

Nigel Pearson  
Chief Executive  
East Riding Council  
County Hall  
Beverley  
East Riding of Yorkshire HU17 9BA

April 2014

Dear Nigel

**East Riding of Yorkshire Council  
Corporate Peer Challenge 1-4 April 2014**

On behalf of the peer team, I would like to say what a pleasure and privilege it was to be invited into East Riding of Yorkshire Council to deliver the recent corporate peer challenge as part of the Local Government Association (LGA) offer to support sector led improvement.

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at East Riding were:

- Steve Robinson, Chief Executive, Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Councillor Jane Scott, Leader, Wiltshire Council
- Nicola Stinson, Assistant Head of Planning, Housing and Regeneration, Cornwall Council
- Louise Fradd, Strategic Director - Place, Bath and NE Somerset
- Liz Spratt, Policy and Finance Advisor, LGA
- Sue Avery – Peer Challenge Manager

**Scope and focus of the peer challenge**

You asked the peer team to provide an external 'health-check' of the organisation by considering the core components looked at by all corporate peer challenges:

1. Understanding of the local context and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and has it established a clear set of priorities?
2. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
3. Political and managerial leadership: Does the council have effective political and managerial leadership and is it a constructive partnership?
4. Governance and decision-making: Are effective governance and decision-making arrangements in place to respond to key challenges and manage change, transformation and disinvestment?
5. Organisational capacity: Are organisational capacity and resources focused in the right areas in order to deliver the agreed priorities?

You also asked us to consider three over-arching areas of focus:

- Financial sustainability. Sustainability of the financial plan - what more should we be doing?
- Economic vibrancy. Do we work effectively within the LEPs? Are we creating the right conditions for sustained economic growth?
- Flood resilience. Is there any more we and our partners can do to help reduce the impact of future flooding events?

### **The peer challenge process**

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement-focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement focus. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent 4 days onsite at East Riding, during which they:

- Spoke to more than 100 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 30 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.

This letter provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit on 4<sup>th</sup> April. In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

### **Summary of feedback: overall observations and messages**

East Riding of Yorkshire Council is a strong and highly performing council that manages its finances effectively in a very challenging public sector environment. The Council benefits from strong leadership and a cohesive team of senior managers and members. The Business Plan and Financial Strategy clearly identifies priorities, as determined by local residents, and is underpinned by a comprehensive competency framework and the culture and values of the organisation.

The East Riding of Yorkshire is the fifth largest unitary area in England, covering 930 square miles, 95% of which is classified as agricultural land. Over half of the total population of 334,200 live in rural areas. Yet despite its size, employees describe the culture as that of 'one big family'. The Council is a large local employer encouraging self-financing services and maximising the benefit of successful funding bids. There is a determination to equip staff with the skills they need for personal, organisational and wider sub-regional benefit. Managers and staff are highly motivated to meet the needs of residents and act as ambassadors for the organisation.

There is a history of strong financial management with significant savings and robust asset management. The Council has a planned strategic approach to managing the reduction in Central Government funding, and has ensured that managers at all levels have sound financial awareness. Whilst the transformation plan is ambitious, its pace may need to be accelerated to meet required savings in the timeframe of the current Financial Plan. Further consideration could be given to long term solutions and alternative trading models to generate additional income (for example sharing your expertise on flood resilience).

Partnerships are also a strength, with the Council working very closely with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), and the Health and Wellbeing Board (H&WBB) to deliver cohesive service delivery across the East Riding. The Council has good relationships with their adjoining councils, and partners speak highly of the Leader and Chief Executive and their senior teams.

Economic growth is a priority and a variety of regeneration projects are underway. The recently announced Siemens offshore energy site on the Humber will create great opportunities for residents across the East Riding impacting on local employment, demand for housing, schools and other local services. Within the Council there is potential to build upon strong performance and capitalise on the exciting Siemens investment to drive physical, economic and social benefits through an integrated approach to economic growth.

