CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE –
FINAL REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present, for information and reference, the final Corporate Peer Challenge report from the LGA Peer Challenge Team, alongside the proposed Improvement Plan, developed to ensure the improvement themes identified in the report are taken forward.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:-

2.1 The Audit Committee note the final Peer Challenge report from the LGA Peer Challenge Team and the proposed headline improvements as set out in the improvement plan.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 In 2011 it was agreed that Barnsley MBC would accept part of the LGA’s ‘Taking the Lead’ self-regulation offer of a Corporate Peer Challenge. The Peer Challenge took place in May 2012 and the final report was presented to Cabinet in August 2012.

3.2 The Corporate Peer Challenge was broadly based around the following themes:-

- Understanding the local context and priority setting
- Financial planning and viability
- Political and managerial leadership
- Governance and decision-making
- Organisational capacity.

However, one of the key benefits of the revised Peer Challenge offer was the flexibility to tailor the above broad themes to each individual Local Authority and to shape the area of focus in advance of the onsite discussion and challenge.

3.3 A detailed scoping brief was prepared in advance of the on site Peer Challenge process, both to provide background information for the Peers and help focus the specific lines of enquiry for the Peer Team whilst on site. This was based around
the council's journey from Minimum Council to Future Council, with a specific request for the Peer Team to explore the following key questions:-

a) Are we on the right track in terms of our journey from Minimum to Future Council?
b) Are we demonstrating the appropriate level of political and managerial leadership and prioritisation in taking forward the overall priorities of Growing the Local Economy and Changing Relationship between the Council and its Community (alongside raising educational attainment and skills for life)?
c) Is our policy direction regarding the changing relationship clearly outlined and communicated?
d) Are we appropriately ensuring that our reduced resources are fully aligned to our strategic priorities?
e) How well are we set up politically, managerially and in terms of staff employment to address the future challenges?
f) Are we taking partners and the community with us?

Overall, the Peer Challenge was designed to challenge and support the council's improvement journey, provide an independent and objective "check" on where we are going and identify areas for us to take into account, respond positively to, and take practical action going forward.

4. **FINAL REPORT AND NEXT STEPS**

4.1 The Peer Challenge Process concluded with an onsite presentation of the key findings of the peer team, followed by a more detailed report received several weeks later. The report highlighted a number of positive strengths, including:

- Clear strategic priorities with sign up within the council and across the Local Strategic Partnership
- Strong and respected political leadership
- A positive and committed workforce focused on improving council services and the borough as a whole.
- The early recognition and planning for the budget reductions and ongoing pressures.
- A good base for delivering our priorities including the Advanced Learning Centres and a viable town centre that is coping well
- Improved performance across a number of key areas including crime and anti social behaviour, adult social care, educational attainment to Key Stage 2 and housing.

4.2 The final report also identified 6 clear improvement themes for the council which can be summarised as follows:-

1. Cultural Changes for the Future Council
2. Delivering the Economic Strategy
3. More Corporate Approaches in Key Areas
4. Partnership Working
5. Health Agenda and Changes
6. Promoting and Communicating BMBC and the Borough as a Whole.
4.3 The improvement themes form the basis of the Peer Challenge Improvement Plan which is attached at Appendix 2. This will be a key priority for the council’s Senior Management Team to take forward and will be subject to regular challenge and review by the Performance Review Panel.

4. LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report.
Appendix 2: BMBC Corporate Peer Challenge Improvement Plan.

Officer Contact: Shaun Jones  Telephone No: 773401  Date: 12 September 2012
Corporate Peer Challenge

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

28th to 31st May 2012

Report
1. Background and scope of the peer challenge

On behalf of the team, I would just like to say what a pleasure and privilege it was to be invited in to Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council to deliver the recent corporate peer challenge. The team very much appreciated the efforts that went into preparing for the visit and looking after us whilst we were on site and the participation of elected members, staff and partners in the process.

This was amongst the first corporate peer challenges delivered by the Local Government Association as part of the new approach to sector led improvement. It is testimony to the council that you commissioned the peer challenge so early on.

Peer challenges are managed and delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The peers who delivered the peer challenge were:

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<th>Name and Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>George Garlick, Chief Executive, Durham County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Councillor Bryony Rudkin, Ipswich Borough Council and Suffolk County Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jules Pipe, Elected Mayor of Hackney</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Tatam, LGA Associate and former Deputy Chief Executive of the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham</td>
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<td>Chris Bowron, Local Government Association</td>
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It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement-orientated and tailored to meet individual councils’ needs. Indeed they are designed to complement and add value to a council’s own performance and improvement focus. The peers used their experience and knowledge to reflect on the evidence presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The guiding questions for all corporate peer challenges are:

- Does the council understand its local context and has it established a clear set of priorities?
- Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
- Does the council have effective political and managerial leadership and is it a constructive partnership?
- Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place to respond to key challenges and manage change, transformation and disinvestment?
- Are organisational capacity and resources focused in the right areas in order to deliver the agreed priorities?
Within this you were keen for the team to challenge and support your improvement journey, provide an independent and objective ‘check’ on where you are going and identify areas for you to take into account, respond positively to and take practical action on going forward, including:

- Are we on the right track in terms of our journey from ‘Minimum’ to ‘Future Council’?
- Are we demonstrating the appropriate level of political and managerial leadership and prioritisation in taking forward the two strategic priorities?
- Is our policy direction regarding the changing relationship with communities clearly outlined and communicated?
- Are we appropriately ensuring that our reduced resources are fully aligned to our strategic priorities?
- How well are we set up politically, managerially and in terms of staff employment to address the future challenges?
- Are we taking partners and the community with us?

As you will recall, we undertook to write to you to confirm the team’s findings, building on the feedback provided to you on the final day of the peer challenge and, in particular, expanding upon those areas that we highlighted as likely to benefit from some further attention. This report sets out those findings.

2. Executive summary

Clear strategic priorities have been established at both council and community strategy level within Barnsley, with the peer challenge being asked to focus on two of these - changing the relationship between the state/council and its communities and growing the economy.

The financial challenge facing the council as a consequence of the changes within the public sector is significant and forms an essential part of the context for the peer challenge. It amounts to around £60m in the six years to 2016/17 – around 28% of the council’s net revenue spend. In 2010 the council embarked upon its journey to 'Minimum Council', which was essentially a cost-cutting exercise, and it is great testimony to the proactive and planned approach of this that the £22m reductions of the last financial year have not had the same scale of negative impact as in some other councils. This is positive but it leaves a situation which people see as ‘the real pain being yet to come’ - with the authority recognising that ‘Minimum Council’ will not be minimum enough.

