

PEER REVIEW

Agenda Item 5b

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Background Papers:- Peer Review Report
Financial Implications:- Will review as issues are addressed
Equalities Implications:- None identified
Legal Implications:- None identified
Options: n/a
Risks: n/a

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Peer Review was undertaken by an IDeA select team. Their role was to act as a 'critical friend' to the Council and identify areas for improvement and issues for consideration. The review undertaken was a corporate review, which looked at such issues as governance, decision-making, corporate process, the challenges the Council faces, future plans, etc.

DECISION

- (a) That the Peer Review report's recommendations be accepted and be incorporated into the Council's 2007/8 improvement plans where appropriate.
- (b) That a report on progress on the recommendations be made to the March Cabinet.

1.0 Introduction

As the Cabinet will recall, a peer review was conducted by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) during September 2006. The purpose of such a review was for an external team consisting of a Review Manager from the IDeA, Chief Executive, Leader of a Council and a specialist officer to take an external snapshot of the organisation and act as a critical friend as to where the Council should look for improvement.

The final report has been sent to all Members under separate cover.

2.0 Findings of Review

Key strengths

The report states that during the course of the peer review it became evident that Braintree District Council demonstrates a range of key strengths:

- Braintree District Council faces up to challenges
- “Can do, get it done “ culture
- Works well with partners and contractors, parishes and wider community organisations
- Well respected by external authorities and partners
- Cross party member respect, co-operation and support for priorities.

These statements are a real credit to the whole Council, both Members and officers and reflect the Council’s desire to make a difference for all the citizens of the District.

3.0 Areas for Improvement

The report sets out a number of improvements and areas for further detailed review. These were issues that the Council had identified and therefore recognised that consideration needed to be given to each of these areas.

The main areas identified are:

- A** Continue to work with partners to meet the challenges associated with cross boundary, regional and national policy developments.
- B** Review and look to co-ordinate the priorities for the LSP, LAAs, LDF and Council’s emerging vision for 2025 to ensure these deliver the vision.
- C** Review and better co-ordinate Scrutiny, Audit and policy development groups (PDG) committees to ensure these help focus the Council on delivering continuous improvement.
- D** Address the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- E** Review Council structure post ballot to ensure ‘Fit for Purpose’.

The specific issues under these main areas will be built into our improvement plan for 2007/8 and beyond, where appropriate.