Building community capacity in Local Government will be critical to the delivery of sustainable services. In order to have sustainable public services into the future there will need to be more self-help by the community. You may wish to consider building upon your current successful work in developing community approaches to promote independence to address your demographic challenges.

Whilst flood risk is one of the key challenges for the East Riding, you used your experience of the devastating floods in 2007 to form a flood resilience team and early warning and prevention

measures which proved their worth in the tidal surges experienced in December 2013. We think you are at the leading edge in terms of local government preparedness and could present this approach to Central Government as best practice at a national level.

This is a time of great opportunity for the East Riding. The peer team have considered areas where there may be potential for you to consider capitalising further on such opportunities, building upon your areas of great strength and extending that performance to all parts of the Council. Our feedback is presented to you with this in mind.

**Summary of feedback: current performance, ability and capacity to deliver future ambitions  
Understanding of local context and priority setting**

The Council Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2011/15 supports the wider ambitions articulated in the East Riding Community Plan and reflects the views and ambitions of local residents. Each year the Council holds budget consultation events for local people and businesses (the latest in November 2013), and the Council Business Plan and Financial Strategy are updated annually to ensure they continue to reflect local priorities. Despite the challenging financial climate the council has high ambitions and a determination to enable communities and business to achieve their full potential.

Whilst Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) have been dramatically re-configured in some areas – indeed ceasing to exist in others – the East Riding LSP has created a strong base on which partners can work together to deliver local outcomes. The Community Plan is widely recognised as the focal document in setting out ambitions for the area and clearly aligns respective partner's strategies and delivery plans. It gives the starting point for a well understood model, providing a clear golden thread from local needs, to partnership plans, through business and service plans down to employee accountability. Constant review of the Community Plan takes place to ensure it reflects and responds to the challenges faced by the Council and its partners and national policy changes – for example the LEP and H&WBB.

The theme of this year's annual manager's conference was 'Building Success, Delivering Locally' and 300 managers focused upon the importance of growing the local economy and the Council's role in supporting local businesses especially in the current challenging environment.

An ambitious transformation programme is in place, targeting £31m savings. The programme has been well planned and identifies clear costs and benefits and mechanisms to hold services to account. There are further opportunities which could be considered for transformational working with partners as set out in the Business Plan. For example, further integration with NHS services building upon the opportunities presented by the Better Care Fund, and increased use of community health hubs.

The East Riding faces a particular challenge in regard to an ageing population as coastal areas face significant numbers of retired people moving into the area. The population of residents over 65 years has risen by 24% since 2001 compared to a national average of 11%. You are tackling this proactively by investing in early intervention and prevention and making the promotion of independence a corporate priority.

The flood team has been an exemplar in sharing data and investing in telemetry, enabling local residents and businesses to plan for specific flood threats with modeling and scenario planning which have proved invaluable. The Council's use of such technology to address flood risk may be of interest to other 'at risk' areas and provides an opportunity for the Council to share its knowledge

and expertise at a national level.

Partnership working is very much a strength, and the desire to maintain the LSP reflects this commitment. Partnership approaches are regularly reviewed. The LSP has reviewed the level of burden on partners following the LGA Health Peer Review in 2013, and the council is currently considering potential opportunities for improvement across partnerships generally and a review of community engagement including the role of Members.

You have rightly recognised the need to review the roles of both the Renaissance and Community Partnerships. This presents an ideal opportunity to also review how the Council engages with communities and the various options available including more extensive use of social media.

#### **Financial planning and viability/financial sustainability**

The Council has identified the financial challenge and has consistently taken early action to reduce costs so that savings can be fully realised when government cuts are made. The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2011 - 2015 is fully integrated with the Business Plan. Budget efficiencies over its first three years have been used for a variety of strategic savings e.g. £14.5m to support continued investment in Council assets (thus delivering improvements and revenue savings whilst supporting the local economy); £9.7m to support budgets in Adults Social Care and Children's Social Care (thereby managing future service pressures). Base budget savings of £71.1m have been made since 2010/11 with a further £70.7m between 2014/15 - 2017/18

The Council holds a number of earmarked reserves which it has plans to use to support the budget from 2015/16, but does not plan to use its general reserve. The 2014/15 budget includes a substantial contribution to those earmarked reserves of £6.4m and the budgeted withdrawal from those reserves 2015/16 – 2017/18 is £9.6m in total, with most been utilised in 2015/16. There are detailed savings plans in place.