The authority’s strategic priority of changing the relationship between the council and its communities represents a key strand in addressing the financial challenge and is at the heart of what the authority is terming the ‘Future Council’. The context is one of a largely paternalistic approach by the council traditionally and communities within Barnsley having tended to be dependent on the authority and other organisations as the providers of an extensive range of services and support. In a context of significantly reduced funding for the council it will not be feasible to sustain the relationship in this form. The emphasis for
'Future Council' needs to be on transformational change to achieve the necessary additional savings and consequent cultural change but it is also important to recognise that fully implementing the 'Future Council' entails change over a generation – although the financial pressures facing the authority mean significant progress also needs to be achieved in the very short term. It represents a major shift not just for local people but also for the council itself – a challenge of culture change within the organisation, with the need for the council to 'let go' and move away from seeing itself as the deliverer and provider and instead act as a facilitator and enabler. Careful consideration needs to be given to the significance of this cultural change – for elected members, officers, trade unions and the community – and the communication around it, given the challenges involved and potential sensitivities that may arise. 'Future Council' also entails possible revised governance arrangements for the council, with this now needing to be clearly mapped out and communicated.

'Growing the economy' has a solid base, with a viable town centre coping well with significant competition from other areas locally. The local offer acts as a beacon of attraction. The council has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the issues in the local economy and, through this, determined that there are considerable issues in the economic performance of Barnsley. The analysis has highlighted the benefit of emphasising the environmental and cultural positives that Barnsley has to offer and it has also served to identify the spatial planning needs of the borough. The analysis and the strategic priority have been responded to by the council putting an economic strategy and underpinning project plan in place to support it, although this generates a significant financial revenue challenge that will need to be addressed in order to enable successful delivery. There are also a number of challenges around selling the vision of Barnsley and its economy in the future – including the weak branding and image of Barnsley as a place. This is an area that would benefit from attention, with an emphasis on ensuring that the branding image of Barnsley as a whole, its economy and the council are complementary and mutually supportive.

With strong and continuous leadership at Chief Executive level over recent years, the council can be seen to have strongly-embedded systems and a style that have delivered many successes. However, there are some strands of the approach that the authority is looking to revise as it moves forward. The acting Chief Executive has started a shift to more corporate approaches and greater openness within the organisation. Corporate performance management arrangements are being developed, customer service arrangements are being reviewed and the Senior Management Team is seeking greater 'togetherness' founded on increased openness and trust.

Partner organisations demonstrated real sign-up to the two strategic priorities at the community strategy level and we noted a number of areas of good performance and proactive work by the council and partner organisations. However, the council appears to be wondering how to fulfil an appropriate role in partnership working – seemingly torn between leading and driving things forward, with a risk of being seen to dominate and dictate, and taking more of a back seat but running the risk of being seen to abdicate leadership responsibility or partners not driving things ahead sufficiently. One of the key sentiments expressed by partners was a shared desire for them to invest some time in clarifying mutual expectations of one another and, through this, being able to hold each other to account more. They also saw a need for 'a harder-nosed approach to performance management' and a focus on delivery rather than debate or strategy.
order to maximise the benefit of partnership working at a time of significant change and reduced resources, greater clarity is needed around the approach (and in particular the role of the council) and what partners are focusing on together to make a collective difference to the borough as a whole.

The underlying health issues for the population strike us as being a pressing concern. Whilst we understand the rationale for growing the economy and changing the relationship between the state and communities within Barnsley, as the strategic priorities, will ultimately contribute to improved health within the local area, the differentials in health in Barnsley when compared to regional and national averages are stark – in the here and now. The challenges around the way in which the health sector in Barnsley is being revised also seemed like a pressing issue to us. Central to this are the establishment of the Health and Well-Being Board, the transition in public health to it becoming a local authority responsibility and changes in relation to National Health Service structures. Thus we have some significant concerns around the state of health and the health sector within Barnsley but, at the same time, we are aware that there are some great examples of joint working between health and the council. Accelerated work is required to ensure that the structural changes in the health sector do not further exacerbate the health challenges across the borough.

There is a major tendency to self-deprecate in Barnsley - both as a council and as a place. We were struck by the number of great things Barnsley has to promote but it requires a change in mindset and culture for the council and the area to capitalise upon these. At the heart of this undoubtedly sits an issue of confidence and possibly one of low expectations. Clearly this won't transform overnight but the council's senior leadership can perhaps show the way by exuding more confidence and belief in the council and the place and, through this, encourage others to believe more strongly and communicate more proactively and assertively. A conscious mindset shift needs to take place, demonstrated in a number of important and symbolic areas of activity, to practically illustrate this necessary change of approach.

The Leader of the council is held in very high regard not just within the authority and amongst partner organisations but also within local government nationally. The council has many very experienced elected members and we were impressed by the arrangements the council has in place to support the development of councillors. We met a lot of good and very positive staff during the course of the peer challenge and they are clearly deeply committed to Barnsley and the council. With a new Chief Executive appointed in the last couple of months and due to commence in post shortly there is a positive anticipation around her arrival and an opportunity to use the learning from the peer challenge to take the council further forward.

3. Detailed findings

- We wanted to begin this report by outlining what we see as some key aspects of the background, context and challenges for Barnsley as a town and a council and which we see as significant moving forward.

- The recent elections continued the stable political make-up of the council, resulting in the Labour group increasing its majority by nine seats to leave them with 52
councillors out of 63 - with the others being five Conservatives, five Barnsley Independent Group and one Independent. The Leader is held in very high regard not just within the council and amongst partner organisations but also within local government nationally. The council has many very experienced elected members and the same can be said for staff too.

- The previous Chief Executive left the council late last year and the intervening period has seen the council’s Deputy Chief Executive assisting the authority by acting up into the position. With a new Chief Executive appointed in the last couple of months and due to commence in post on 11th July we noted the positive anticipation around her arrival. The appointment is seen as an opportunity for the council to move forward and make further progress on its improvement journey. Middle and senior managers emphasised how important they saw it as being for them to support her as she settles into the role.

- We met a lot of good and very positive staff during the course of the peer challenge and they are clearly deeply committed to Barnsley and the council. Whilst things are not easy for them at this stage with so much change and uncertainty, particularly as a result of the changes in public sector finance, there is clearly still a huge amount of goodwill. The council has made a successful move to new office accommodation, which forms part of a key area of re-development within the town, and delivered the refurbishment of the Town Hall which acts as the primary base for elected members. The fact that the authority has been able to draw in external funding for these projects is very positive.

- The financial challenge that the council has been facing up to as a consequence of the changes within the public sector is significant. It amounts to around £60m in the six years to 2016/17 – which is around 28% of the council’s net revenue spend. From this figure of £60m, £22m was saved in 2011/12 and a further £9m has been identified in setting the budget for the current year.

