far lower than comparators averaging 8.4 days.

It was noted that the percentage of planning applications determined within 8 weeks was in the worst 5 per cent nationally in 2011-2012 and the revenue spend on the Development Control/Management service appears to be comparatively low. However, the peer challenge team were told that this dip in performance occurred temporarily as a result of the service transition to Agile Working and that performance has since improved. Given the importance of planning for regeneration it will be important to continue to monitor these performance levels. Future performance management arrangements may benefit from the use of benchmarking and looking elsewhere to see what excellent and efficient look like in terms of performance. Governance and decision-making processes appear sound, with this supported by the use of Local Futures to review comparative data and the use of the balanced scorecard.

There is an evident 'can do' culture that permeates the council. One of the key drivers for this was the introduction of the DRIVE Programme and in particular the success of Agile Working and the wholesale move to paperless offices. For the peer challenge team this is the first time we have seen successful implementation of Agile Working and a move to a paperless office. [Agile working uses the benefits gained from changing work practices, the deployment of new technologies and creating new working environments. Behind this is the progressive improvement in mobile, wireless and fixed line technology and related investments in fibre, bandwidth, server capacity, cloud computing and unified communications or convergence.]

This bold project has delivered: significant savings already with the release of a principal office location and is projected to return £3m over the next ten years over and above the original investment. The programme was delivered to timetable and budget; and has transformed traditional working arrangements. This was achieved in particular by the corporate management team leading by example, involving staff at all levels in the programme design and not compromising on the timetable. This has given staff a deserved confidence and pride in their achievement and a positive outlook for the future. The peer challenge team believe that this constitutes notable practice that should be shared with the rest of the sector.

Council working is underpinned by strong partnership working arrangements at senior political and managerial levels in the council. This is recognised by principal partners who have confidence in the council, with one referring to it as "our partner of choice". An example of this is where the council is leading Sussex councils on the preparations for Council Tax support. Another is the East Sussex Procurement Hub of East Sussex local authorities established in late 2010 that achieved savings of more than £320k in its first year. Of particular note is the support of private sector partners one of whom commented that the council is the most entrepreneurial of the many with which it works.

However, there is more to be done on partnership working and anticipating change and this should be viewed as the council embracing its community leadership role. For

example, the welfare benefit reforms present a challenge for all agencies but particularly for the voluntary sector. The peer challenge team saw little evidence of the council masterminding the development of a comprehensive advice arrangement for all agencies. This may be one of the 'looking forward' areas that the council needs to be considering and developing plans for.

Similarly there was little evidence of anticipation of other major issues that will impact on local government such as the Localism Act 2011. The Act will require the council to give consideration to its approach on neighbourhood planning given that the borough is not parished. In addition it will also provide important opportunities, for example the duty to cooperate will enable the council to work with neighbours on developing the Hailsham triangle for mutual benefit. While the council is yet to develop policies for the 'Community Right to Challenge' and 'Assets of Community Value' its current practices place them in a strong position to meet these requirements. Partnership working has been important for the council but this will become even more important to support delivery over the next 5 - 10 years and to generate the capacity that will be required.

The council is driving change and setting an ambitious agenda for the future. This agenda includes plans for town centre regeneration, developing new income streams and developing the skills base of those that live in the borough so as to retain the workforce to live in the area and for the local economy to derive financial value from this. The council is now embarking on the next stage of DRIVE which is the implementation of the 'Future Model'. It was clear to the peer challenge team that Agile Working has developed capacity for the council to address its internal difficulties, establish financial stability and maintain front-line services. With the completion of Phase 2 of Agile and the move to the Future Model the council recognises that it will need to monitor the organisational capacity for continuing change so that this can be sustained.

The council is moving from a position of having 'fixed the problems' to one of considering its future direction. This is reaching a critical stage and it will be important to manage this carefully to make the right decisions for Future Eastbourne. The council recognises that in addressing the serious situation it found itself in 2007 it has been addressing the internal shortcomings of the past in order to establish a sustainable and efficient organisation. Now it needs to decide and communicate a clear picture of what future it should now be working towards.