Any underspend in adults and children's services has been re-invested in these services. During the last 18 months a multi-agency help and advice team has been established (EHASH) in order to provide an immediate response to child protection concerns received from the public and agencies using the "golden number". This has been part of a strategy which has led to a significant reduction in the number of children subject to child protection plans and coming into care. Closer working with acute services at local hospitals and funding from CCG and Better Care Fund is identified as critical to meet adult social care pressures. Subject to securing additional funding for the delivery of the Care Bill the Council's finances for adult services are sustainable for the life of the current Financial Strategy.

#### **Sustainability of the financial plan - what more should we be doing?**

A four year Business Plan and Financial Strategy is in place and updated annually. A phased programme for transformation is underway led by Heads of Service with project management support. The process is supported by a Transformation Team which operates on LEAN principles and is widely recognised as being objective and challenging. An efficiency fund has been established to provide headroom for budget reductions to be phased over the Financial Planning period and to provide investment where required to realise sustainable savings.

Managers have good financial management skills and the organisation has developed a strong level of financial capability within services.

Relationships are good between the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Council, the Chief Operating Officer of the CCG is a member of the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Director of Commissioning and Transformation sits on the Senior Management Team (SMT). This working relationship is critical for future financial sustainability of the Council and CCG.

Further consideration could be given to pooled budgets, shared services and co located teams. The Better Care Fund provides an opportunity to think radically how Adult Social Care and Health could be better integrated. A focus on joint Health and Adult Social Care teams working with GPs would be one example to support early intervention and prevention services. Community health hubs could be used to support a Community approach to prevention. Further work could be developed with DWP and Job Centre Plus and skill providers to develop more focused support around skills and training.

In recognition of the ageing population, and the increase in adult social care costs, the council should now build on the success of current investment in self-help and prevention to address future pressures.

The capital programme – estimated at £117m in 2014/15 – is well managed and clearly linked to the Council's regeneration priorities to support the financial stability of local businesses and stimulate the local economy.

### **Political and Managerial Leadership**

We were impressed with the political and managerial leadership of the Council. Many people we engaged with described the Council as 'a council to be proud of'.

The council has a strong, Leader who is very experienced and widely respected amongst managers, staff, partners and local business. Members and officers are clear about their respective roles and cabinet members understand their strategic focus. There are good relationships with all the adjoining council leaders – particularly with Hull City Council, where the two councils are working together closely for the success of the sub-region; the current example being the exciting new wind energy project in the Humber with Siemens.

The Chief Executive, CMT and SMT along with the Leader and Cabinet Members set and support the corporate culture and values of the organisations. They aim to ensure that services are responsive and meet the needs of local people. Feedback about the Chief Executive was very positive from all the partners we spoke to.

The Chief Executive and Directors of CMT are all based in one open plan office in County Hall enabling regular information sharing, quick decisions and opportunities to develop ideas collectively.

Strong joint corporate leadership is evident between senior management and members. There are regular formal and informal discussion sessions held between the Cabinet and CMT, and regular planned sessions with individual Portfolio Holders, Directors and Head of Service.

There is clearly a supportive learning culture for managers, staff and members with extensive availability of targeted training available at all levels including MSc accredited management development, graduate trainee programmes, apprenticeship programmes, in house training and workshops, mentoring, coaching and action learning. The Council has adopted an Outcomes Based

Accountability approach to performance management and identifies the milestones required to 'turn the curve' – or 'actions needed to succeed' in OBA terms - with clear criteria and action plans.

All the managers and staff we met were passionate about their focus on local residents and businesses, although some staff were not clear on the council's priorities and values.