- In undertaking our research in advance of the peer challenge we were struck by the stark nature of some of the facts and figures around Barnsley as a place. Whilst the relative deprivation has lessened over recent years, the fact is it was in the top 15 per cent of most deprived council areas when last measured in 2010 – 47th out of 354 where one is the most deprived. There has clearly been progress, however, with the ranking in 2004 having been 28th. In terms of health, life expectancy in Barnsley is, on average, two years shorter than the national figure. Premature deaths from cancer and circulatory disease are significantly higher when compared nationally, as is take-up of the Disability Living Allowance. Rates of teenage pregnancy are almost 50 per cent and 20 per cent higher than the national and regional averages respectively. Good progress has been made in relation to educational attainment at Foundation and Key Stages 1 and 2 but there are still significant issues in terms of attainment of GCSEs at A to C grade in English and Maths. The unemployment rate is bordering on 11 per cent compared to a regional average of 9.5 per cent and a national average of just under eight per cent. The percentage of the working age population claiming some form of benefit payment is 23.3 per cent in Barnsley compared to a regional average of 15.4 per cent and a national average of 14.1 per cent.
• Whilst we may have familiarised ourselves in advance with some of the facts and figures regarding Barnsley, none of the members of the peer team had fully appreciated the geographical variation of the area covered by the council prior to our arrival. It is a fascinating mix of urban and rural, with some areas that are truly beautiful. Through the discussions we had during the course of the peer challenge we came to fully understand the extent to which the council area is comprised of a series of distinct communities, some of which have Town and Parish Councils, which have been drawn together in one large metropolitan borough council area.

• Clear strategic priorities have been established at both council and community strategy level. These are broadly the same at both levels, although with appropriate refinement to translate them from the community strategy level into a council context. Thus, for the council the priorities are as follows:

  ❖ Growing the local economy
  ❖ Changing the relationship between the council and its communities
  ❖ Better educational attainment and skills for life

• In delivering the peer challenge, we were conscious of the council’s desire for the peer challenge team to focus our efforts and attention on the first two priorities. Both of them have cross-party elected member Strategy Review Groups in place to shape their direction and these are felt to be working well.

• We noted a number of areas of good performance and proactive work by the council and partner organisations. Improving educational attainment at Foundation and Key Stages 1 and 2 is hoped by the council to provide a springboard for enhanced attainment at other levels in the coming years. There has been extensive take up of personalised budgets within social care. We learned the extent to which local businesses see the council’s regulatory services as supportive of them – whilst fulfilling their roles these services are seen to do so in a way that minimises the burdens on businesses. The council was awarded ‘Excellent’ status in March last year for the Local Government Equality Framework and the proportion of staff who would act as an advocate for the council as a good place to work increased from 36 per cent in 2009 to 54 per cent last year. Crime levels in Barnsley are currently the lowest they have been for 21 years, whilst Berneslai Homes, as the arms length management organisation for housing, are felt to be doing an excellent job and the ‘Decent Homes’ standard has been achieved. We also learned of the proactive work being undertaken by the council and key partners to prepare for the challenges that are likely to be thrown up by the Government’s reform of the welfare and benefits system and the council is fully aware of the challenge that will be posed to the authority and the local area by the forthcoming localisation of business rates.

3.1 Achieving ‘Minimum Council’

• In 2010 the council embarked upon its journey to ‘Minimum Council’ – a four year programme to help the authority address the financial challenges it had been presented with. This is widely recognised as having been essentially a cost-cutting
exercise and the council’s external auditor has credited the authority for having been “proactive in its approach”. The programme has identified a series of ‘Key Lines of Enquiry’ entailing areas to be pursued to deliver expenditure reductions across 280 activities. In order to meet the financial challenges of the next year or two the council is depending upon achieving the full extent of the savings in all of the Key Lines of Enquiry – there is no contingency for non-delivery of any aspects of the programme. However, the authority is confident that it has established a robust and comprehensive programme management approach to enable it to deliver the targets.

- Staff that we spoke to indicated they felt there had been a good process of engaging them in the ‘Minimum Council’ thinking and delivery. Whilst the challenges and circumstances have been difficult people very much welcomed the honesty and respect that had been shown towards them by the council’s senior leadership and indicated they had increased trust in the leadership as a result. The staff survey results for last year reflect this, with a significantly increased proportion of people feeling they were better involved and consulted and there was improved explanation of the reasons for change.

- It is great testimony to the proactive and planned approach of ‘Minimum Council’ that the £22m reductions of the last financial year have not had the same scale of negative impact as in some other councils. The early implementation of a recruitment freeze was a significant contributory factor in the required deletion of 400 posts translating into 65 compulsory redundancies – obviously enormously difficult and painful for those affected but a lot better than the scenario that may have otherwise existed. Another key aspect of the savings was the two year terms and conditions package, including a five per cent pay reduction for senior managers and a freeze on other aspects, negotiated with the trade unions and approved overwhelmingly by ballot. In pressing people how the savings reductions had impacted beyond these areas, most people found it difficult to indicate tangible negative consequences with a reduction in grass-cutting being the example most frequently cited. This is all positive but it leaves a situation which people see as ‘the real pain being yet to come’ – something that the council will need to be prepared for in terms of negative impact in such areas as staff morale and customer satisfaction.

- The authority has recognised that ‘Minimum Council’ will not be minimum enough. A £35m challenge exists for the period from 2013/14 to 2016/17, with £6m of that required in the first year. In addition to this, some of the financial pressures that have been eased in previous years come back in to play next year, including the expiry of the existing terms and conditions package and the increased council tax revenue requirement that will emerge as a consequence of the authority having accepted government funding to deliver a council tax freeze recently. In addition to this there is the fact that recent budgets have been supported by the use of reserves which clearly doesn’t represent a sustainable long-term proposition. The move the council has made to embark on a journey from ‘Minimum Council’ to ‘Future Council’ reflects a full understanding of both the continuing financial challenge and the need to do something additional. This again represents a proactive and planned approach but the authority does need to be aware that as the
time taken to move towards ‘Future Council’ builds so too does the risk of being forced into a more reactive future approach.

3.2 Journey to ‘Future Council’

- The concept of a ‘Future Council’ sits right at the heart of the council’s strategic priority of changing the relationship between the council and its communities. The context, as presented to us, is one of a largely paternalistic approach by the council traditionally and communities within Barnsley having tended to be dependent on the authority, and other organisations previously such as the Coal Board and mining trades unions, as the providers of an extensive range of services and support. In a context of significantly reduced funding for the council it will not be feasible to sustain the relationship in this form. As a result communities are faced with a combination of reduced services and needing to do more for themselves. The ambitions and challenges around ‘changing the relationship’ are outlined in more detail in the next section of this report.