It was essential for the council to 'fix these problems' and it has done so successfully. Inevitably this has led to some areas being missed and these now need to be addressed. One such area is the absence of a documented coherent approach to community engagement and consultation. There are a number of consultation/engagement mechanisms such as: citizen's focus group, public meetings, consultation on devolved budgets (£10,000 allocated for local expenditure by each ward) but there is no overarching strategy to supervise this. The consequence is that consultation/engagement data is gathered disparately, the effect of engagement/consultation is diluted and there is the danger of duplication of activity and inefficient use of resources.

Another example is the MTFs which has been very effective to support the making of balanced budgets but does not, in its current format, clearly set out both the corporate priorities and available resources. This information is given in different places but is not brought together in the MTFs. This could be addressed by moving to a four year MTFs beginning in 2013-2014. The advantages of this would be: it would cover the period of

the next Comprehensive Spending Review; and could set out the response to the key issues coming up, for example changes to housing benefit, universal benefits and capping, business rate reform etc. It could also be streamlined to set out: priorities, resources, and a sharper set of key performance indicators for monitoring. The latter would be important to move away from the current overlong 97 page document that is used for performance monitoring.

The Corporate Plan is a well laid out and comprehensive document. However, at 59 pages the peer challenge team believe you are unclear who the audience is for this. In its current format it is not a document that will be meaningful for residents, local businesses or other stakeholders. This is an important communications issue as it is essential to communicate clearly the council's vision and priorities to the community, and the various segments of this, of Eastbourne. A shorter document summarising the objectives of each priority, allocated revenue and resources and the anticipated outcomes would bring together the essential elements and goals of the MTFs and the Corporate Plan to be available for external communication purposes.

The peer challenge team were impressed by the extent that the administration and the opposition are able to reach agreement on the 'big ticket' items and this demonstrates a mature relationship. However, are non-executive Members being left behind? The team were told of the feeling of non-executive Members being separated from the hub of activity and modern Agile working at 1 Grove Road by being located at the Town Hall. This may have been exacerbated by the traditional layout of the Town Hall and it not having WiFi. However the peer challenge team understand that many of these concerns are expected to be picked up during Phase 2 of Agile with all Members being provided with the full range of electronic ways of working along with training and development to support this transition.

In addition the opportunity for non-executive Member engagement is diminished by the weakened state of the Overview and Scrutiny function. For example, there are no leading opposition group Members on the committee and the output of two or three pieces of work per year appeared to be comparatively unproductive. This should be a priority to address as this will not only strengthen non-executive involvement but it would provide additional capacity and be a valuable resource both for Cabinet and the council. Perhaps changing the name of the committee to emphasise its role in providing challenge and improvement as a positive force for the council could help address this.

The devolved ward budget scheme is an example of an innovative approach to raise the profile of back-bench members in their communities. Members are given ownership and accountability of significant levels of funding to respond to suggested needs of the community enabling public-led projects, outside the programmed core and priority work of the council, to be delivered quickly.

Eastbourne Borough Council's ambitions for economic development and regeneration within the borough, including 'brand building' for Eastbourne

The council has many advantages when mapping the future. It is currently hosting a number of international businesses, has the largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the county and is the fastest growing seaside resort in the UK. It is a comparatively safe place

to live, there is a high quality environment, and there is a strong business base and good independent local shops to provide a strong and unique 'high street' identity.

Alongside this there is an extensive asset base available with the council owning: four theatres, a bandstand, Devonshire Park, the Redoubt Fortress military museum, the Wish Tower, the Towner Contemporary Art Gallery and many others. By way of events there is a Lawn Tennis Association facility that hosts the Eastbourne international Aegon tennis championships in June and there is the international air show 'Airbourne' in August. On the outskirts of the town there is a large marina, with housing (Sovereign harbour), which is the largest composite marina complex in Northern Europe. In addition the council is working with owners Legal and General on a £70m investment to transform the current Arndale Centre into a major regional shopping attraction. All this presents great potential and opportunity. Despite this the Eastbourne 'offer' is not presented clearly to potential visitors and businesses across the UK and to residents and businesses in the borough.