### **Governance and decision-making**

The Overview Management Committee (whose Membership includes all the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees) is led by a member of the Labour Group. Scrutiny is well supported by officers and members and comprises highly motivated scrutiny members. Recommendations from scrutiny are followed up on a regular basis to ensure scrutiny continues to add value to the work of the Council and its partners. There is extensive annual consultation with Members and Partners during the budget setting process, Budget Conferences with Members of the public and partners early on in the process followed by scrutiny through the Overview and Management Committee, Political Group budget seminars and an annual presentation at the Local Public Service Resource Advisory Group. There are, however, elements of scrutiny which might be improved. The team did not see any scrutiny of performance data (although we recognise that the new Inphase – interactive Performance Dashboard reports - will be accessible to members).

The Review panels are extremely effective, allowing an in depth look at key policy areas. The work undertaken is detailed and thorough and can take up to a year undertake and report to full council. One excellent example is the review into Flood Planning following the 2007 floods and which led to the development of nationally leading edge flood resilience. Another is economic development. Both have been well received within the council and by its partners and recommendations implemented.

In light of the growth agenda it would be timely to explore the potential for the implementation of greater delegated responsibility to officers to stream-line the planning process and give Members more time to prioritise larger, strategic development applications.

The Council has embraced the new governance arrangements, and has a strong, credible leadership role in the H&WBB, as assessed during the Health Peer Challenge held in 2013 and both the LEPs in the region.

Governance around community engagement is confusing and a fundamental review is underway by a Scrutiny Review Panel. There are many good projects being delivered within the communities of East Riding. Given the challenges facing the area in the future, particularly around finance and demographic changes, the council working with its partners should seek to develop a culture of independence within its communities. The excellent network of community hubs are a great foundation. These multi agency service points are being expanded and this coupled with the development of ward councillors as community leaders, will continue to enhance community engagement.

### **Capacity**

The Council values its workforce who are in turn committed to delivering quality services, despite shrinking resources. Staff feel valued, and this is reflected in their responses within the annual workforce survey. Staff feel particularly positive about the ongoing provision of personal and professional development opportunities – maintained at the same level again this year. Training is delivered for all levels of managers, staff and members using a variety of learning and development

pathways and providers including in-house member and manager development teams, external contracting arrangements and development centres for leadership and management competences. Styles of intervention are varied, making appropriate use of programmes such as a Masters Degree course accredited by INLOGOV, online Leadership for Excellence and national accreditations. The Council is one of only a few local councils to hold the Investors in People Award at Gold standard – for the entire organisation, including members – which is an excellent achievement.

Staff are proud to work for the Council and act as ambassadors in the local community. Staff cited their response to the floods in 2007 and more recently in December 2013 as great examples of a 'one organisation' response alongside partner agencies. Despite being a large employer locally, there is a strong 'family' feel to the culture of the organisation which is to be commended.

Organisational development is aligned to the transformation programme. The Council's strategy has been to retain capacity within the organisation of staff with the right skills and potential to manage change and service risks. Staff feel secure in their jobs and acknowledge that managers are interested in their welfare. Effective absence management with a focus on prevention and support for example through fast tracking medical appointments, access to physiotherapy and counselling has delivered sustainable results – leading to a fall in sickness levels from 10.5 days to 7.5. This is impressive.

Staff communication is good with clear mechanisms in place to cascade core messages through regular team meetings. Some staff expressed concerns around lack of regular team meetings, and some felt that although they were encouraged to put forward ideas, they didn't always receive any feedback on outcomes. Employee Development Reviews (EDR) take place across the organisation six monthly, supported by a comprehensive competency framework which is regularly reviewed as skills needs change.

Performance management reviews are undertaken and driven from the corporate centre – Inphase software is being used to enable online access to live performance data available on a range of Dashboard reports designed for different audiences using a core source of data. Reports are designed for management, cabinet and scrutiny and partner groups, for example the Children's Trust Board.

The Council could do more to celebrate success. Whilst in recent years this has been something of a challenge as resources are stretched, the time may now be right to promote the achievements and best practice in the Council in competition again – for the benefit of staff and partners. The Council has many good news stories to share and more could be done to 'showcase' these locally and nationally.