- If ‘Minimum Council’ essentially entailed a reductive approach - a cost-cutting exercise - but the ‘minimum’ hasn’t been sufficient, then the emphasis for ‘Future Council’ needs to be on transformational change to achieve the necessary additional savings and consequent cultural change. Careful consideration needs to be given to the significance of this cultural change – for elected members, officers, trade unions and the community – and the communication around it, given the challenges involved and potential sensitivities that may arise.

- The first step in the transition from ‘Minimum Council’ to ‘Future Council’ is what has come to be termed within the organisation as ‘Core Council’. It represents an objective of determining what it is felt to be essential for the council to deliver – comprising an ‘irreducible common offer’ supplemented by areas that the council attaches importance to politically (which are currently the corporate plan priorities) and therefore wishes to invest in. However, what is entailed by ‘Core Council’ requires definition and the development of much greater clarity around the approach to delivering it. An important piece of context here is that staff indicated that tensions emerged under ‘Minimum Council’ as a result of different interpretations being placed by officers upon what ‘minimum’ entailed and perceived disparities ensuing around the extent to which things were cut back in some areas relative to others even where they were felt to be of equal significance. It is therefore important to provide officers tasked with determining the future direction for the council’s current activities with a clear sense of what ‘core’ entails. For example, some people may interpret ‘core’ as meaning nothing more than what the council is statutorily required to provide but, as we understand it, it will involve a range of other activities, reflecting political priorities, continuing to be delivered such as community engagement activity to support the sought after change in the relationship with those communities. The council needs to minimise the risk of mixed messages regarding ‘core’ and ‘non-core’ activity and the funding for them respectively. This will be important if the level of commitment to the process displayed by staff so far is to be maintained.
• Whilst managers spoke of being better informed about their services now than they did a year or two ago, as a result of the preparations they were required to undertake for 'Minimum Council', we identified the need for increased use of evidence to inform decision-making. As examples, the authority already recognises the need to update the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and that it needs to develop a better understanding corporately of how it is performing in key areas. Another example is the 'Think Local, Act Local' annual survey which, whilst popular with elected members because of the insights it provides them into their communities, cannot be considered a reliable measure of what is truly being felt across the borough because of its lack of statistical validity. We were surprised that this survey had been preserved whilst other measures, such as the regular MORI survey, had been sacrificed. We also noted that the authority hasn't yet moved to utilise community profile data, available through the likes of Experian, to enable it to better understand the make-up of communities, how they are changing, their needs and how best to engage with them.

• The challenge of bringing about the ‘Future Council’ is a significant one and we were reassured when we heard the council's senior leadership referring to it as a continuum, with work starting now but the whole concept developing over time, going through different phases, so the balance of responsibilities shifts from the council towards communities over time. It is important for the senior leadership to develop recognition amongst others that fully implementing the ‘Future Council’ entails change over a generation. Thus ‘Future Council’ will look different at different points in time over the coming twenty or so years. It is also likely to develop differently in different places, with some communities within Barnsley which have traditionally been more self-reliant, perhaps as a consequence of having a Parish or Town Council or as a result of well-established voluntary bodies and organisations, being better placed than others to take on increased responsibilities. Thus there is a major communications and engagement challenge around the journey to ‘Future Council’ – with a need to explain to people what the concept broadly entails and that there will be differentiation over both time and geography. This is a key prerequisite that underpins a number of other actions and improvement activity.

• A lot of thinking and basic planning is currently taking place within the council regarding possible revised governance arrangements to sit at the heart of ‘Future Council’. The Leader is central to this. Future arrangements have been discussed by both the relevant Strategy Review Group and between Cabinet and the council’s Senior Management Team, with this potentially highly significant change process now needing to be clearly mapped out and a communication strategy developed. The council has an ambition of implementing any revised governance arrangements from the start of the new municipal year. This is a highly ambitious timescale and there is a lot of groundwork to do in order to enable the council to be sure what is being considered represents the right direction. A central issue regarding ‘Future Council’ is the importance of the council determining what appetite there is within local communities to take on more responsibility and become involved in council activity at the local level and, linked to this, how best to engage people in the whole agenda.
• The proposed revisions to the governance arrangements include changes at both the local area level and the corporate level. Our understanding is that the local area level changes could entail the establishment of ‘ward alliances’ for each council ward which could comprise the elected members for that ward and representatives of the local community. Their particular focus would be consideration of local priorities. These could then be supplemented by five or six ‘area councils’ comprising a number of wards each. Their core responsibilities would include scrutinising local service delivery and shaping service delivery in line with priorities emerging from the ward alliances. The area councils would form part of the Executive arrangements and would represent a key means by which elected members would engage with council officers. This thinking is still developing and clearly more needs to be done in order both to be clear that the direction is the right one and the detail is correct. There are two key aspects at the area level that we weren’t clear on – firstly, the role that Parish and Town Councils might play and, secondly, how the democratic mandate of elected members would sit in relation to the role of the citizen. It is important for the council to work these issues through if, indeed, it hasn’t already done so.

• At the corporate level, as we understand it, the intention is to pare back the extent of overview and scrutiny activity in line with the amount undertaken at the local area level being built up. Consideration is also being given to reducing the frequency of Full Council and Cabinet meetings as increasing amounts of direction-setting and decision-making would take place at the local level.

3.3 Changing the relationship between the council and communities

• We quickly came to appreciate that Barnsley as a council area comprises a series of distinct communities with significant differentiation between them around such matters as geography, social make-up, governance mechanisms (with some areas parished and others not) and levels of engagement in civic life. We noted many references from outside the council to the resilience of communities – reflected in their close-knit nature and their positive responses to crises that may have hit them over time such as infrastructure and logistical difficulties brought about by heavy snowfalls, emergencies triggered by flooding and economic hardship. Perhaps communities are more resilient than the council gives them credit for.

• As we have touched on above, a key aspect of changing the relationship between the council and communities is the authority’s engagement with local people and the governance arrangements that enable this to happen. There are some good foundations in place, including pilot activities such as neighbourhood management in Kendray and Athersley/New Lodge and a community-led approach to designing and delivering services in the Dearne wards which is being supported by a national social enterprise, plus similar initiatives in both Penistone and St Helen’s wards. The authority also has plans to move towards implementing a ‘Big Conversation’ as part of its consultation activity – this would be a massive extension of the ‘Think Local, Act Local’ survey and would involve staff from across the council swapping their usual activities for a day to go out into communities, probably with elected members, and glean the views of large numbers of residents in the form of a survey.
• Changing the relationship between the council and the communities it serves will represent a major shift not just for local people but also for the council itself in the form of staff and elected members - a challenge of culture change within the organisation. A wide range of people within the council talked to us about the notion of ‘dependent communities’ within Barnsley - people relying on support from the state, in the form of services, social/welfare benefits or employment. Whilst people outside the organisation that we spoke to reflected that this was the case, they did also, as we have said, reflect a sense of Barnsley communities being resilient ones. This prompted us to wonder whether a situation of communities being dependent upon the local authority is actually mutually beneficial - communities receive the support they have been ‘weaned on to’ and become accustomed to whilst, at the same time, the council has welcomed the chance to fulfil their needs and become a hugely important organisation to the population. In reflecting this view to senior people within the council there was an acknowledgement that this perhaps had some significant truth to it.