The Eastbourne 'brand' is currently diffuse. It is not clear if the Eastbourne 'offer' is as a Victorian seaside resort, a conference centre, a sporting/cultural/heritage location, or a centre for economic investment in the knowledge economy or a combination of all of these. It will be important that the Future Eastbourne offer is developed so as to have a clear and unambiguous focus. Branding will have many levels but the principal ones will be how Eastbourne is presented to the rest of the UK and how this brand is articulated and understood by residents, businesses and partners in the borough.

Against this is the legacy of a history of under-maintenance of property assets that now require works that will carry significant revenue and capital costs. An iconic image that summarises this is the scaffolding at the Congress Theatre that has been in place for two years and is a visual reminder to residents of nothing appearing to be done. One regeneration partner told the team, "they need to get on with communications...the public think they're doing nothing." This perception of apparent lack of progress on assets could hinder confidence in the town and its economic growth.

The council's considerable asset portfolio provides significant potential levers for economic development. The council recognises this as a "once in a generation opportunity" and the political administration and management team are committed to addressing this historically neglected portfolio. In doing this it will be essential to define the future vision for the local economy and the brand for the borough so that decisions can be made on future investment in and the future use of these assets. This should lead to decisions being made on assets that will be not form part of the future and may be considered for sale or transfer.

The council is moving on this with the asset review commissioned from CIPFA and a contract with East Sussex County Council to evaluate the condition, works required and costs for upgrading its asset portfolio. This work is scheduled for completion later this year and the council then intends to initiate an internal Asset Challenge debate. However, the peer challenge team recommends that this debate start immediately, perhaps using the cost/value service prioritisation matrix, so that initial assessments might identify assets that may fall into the unviable quadrant and could even be disposed of sooner rather than later. The value of undertaking this debate sooner would be to progress the decision-making process, which will be important for making budget decisions for 2013 - 2014.

Inward investment, tourism, business relocation may be hindered by transport infrastructure that provides slower links to London than the council would like and slow road access to Eastbourne via the A27. The council uses the access to the South Downs National Park as a selling point but visitors first have to travel to Eastbourne on the A27. It may not be possible to address this in the short term but it may be possible to counter it. For example, the council's partnership with CloudConnX is offering superfast broadband at 4 Gb. which will be an important promotional feature for growing – and attracting - small and medium sized businesses (SMEs) as a key segment of the future economy. This could form part of the future Eastbourne 'brand'. As part of the future offer the peer challenge team feel that the offer of start-up units on easy in/easy out terms would be attractive to grow future SMEs.

The council has a strong policy framework for sustainable development. The Core Strategy is expected to be adopted later this year and an Area Action Plan for Eastbourne developed. A challenge for the council is how the Sovereign Harbour can be made more sustainable for residents and business by ensuring that it has the level of local facilities for the scale of development. With the Harbour three miles from the town it felt physically separate. The council is working with Harbour residents on this and plans are in place for a cycle route, for the promenade to be extended, new seafront signage to be erected and a new bus link negotiated.

Additionally, while the Marina contained development with character, including more modern additions, some of the areas away from the Marina were less distinctive and further phases should give appropriate emphasis on urban design. The council recognises that it needs to continue to give consideration as to how the Marina can be presented as a distinctive part of the overall Eastbourne offer and more integrated as part of Eastbourne town. To this end, a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is in place to assist the future development plans for this area.

Housing will be an important consideration for the council in shaping the future economy. The ALMO provides the housing management function for the council but future new build of 240 homes per annum over the next 20 years will be constrained by one third of the borough's land being in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and one third at risk of flooding. The ALMO will be an important partner in the new environment of housing self-financing and its revenue 'headroom' important to support housing delivery over the next 20 years. The council's housing strategy sets out the breakdown of social rented, intermediate and market housing required but the council will need to progress site locations for future build and ensure that there is a land supply to meet need.

The council needs to better understand its current and future economy. Some work has been done on this, for example research on the 'Economic Impact of Tourism – Eastbourne' in 2010 and a 'East Sussex Perceptions Study' in April 2012 and there is a survey being conducted this summer to understand better what attracts visitors to the area and the value of this for the economy. However, at present there is insufficient data to inform the council and its partners of current levels of wealth value generated by the economy or from which parts of the economy.