### **Economic vibrancy**

#### **Do we work effectively within the LEPs?**

You positively engage and participate in the LEP at senior management and political level, playing an influential role in the Humber LEP and the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding LEP. Partners in both LEPs recognise the Council as a strong and constructive partner. In the Humber LEP, political differences are put aside for the economic benefit of the sub-region. The Council's Economic Strategy informs both the LEPs and their Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs).

There is a LEP skills strategy in place, but the Council's contribution to the overall target was not clear to the peer team. We understand that work is underway to combine the skills plans across

both LEPs to understand and identify any gaps and unmet need from the perspective of employers and local people across the East Riding, and we encourage you to continue this.

Officers described occasions when LEP ideas had been implemented without awareness of projects already underway locally, leading to duplication. Issues like these are common across the country as new partnerships become embedded – regular communication and clarity of roles and responsibilities will be key going forward.

Working with two LEPs leaves the Leader very stretched, the Council may wish to consider what additional support can be provided to him in his various sub-regional leadership roles to ensure that the Council's involvement on both LEPs continues to deliver complementary benefits.

### **Are we creating the right conditions for sustained economic growth?**

There is a very good capital programme process which is very well managed and understood - and supports local economic growth and regeneration. The capital programme for 2014/15 is estimated at £117m with contributions from the continued success in attracting and making excellent use of external grants (£60m over recent years). The Economic Development Portfolio Holder provides clear direction and is actively improving relationships with Small and Medium Enterprises (SME's) for example by establishing a business sector group. Start-up incubation units are very successful and well received, but some SME's feel that additional support would help them to grow and improve their long term sustainability. The Chief Executive, Leader and Director of Planning and Regeneration have particularly strong relationships with key business partners and the Council ensures that their development and operating needs are understood and supported.

The Rural Strategy has enabled the Council to lead the way on rural issues and target external funding. The council engages in effective joint working with neighbouring authorities, for example the destination management project with Scarborough.

The recently announced Siemen's investment in the Humber Energy Estuary creates a huge growth opportunity for the East Riding. There will be two phases - at Greenport Hull where turbine assembly and shipping will be focused and in the East Riding at Paull earmarked for turbine manufacturing – with an overall potential (when including related support services) for up to 3000 new jobs and £400m investment.

You have rightly recognised that to maximise this opportunity, identifying, developing and maintaining the essential skills for local economic growth is a priority. These skills priorities include both 'work readiness' and Level 3 and above qualifications. This priority is shared across the sub-region and the Council working with its partners have identified some key actions to address the issues. For example, the Employability Charter has been introduced and specific actions on skills have been identified in the East Riding Economic Development Strategy 2012-2016. The council with its partners is developing a pathway for young people to seize the opportunity of economic growth. Employers need to be clear about the skills that they need in the future whilst the LEP and training providers must commission and deliver effective training from preparing young people to the world of work through to highly skilled qualifications. This ladder of opportunity is vital if the young people of East Riding of Yorkshire are to gain the benefits of this economic growth.

The Council is good at developing and linking the economic and physical elements of the regeneration agenda but our observation was that social linkages appear to be less strong. For example the Economic Development Strategy 2012-16 identifies under both 'Weaknesses and Threats' issues regarding the lack of affordable and quality housing and an ageing population.

However, housing for example, is not picked up under the theme 'Quality Locations' and yet it is presumably a vital component to providing '*sustainable growth, whilst building the resilience of other areas*'. In addition connectivity and community transport options are not addressed under the key heading 'Connected Hinterland' although limited public transport coverage is identified as a weakness.

Feedback from business people we met were very supportive of the Council however some said they would like to see planning processes speeded up but often planning applications raise sensitive issues and the council has to follow a statutory process. The council may however wish to consider taking steps to improve its scheme of delegation to streamline the process for less complex applications and consider the benefits of undertaking new member training around specialisms (for example housing and flood impacts).