• Thus we see a need for the council to ‘let go’ and adapt to different ways of working - to move away from seeing itself as the deliverer and provider and instead act as a facilitator and enabler, entailing developing the best possible understanding of the needs of communities, developing their capacity to meet those needs as individual citizens or communities and sourcing necessary services and support from wherever may be most appropriate. As part of this, it will be important for the council to explore all possible avenues in terms of ways of delivering services as part of meeting the financial challenge and empowering communities. The council has a long tradition as the direct provider of services, with obvious exceptions such as the provision of housing via Bernslai Homes. This tradition reflects a clear political belief and has been instrumental in the council’s strong and positive relationship with trades unions. Going forward, the council, and politicians and trades unions in particular, will need to recognise that the financial imperatives that are driving the requirement for the council to transform its relationship with communities will require communities to do more, the council to do less and what is funded by the local authority to be delivered from a wider range of sources. This will be a key part of the cultural shift described and requires dedicated focus to ensure a shared understanding going forward.

• Within all of this, we noted the passion with which the elected members we met represented their wards – taking issues forward to the council on behalf of their constituents and seeking a response. As the balance of responsibilities shifts over the coming years as part of ‘Future Council’ and the changing of the council’s relationship with communities, elected members will be at the forefront of the engagement on this issue with those communities and developing understanding within them of the ways in which services need to be revised and local people need to take on increased responsibilities. For ‘Future Council’ to succeed elected members will need to represent the council to communities as well as the other way round - explaining why things need to change and how people need to respond.

• Alongside this, as elected members are required to take increasingly tough budget decisions and policy and provision is revised as a consequence of those decisions, then it will be important for councillors to adjust their expectations of the council
accordingly. We learned from a range of sources of something of a historic tendency for elected members to approach officers informally and ask for something to be done because it was important to a local constituent. Whilst this is perfectly reasonable and positive in some circumstances, such as a customer service ‘failing’, there are other circumstances where it may be inappropriate because it goes against agreed council policy. What became apparent to us was the extent to which those requests which were less appropriate were being made – it was clearly established as part of the culture, with officers seeking to respond positively wherever possible. This situation will not be sustainable going forward and will require substantial adjustment as resources reduce further and elected members and officers become more constrained as a result.

3.4 Growing the economy – building on the strengths

- ‘Growing the economy’ is one of the key strategic priorities of the council with this reflected at the ‘One Barnsley’ partnership level as ‘Growing Barnsley as a 21st century market town’. There is a solid base here, with a viable town centre coping well with significant competition from the likes of Meadowhall, Sheffield and Leeds. Significant public realm work has been delivered already to enhance the town centre and the occupancy level of retail outlets is high at around ninety per cent. The local offer acts as a beacon of attraction, with the local market having a national reputation, there being a number of high end and specialist outlets and 70 per cent of outlets within the town being independent. The re-development of the market is aimed at furthering the transformation of the town centre, with the related agreement now signed with the main private sector partner and the sign-up of key retailers secured.

- The council has undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the issues in the local economy and, through this, has determined the considerable extent of the issues in the economic performance of Barnsley and the unsuitability of some options that had been mooted at one stage – including developing Barnsley as a ‘dormitory town’ serving Sheffield, Leeds and others. The analysis has highlighted the benefit of emphasising the environmental and cultural positives that Barnsley has to offer – of which there are many, including very attractive countryside, beautiful villages, the market, the Lamproom Theatre and the Cooper Art Gallery. In addition, the analysis has served to identify the spatial planning needs of the borough, including the extension and diversification of the housing offer and the importance of being able to make land available in order to strengthen employment opportunities, and these needs have been acted upon.

- The analysis and the strategic priority have been underpinned by the council putting a clear plan in place. An economic strategy has been prepared and there is a costed project plan to support it. Barnsley has now become clear in its own mind and in turn made it known to key partners in the region that it is going to relate primarily to the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – having previously sought to ‘ride two horses’ in terms of also working within the Leeds City Region LEP. This decision provides a clear direction of travel for all concerned. Whilst there is still significant progress to make in relation to enhancing educational attainment within Barnsley, which is central to economic growth, it is widely
recognised that there is a very strong focus on it. The Local Plan also now reflects the economic strategy and is aimed at enabling the growth drivers to be brought about, including the requisite site allocations being included.

3.5 Growing the economy - issues

- Thus there are clearly a number of strengths within Barnsley that the council and partners can, and are, looking to build on in order to grow the economy. However, it will not be easy, with there being a number of issues to consider and overcome.

- As we have outlined, the re-development of the market is central to the strengthening and future prosperity of the town centre. A lot of effort has gone into reaching the current position and many obstacles have been overcome. Seeing things through to a conclusion will be vital if the overall ambitions are to be fulfilled.

- As regards the economic strategy, the costed project plan underpinning it has been important but this focuses on the capital funding elements and the council is faced with financing a significant revenue increase of around £2.5m per annum in order to enable successful delivery. This adds to the £35m financial challenge already identified for the period through to 2016/17. The strategy also focuses on the long term, in relation to some of the key deliverables including the housing offer, making development sites available and enhancing educational attainment – with less in the way of shorter term ‘quick wins’. This needs to be addressed to provide momentum and confidence in the plan and its deliverability. There is also a focus on a ‘high concept’ (and therefore more expensive) approach for housing, as reflected in the likes of low carbon and eco homes projects, which may prove challenging in a time of recession. We also noted the absence of a skills strategy for Barnsley and suggest one should be developed to sit alongside the economic strategy.

- There are also a number of challenges around selling the vision of Barnsley and its economy in the future. Whilst Barnsley features a number of good private sector companies, the existence of a weak partnership with the private sector generally is acting as a barrier, with the council being required to take a strong lead, including making significant financial investment, to drive forward the economic strategy and growth of the 21st century market town concept. Another concerns the weak branding and image of Barnsley as a place – with a failure to date to demonstrate to people what it has to offer including the cultural and environmental positives. This is an area that would benefit from attention, with an emphasis on ensuring that the branding image of Barnsley as a whole, its economy and the council are complementary and mutually supportive.