The council sees the future being based around the knowledge economy (national employment in the knowledge economy is 21.23 per cent and in Eastbourne it is just 12.22 per cent) and aspires to be a "regional centre of excellence" for technology. It also

recognises that current skill levels lag behind the national average and that this needs to be addressed. The council is working on these areas with the proposal for a Science Park located at Sovereign Harbour and its work with Activating Eastbourne, which is the regeneration and economy sub-partnership of the local strategic partnership (LSP). Its role is to promote skills training and employment opportunities and to grow local employers' businesses.

Developing the future knowledge economy, with the local skills to support this, will be important. This will require profiling current and future economic sector skills and working with education providers and employers to develop the skills required. The recent 'Cities Outlook 1901' national study, (Centre for Cities, July 2012) finds that skills are the most important factor determining long-term urban success, and therefore are a key area for policy intervention. There are strong links with Brighton University, in particular with European language students based in the town. This presents a development opportunity, in particular profiling future economy skill needs and how these might be met by the council working with education and training providers.

This will be essential to inform an Economic Development Strategy. Such a strategy could be developed with partners, with these being involved in action planning and subsequent delivery. At the same time tourism and events should be seen as part of this strategy and not as separate activities. Similarly major projects, such as Devonshire Park and the Science/Business Park at Sovereign Harbour should be seen in the context of the Economic Development Strategy for the borough.

Despite agreement across the political groups on the 'big ticket' items there is a history of Member relationships being influenced by scepticism on the ability to move ahead collectively. This could be a legacy of the previous model of elections by thirds, the frequent change of administration and the short-term outlook that this would understandably cause. It may be that this also contributes to the shortcomings of the Overview and Scrutiny function mentioned earlier. It is essential to move away from this outlook as shaping a future economy will require close partnership working and the private sector in particular will look for stability to provide them with confidence to work with the council. This risk is recognised by the council as it features as the first risk in its Strategic Risk Register. More needs to be done to develop consensus.

Becoming more entrepreneurial to extend the 'mixed economy' of service provision, partnership working, along with effective service delivery and efficiency savings

The council has a strong commercial mindset and is not risk averse. By correcting its earlier failings and underperformance it is well placed to move to become more outward looking.

A significant factor in getting to this stage is the Agile Work programme. Staff are deservedly proud of their achievements in the face of what was a daunting programme of change and changed working arrangements. This has also been instrumental in cultural change: one member of staff told the team that "the organisation trusts me". Agile has been the underpinning of the efficiency savings programme that is projected to deliver savings of £4.2m between 2011-2012 and 2014-2015.

The council is now embarked on Phase 2 of Agile and is working on the implementation of its Future Model which will transform the means by which staff, residents, partners and stakeholders transact their business with the council and how services are provided. We heard from meetings with staff at all levels that the Future Model is more of a cause for apprehension than Agile working. This is principally because of the uncertainties over future professional working arrangements and job losses. This makes thorough communication of change even more important and that the organisational capacity for change is monitored closely by corporate management team and Cabinet. However, the principle of staff involvement in shaping this programme is evident and should prove a key success factor.

As the programme of change has moved at breakneck speed the peer challenge team believe it will be important for the council to build in some time and space for the organisation to pause, reflect and consolidate. For example, it will be necessary to move from its deliberate and self-acknowledged “strategy lite” position to one that ensures essential strategy gaps are covered. The most urgent of these at this time is the development of an Economic Development Strategy.

The council has been innovative in its partnership arrangements. The CloudConnx has already been mentioned. In addition there is the prestigious development of the Towner Contemporary Art Gallery which provides Eastbourne with a national critically regarded cultural icon. Other examples include the Solarbourne partnership that is projected to provide an annual income stream of £200-250k; the Morrisons development that provided significant commuted planning gain to support the council’s regeneration budget; and the proposals for a waste contract with four other authorities. These initiatives are evidence of the can-do approach that is having a positive impact on physical regeneration and infrastructure which are key components of growth.