- Alongside this sits the issue of the lack of an easily identifiable narrative regarding both what the place has to offer and the economic vision for the future, including the clear articulation of priorities, such as extending and diversifying the housing offer, enhancing educational attainment and increasing land availability, for outsiders to the council such as Government, LEP members and inward investors. This is a key gap that would benefit from some specific focus and attention. Also, to turn the economic strategy and ambitions into a reality, the council will need to ensure it matches the human and other resource requirements, including officer support, to the level of ambition. The revenue liabilities generated by key strands of the
economic strategy need to be addressed in the council’s medium term financial plan. We also noted the limited extent to which the private sector and the council had endeavoured to tap into some external funding streams to assist with economic growth, such as the ‘Growing Places Fund’ and ‘Regional Growth Fund’ monies, and would encourage them to pursue such opportunities in the future.

- The current level of performance at secondary school level in Barnsley will inevitably limit the borough’s attraction as a place to live and work.

3.6 Corporate working

- With strong and continuous leadership at Chief Executive level over the twelve years to late 2011, the council can be seen to have strongly-embedded systems and a style that have delivered many successes. These include good financial management and a unified set of support services, including HR. The council has driven forward its office accommodation strategy, culminating in the developments that we saw, the refurbishment of the Town Hall, development of public space and the public realm within Barnsley and the complete overhaul of the secondary school buildings provision, with 13 schools being replaced by nine Advanced Learning Centres.

- Whilst this is all extremely positive, there are some strands of the approach that the authority is looking to revise as it moves forward. Corporate performance management arrangements are only now being developed, with the approach until recently having centred on issues being managed on a directorate by directorate basis. Managers spoke of the constraints they experience as a consequence of the centralised arrangements within the authority, with them being perceived as bureaucratic and slowing down decision-making – although this is certainly not unique either to Barnsley or to local government. Customer service arrangements within the authority are also of a lesser standard than might be expected. As an example, we were struck by the huge range of phone numbers for council services publicised in the authority’s newsletter to residents – which gave us the impression of it being quite a difficult organisation to navigate your way around as a member of the public. The council has recognised this, however, and a review of customer service arrangements is now underway, offering opportunities for both improvement and financial savings.

- Another strand that needs revision is the way that policy seems sometimes to be formulated within the council, evolving through convoluted routes and involving differential speed of progression through different parts of the council machinery, including the formal governance and decision-making aspects. As an example, we learnt of a desire on the part of overview and scrutiny recently to undertake a review of the way in which communities are being supported around the changing relationship with the council, which runs way ahead of the formulation of the policy direction and emerging planning – suggesting that some parts of the organisation and governance framework are kept better informed on key issues than others. Another example is what we touched on earlier in terms of a lot of thinking and basic planning currently taking place amongst a small number of people within the council regarding possible revised governance arrangements to sit at the heart of ‘Future Council’ — with the Leader being central to this but too much of the thinking
sitting within his head and needing to be more widely shared. Greater clarity and consistency around the process of policy formulation would bring benefit in terms of better join-up across the organisation and greater efficiency.

• There are finance issues as well, with the £35m gap to 2016/17 still needing to be addressed as we outlined earlier, and increasing cost pressures including the development of the devolution agenda that the revised governance arrangements under the ‘Future Council’ represent, the costs associated with the council’s activities under the economic strategy and a potential liability in the form of the ‘Digital Region’ project with other authorities in South Yorkshire and in which the council is a shareholder.

• The acting Chief Executive has started a shift to more corporate approaches and greater openness within the organisation. An example of this is the move to develop corporate performance management arrangements. The Senior Management Team is seeking greater ‘togetherness’ founded on increased openness and trust. Many people spoke of the lack of cohesion at this level over recent years but things appear gradually to be improving now. Two of the things they will need to address are their limited visibility and the lack of trust staff have in them, as highlighted in the latest staff survey. The ‘Minimum Council’ programme was, as we outlined earlier, felt by staff to have engaged them effectively and they very much welcomed the honesty and respect that had been shown towards them by the council’s senior leadership and indicated they had increased trust in the leadership as a result – all of which provides a good basis to build from. The programme also represents a good example of the potential of the organisation to pull together. Further organisational change is expected by the Senior Management Team at their level and people are expecting the forthcoming ‘de-layering of management’ report to also prompt further change.

• We were impressed by the arrangements the council has in place to support the development of elected members. There is significant take-up of personal development plans by councillors, with these being facilitated by council officers – which suggests a very healthy and open set of relationships between councillors and officers. Elected members also have access to a wide range of activities aimed at keeping them abreast of key developments within the authority or wider local government and developing their skills and abilities. Central to this, and something that none of the peer challenge team had come across before but thought was positive, is a tiered system of allowances linked to the development activities undertaken – with the top tier rewarding those securing a formal public administration-related higher education qualification.

• Whilst we had limited opportunity to fully probe the issue, we identified a perception amongst organisations within the voluntary and community sector of a lack of a consistent corporate approach to commissioning. There are two dimensions to this. The first is the existence of different commissioning units within the council, primarily for adults and children’s services, which leads to different approaches and possible lack of join-up whilst the second revolves around the extent to which local organisations that have been around for a lesser period of time are able to break into what they see as a commissioning world dominated by direct council provision or delivery via well-established and significantly-sized voluntary and community
sector bodies. We wondered about the extent to which this links to governance and accountability arrangements around grants to the third sector traditionally having been less robust and rigorous than should be expected. A review both of the grants themselves and the arrangements has improved things but there is room for further improvement, with a need for the authority to ensure the appropriate outcomes and values expected from grants are clearly reflected in, and secured through, service level agreements with bodies receiving grants from the council.

3.7 Partnership working

- In meeting with partner organisations we were impressed by the real sign-up that they showed to the two strategic priorities at the community strategy level. We also noted the frustration that exists amongst them with what they see as a tendency for the ‘One Barnsley’ partnership to over-strategise – although we weren’t sure why this was presented as being the responsibility of the council rather than the partners as a collective. This mindset is perhaps symptomatic of a wider matter in relation to partnership working within Barnsley, with the council appearing to be wondering how to fulfil an appropriate role in partnership working. It seems torn between leading and driving things forward, with a risk of being seen to dominate and dictate, and taking more of a back seat but running the risk of being seen to abdicate leadership responsibility or partners not driving things ahead sufficiently. There is no easy solution to this beyond some honest dialogue at a senior level.

- There were also frustrations expressed by partners around the myriad arrangements in the sub-structure of the partnership, although this won’t be unique to Barnsley. The top level structure of the partnership was reviewed last year, resulting in the establishment of the Senior Executive Team (SET) arrangements, comprising the senior professionals from the principal public sector partner organisations, to help drive forward delivery. We understand a review of the way in which the SET operates is underway, although this comes more in the form of team building and development rather than a revision of the arrangements themselves.

- One of the key sentiments expressed by partners was a shared desire for them to invest some time in clarifying mutual expectations of one another and, through this, being able to hold each other to account more – with this perhaps providing the opportunity to tease out the issue of the role the council should be playing in relation to partnership working. Partners saw a need for what they described as ‘a harder-nosed approach to performance management’, linked to this issue of accountability, and a focus on delivery rather than debate or strategy. It was also felt that there are opportunities for improved data sharing amongst partners. The ‘performance clinics’ are central to developing the approach to performance management, with them not yet being seen to be operating to full effect.

- The ‘no-nonsense’ sentiments expressed by partners bode well for the future and carving out some time to turn these concepts into a reality would be a good investment. This would build on what are already a number of good examples of joint working, especially at the operational level. One example is the joint activity between the council and the South West Yorkshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust to deliver ‘telehealth’ which has culminated in reduced hospital admissions.
Another example is the location of joint housing, council and police teams in police stations. A further example is the way in which partners, including the council, Job Centre Plus and Barnsley College, worked together to secure the relocation of internet retailer ASOS to the area, creating around 1,500 new jobs.

- Whilst all of the partners within ‘One Barnsley’ deserve credit for having so clearly determined the two strategic priorities and making them central to people’s thinking, the underlying health issues for the population strike us as being a pressing concern. Whilst we understand the rationale that growing the economy and changing the relationship between the state and communities within Barnsley will ultimately contribute to improved health within the local area, the differentials in health in Barnsley when compared to regional and national averages are stark – in the here and now.

- Another aspect related to health that seemed like a pressing issue to us concerns the challenges around the way in which the health sector in Barnsley is being revised. Central to this are the establishment of the Health and Well-Being Board, the transition in public health to it becoming a local authority responsibility and changes in relation to National Health Service (NHS) structures. Accelerated work is required to ensure that the structural changes in the health sector do not further exacerbate the health challenges across the borough.

- There were significant delays in progressing the establishment of a Health and Well-Being Board in Barnsley, with key factors being traditionally poor relationships between the council and the Primary Care Trust (PCT), the demise of the PCT resulting in a loss of direction and a lack of sign-up to the coalition Government’s health reforms. Things are now progressing, with clear leadership being shown by the Leader of the council in his capacity as chair of the Health and Well-Being Board, but there is a lot of ground still to make up and a need for a clear health partnership led by a single senior officer.

- As regards the transition in public health responsibilities, the formal transition plan has been passed as ‘green’ by central government but the capacity to implement it has been assessed as ‘amber’. The capacity issues are felt to relate mostly to significant levels of sickness and other absence within the public health directorate in the council and a loss of personnel as people move on to other roles elsewhere. The council will need to pay very close attention to the issues here if the transition is to be managed successfully.

- Finally, in relation to NHS structural change, Barnsley is a long way off the pace in seeing a Clinical Commissioning Group being formed. There is simply seen to be a lack of appetite within the local General Practitioner community to dedicate time and effort to it. Whilst not the council’s responsibility this does generate significant difficulties for the authority in terms of there being nobody to have a dialogue with concerning commissioning in the future.

- Thus we have some significant concerns around the state of health and the health sector within Barnsley but, at the same time, we are aware that there are some great examples of joint working between health and the council.
• As the authority moves forward on its ‘Future Council’ agenda and ‘changing the relationship between the council and communities’, it will be important for it to work both with and through the voluntary and community sector in relation to bringing about the changes. The council understandably sees volunteering as a core strand in changing the relationship. There are volunteering strategies established at both ‘One Barnsley’ and council level but, in meeting with a range of organisations from the voluntary and community sector, there was a strong sense that these, and related requests for volunteering support, were being ‘foisted’ upon the sector rather than an approach being jointly constructed which would look to make the best use of existing volunteering capacity and increase that capacity in the most appropriate ways.

• Whilst the sharing of council services with other local authorities is a growing trend within local government, we didn’t get a sense that much was happening on this front in relation to Barnsley. Rather, the sense that we developed was one of the council exploring possibilities but then backing away from potential agreements unless Barnsley was going to act as the provider – potential partners that we spoke to have certainly picked up a message from the authority of ‘we’ll play but only if it is on our home pitch’. It may be that the factor we have already touched on, concerning the council traditionally acting as the provider of services and the political belief that sits at the heart of this, is a key issue here. Another may be a desire, linked to the priority of growing the economy, to maximise employment opportunities within Barnsley – the importance of which we fully understand. There will also be some apprehension because of a previously negative experience in relation to joint trading standards provision with Sheffield City Council. It is entirely the council’s prerogative as to whether it pursues anything in the way of a shared services agenda in the future – the important thing is that the authority keeps an open mind on the issue.

• On a similar subject we wondered about the council’s appetite on occasion for working with other organisations. We’ve already touched on a perception within the third sector of barriers to less well-established organisations being commissioned to provide services. We also learned of a decision within Barnsley not to sign up to a programme of work being delivered by the Rotherham and Barnsley Chamber of Commerce to develop business start-ups across the Yorkshire and Humber region, which had received funding of £6m from Europe and central Government, with the rationale being the council could do it itself. We didn’t have the opportunity to obtain the council’s view on this matter, and there may be perfectly logical reasons for the decision, but it did strike us as rather odd to pass up the opportunity – not least because of the strategic priority of growing the economy and the organisation leading the work being a local one. Thus we don’t have particularly firm evidence on this front, but there was just enough of an undercurrent around the attitude towards working with others that led us to want to raise the matter for the council to consider.

3.8 Confidence and communication

• Amongst many people we spoke to outside the organisation, the council is perceived as risk-averse. One of the ways in which this is demonstrated is what we saw for ourselves as a hesitancy around communicating successes and positive
developments. It felt to us as though no time is ever quite right for the council to communicate good news. We noted the number of times in our conversations people within the authority used phrases along the lines of:

- ‘Well its too early to judge – we've had some initial success but we'll have to see if we can sustain it’;
- ‘Obviously that's good for somewhere like Barnsley but compared to others ...’;
- ‘Of course this is Barnsley so I'm sure something can still go wrong with it' 

- There is a major tendency to self-deprecate, both as a council and as a place. We were struck by the number of great things Barnsley has to promote but it requires a change in mindset and culture for the council and the area to capitalise upon these. At the heart of this undoubtedly sits an issue of confidence and possibly one of low expectations. Clearly this won't transform overnight but the council's senior leadership can perhaps show the way by exuding more confidence and belief in the council and the place and, through this, encourage others to believe more strongly and communicate more proactively and assertively. A conscious mindset shift needs to take place, demonstrated in a number of important and symbolic areas of activity, to practically illustrate this necessary change of approach. Given that greater risks are going to have to be taken going forward, the Council needs to develop a bolder, less risk averse approach, built on sound policy development, to face up to the many challenges ahead.