One reason for the approach taken by the council in recent years was that a lack of partners willing to work with the council meant it tended to go it alone. This was evident in the Sustainable Service Delivery Strategy developed in 2010 which looked at five possible options for future service delivery. The lack of partners at that time led the council to follow the option of continuing direct service provision, although this is being radically restructured through the DRIVE Programme, specifically Agile Working and the Future Model. It will be important for the council to continue to monitor this partnership environment as continuing public spending pressures will make it essential for all sectors to develop more partnership options. This will present opportunities for Eastbourne in due course.

Eastbourne has long been associated with an elderly population. Although this profile largely holds, with the over 65 years proportion of the population well above the national average, it is changing. This needs to be monitored and influenced as the change factors within the local economy and tourism are better understood. Part of the future niche for Eastbourne may be to attract and retain young people and young families attracted by a top quality environment and enabled by technology that can overcome barriers of infrastructure and distance. This reinforces the earlier point about branding with Eastbourne needing to be clear on its unique selling point and offer so that it may be able to define what it is people are being attracted to.

Your relationship with the East Sussex County Council seems good, particularly at officer level. However, it is clear that political differences do occur with differently coloured

political administrations and with many borough councillors being twin-hatted. Members will need to be aware that poor political relationships could undermine the overall relationship and this will need to be managed so as not to disrupt an important partnership. This will be important for a number of reasons, not least to build up a 'cluster of authorities' model to provide a voice for more effective engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) that covers a vast area of East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Thurrock and Southend.

The council has retained the LSP. The LSP appears not to have the authority that it used to, which is a common feature nationally with the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards often replacing LSP partnership forums. However, the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership, with its range of supporting groups such as the Community Safety Partnership, may be an important vehicle for Eastbourne, which could operate as an influential partnership board to involve partners working with the council on developing the future vision, branding and delivery. However, in the absence of a strategy or delivery plan we were not convinced its purpose and plans for the future are clear.

Moving forward - suggestions for consideration

Based on what we saw, heard and read we suggest you consider the following actions. These are things we think will help you improve and develop the effectiveness and capacity to deliver your future ambitions and plans.

Economic Development Strategy

1. Begin immediately a review of property assets so that decisions can be made on those that will be retained and how they will be used in the future. This will need to be completed before the end of the calendar year as there may well be financial implications that need to inform budget development for 2013-2014.
2. Develop a partnership with education and work based learning providers and businesses to map the shape of the future economy and the skills of residents required for this. From this develop a twenty year partnership strategy to develop these skills.
3. Ensure that various segments of the future economy, for example tourism, events, conferences etc. are integrated.
4. Incorporate the above into an Economic Development Strategy for Eastbourne. This could be a partnership strategy that is underpinned by action plans involving all partners in delivery.

Branding

5. Develop a future economic vision and distinctive 'brand' for Eastbourne that clearly describes the unique offer to the UK and what this will look like for residents, business and partners.

6. Engage residents, businesses and partners to test this future economic vision and Eastbourne offer.

Review of key strategies

7. Review the strategic framework and identify the gaps. Prioritise these and develop a timetable for these strategies to be produced in a way that is proportionate to their value and importance to the council.
8. Review the format for the Corporate Plan and consider how corporate priorities are conveyed to different internal and external audiences. This, in turn, should lead to a review of performance measures so that these are reduced in quantity with increased emphasis on measuring outcomes and have a clear link to the MTFS.
9. Review your relationships with partners and citizens and consider the current effectiveness of these and how they could be developed to support the future vision and offer. The LSP may facilitate development to become a partnership board model that engages with a range of partners and supports future delivery.
10. Continue to review strategic risks taking account of the changing local government landscape, including local government finance, Localism and welfare reform.

Communications

11. Develop a Communications and Engagement Strategy. This should integrate the many current forms of communication and engagement used that is presented in a clearly stated and functional strategy.
12. Internal communications will continue to be important at a time of continuing transformational change. This should be regularly monitored by corporate management team and Cabinet for its effectiveness.

We have attached a set of slides that summarise the above feedback. The slides are the ones used by the peer team to present its feedback at the end of the onsite visit.

Next steps

You will undoubtedly wish to reflect on these findings and suggestions made with your senior managerial and political leadership before determining how the council wishes to take things forward. As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of continued activity to support this. We made some suggestions about how this might be utilised. The LGA looks forward to finalising the detail of that activity as soon as possible.