- Whilst we understand the council hasn't enjoyed a great relationship with the local newspaper in recent years we understand this wasn't helped by a clash of personalities. With new faces now in place perhaps the time is right to develop that relationship and see how these two key organisations can work together for the good of Barnsley.

4 Conclusion and Improvement Areas

At the invitation of the council, outlined below are a few areas that we feel the council could benefit from prioritising in order to help deliver the next stage of its improvement journey and the transition from 'Minimum Council' to 'Future Council':-

1. Putting in place the key steps necessary to deliver the cultural change required for 'Future Council' to succeed – across elected members, officers, trade unions and communities. There is also a major communications and engagement challenge around the journey to 'Future Council' and we therefore see the need for a communication plan to underpin the transition.

2. Specific actions are required to enable the successful delivery of the economic strategy. The first is finding the means by which to finance the significant revenue increase of around £2.5m per annum that it generates. The second is addressing the weak branding and image of Barnsley as a place. Thirdly, there is the need for a skills strategy to be developed.
3. More corporate approaches are required in a number of key areas, particularly with regard to performance management, customer services, commissioning, evidence based decision-making and policy formulation. A collective focus and emphasis as one organisation is key to future progress and success.

4. The need for the council, with partners, to be clear around its approach to partnership working and for partnership working within the borough to have more of an emphasis on tangible delivery underpinned by a ‘harder nosed approach to performance management’.

5. The need for a greater emphasis on the health agenda – both in terms of the nature and extent of the inequalities across the borough and ensuring the structural changes in the health sector do not further exacerbate the health challenges across the borough.

6. A shift in mindset and approach about the good things that Barnsley as a place has to offer and the successes of the council, with a commensurate emphasis on communications and branding that is less risk-averse and self-deprecating.

We have sought to highlight the many positive aspects of the council through the peer challenge process but we have also outlined some difficult and challenging messages. It has been our aim to provide some detail on them through this report in order to help the council consider them and understand them. The councils' senior managerial and political leadership will therefore undoubtedly want to reflect further on the findings before determining how they wish to take things forward.

There is also the need to consider communication of the findings of the peer challenge with many people the team met expressing a strong interest in learning of the outcomes of the process.

Members of the team would be happy to contribute to any further improvement activity in the future and/or to return to the authority in due course to undertake a short progress review. Mark Edgell, as the Local Government Association's Principal Adviser for your region, will continue to act as the main contact between the council and the Local Government Association, particularly in relation to improvement. Hopefully this provides you with a convenient route of access to the organisation, its resources and packages of support going forward.

All of us connected with the peer challenge would like to wish the council and Barnsley every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Bowron
Programme Manager – Peer Support
Local Government Association
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| 1   | Cultural change for Future Council | Future People and Culture | a) Change Narrative  
Develop/ revise the narrative to explain the cultural change journey that the Council is on and what this means for various stakeholders within and outside the Council – members, employees, partners and communities.  
Specific actions to include:-  
- Identify where we are/ where we need to be as an organisation?  
- Highlight what this change will mean for key stakeholders and our relationship with them.  
- Develop shared understanding of ‘what will success look like’. | Oct 12 | DT |                      |
|     |                                    |                         | b) Change Plan  
Develop a change plan to take forward the Council’s organisational change and improvement agenda and requirements, and how this will help deliver the Corporate Plan.  
- Review existing draft Organisational Development Plan.  
- Identify process for engaging key stakeholders across the Council, particularly employees.  
- Identify what change is required, from when to what, why and how.  
- Draft revised plan and map out key actions, milestones and outcomes. | Dec 12 | DT |                      |
|     |                                    |                         | c) Communications Plan  
Clear communication plan to support the organisational change and improvement of the organisation as a whole. | Dec 12 | DT/BW |                      |
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<td>2</td>
<td>Delivering the Economic Strategy</td>
<td>Growing the Economy</td>
<td>a) <strong>Identifying capital and revenue funding to deliver</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop a clear investment plan for the delivery of the Economic Strategy taking account of capital and revenue requirements and implications across the Council.</td>
<td>Sep 12</td>
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<td>b) <strong>Address weak branding and image of Barnsley as a place</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop a clear branding and marketing plan for Barnsley as a place and its economic offer, complementary to that of the Council (see 6).</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
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<td>c) <strong>Develop a Skills Strategy</strong>&lt;br&gt;To address the skills challenges facing the Borough and planning ahead to maximise the employment opportunities available with and outside Borough.</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>JH/AG</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>More Corporate approaches in key areas</td>
<td>Future Leadership</td>
<td>a) <strong>Performance Management approach, reporting and associated arrangements</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop a revised performance management framework and approach, with clear roles and responsibilities and quarterly reporting processes and timescales.</td>
<td>Sep 12</td>
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<td>b) <strong>Customer Services</strong>&lt;br&gt;Separate programme plan available (subject to SMT discussion in September 2012).</td>
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<td>c) <strong>Commissioning (including community and voluntary sector)</strong>&lt;br&gt;Develop a consistent, coherent and coordinated approach to commissioning across the Council, incorporating links with community and voluntary sector, alongside an integrated resource support arrangements.</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>SS</td>
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|     |                    |                         | d) Evidence based decision making  
Linked to the performance management changes, develop a coherent approach to evidence based decision making and use of strategic intelligence across the Council as a whole. | Nov 12 | SJ/SS |            |
|     |                    |                         | e) Policy making  
Review the Council’s policy making arrangements to develop a clear and consistent policy formulation process, alongside the revised governance arrangements. | Oct 12 | AF |            |
| 4   | Partnership Working | Future Leadership      | a) Review of partnership ways of working and governance for LSP | Nov 12 | DT/SJ |            |
|     |                    |                         | b) Define Council approach to partnership working | Nov 12 | DT/SJ |            |
|     |                    |                         | c) Review resource requirements and commitments by the Council to partnership working and governance across the Council | Dec 12 | DT/SJ |            |
| 5   | Health Agenda and Changes | Future Leadership/ Improving People’s Potential and Achievement | a) Actions and leads recently agreed by Health and Wellbeing Board  
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy  
- Establishing the Clinical Commissioning Groups  
- Transition of Public Health into the Local Authority  
- Transformation  
- Membership of Health and Wellbeing Board | Dec 12 | MF |            |
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<td>6</td>
<td>Promoting and Communicating BMBC and the Borough as a whole</td>
<td>Planning for the Future/Future People and Culture</td>
<td>b) Develop and publish a revised JSNA as the basis for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy</td>
<td>Dec 12</td>
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<td></td>
<td>a) Revised internal and external communications approach and Action Plan</td>
<td>Dec 12</td>
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|     |                   |                        | b) Visual Identity  
Research and develop potential visual identity programme to reflect the Future Council | Dec 12 | DT/BW | |