## **Flood resilience**

### **Is there any more we and our partners can do to help reduce the impact of future flooding events?**

Following the severe floods of 2007 when there was extensive damage and disruption caused to thousands of homes, businesses, schools, farms and roads, a Flood Review Panel established by the Council made recommendations which have led to the Council developing and delivering national best practice approaches to flood resilience. The Council has been recognised at a national level for flood management and the largest capital programme for flood alleviation of all English local authorities. The Flood Protection and Resilience Board was set up with the Council making significant investment and successfully attracting funding from the National Flood Defence Grant and other partners to deliver wide ranging initiatives including drainage schemes, advance warning and flood risk telemetry, response and recovery.

Those working in the flood teams are clearly highly skilled and resourced in flood management from strategy to post event recovery. They are successfully attracting funding and operate as a self-financed delivery team and are highly motivated and empowered.

There is innovative and effective use of data and the highest investment in telemetry in the UK – the software tools to create modelling and simulations which inform the investment decisions of partners and emergency planning resilience.

Cabinet members and senior officers are well informed and knowledgeable and the clear flood resilience strategy is prioritised by all partners. The LEP, Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and City Deal are all informed by the need for environmental protection to facilitate sustained economic growth. There are good relationships across boundaries and strong partnership working. The Council has supported the development of the capacity of local communities to respond to flooding events through close working with Parish and Town Councils on local flood risk development plans and the empowerment of volunteers to support a quick, local response in small communities.

To manage the inevitable tensions between the two local priorities of housing and flood risk it will be necessary for Members to further develop their knowledge of flood risk.

The Council could consider whether there may be an opportunity to engage local business in funding local initiatives. Some larger organisations may identify flood related initiatives as a good target for involvement in local socially responsible projects.

Members recognised the strategic importance of the Humber ports as a major connectivity hub for the country as a whole. However, they were concerned that there was no clear leadership role for addressing the potential flooding issues, as the impact would be greater than just on the immediate locality. To support economic growth and investment sub regional partners have recognised the need for a strategic business case and economic impact assessment to be developed to support the securing of grants for flood risk mitigation. The Humber LEP is well placed to take this forward supported by expertise in the Council. Consequently a meeting has been arranged with local MPs to try and address this issue. Having secured the Siemens project, the time is right to bring local partners together to produce an Economic Impact Assessment for the Humber Estuary which demonstrates the national significance should flooding occur (this might potentially act as the key discussion paper for future meetings with MPs and Central Government Ministers).

### **Key suggestions and ideas for consideration**

The peer team developed some key recommendations for you to consider. These are based on what we saw, heard and read. Drawing on our experience of the sector and knowledge of local government improvement, the following are things we think will help you to make best use of your skills and experience, deliver some quick wins, and develop the strengths you will need to see your change agenda through:

#### Finance

- Consider accelerating the pace of the transformation programme to meet the required savings within the current business plan
- Look beyond the financial plan and build upon work underway to further consider long term solutions such as early intervention and prevention to promote independence and address pressures by working together as one public service focusing on the customer to deliver efficient and effective services
- Pursue options for pooled budgets, shared services and co-located teams and income generation locally, sub regionally and nationally

#### Growth

- Further develop an integrated approach to economic growth by bringing all key delivery services together to drive physical, economic, and social benefits.
- Skills development is critical to the delivery of your growth agenda and to your residents. Build and accelerate the relationship with business, school, colleges, and universities in order to have a workforce across the region which is skilled to meet the needs of the emerging renewables sector.
- Build on successful support to SME's in start-up incubation units; market and extend the support to SME's looking to expand and grow
- Take the lead with the other local councils and develop a joint Economic Impact Assessment to inform future discussions with Government in order to deliver the flood aspirations of the Humber SEP

#### Communities

- As part of the existing review process of both the Renaissance and Community Partnerships also look at opportunities for improving consultation/ communication in order to achieve even greater community engagement
- Continue to build community capacity for the future, especially to support the vulnerable, this will be critical to your ability to deliver sustainable services and enhance the role of local members

- The Council's excellent community hub network brings the opportunity to co-locate services locally and rethink how services could be delivered.

We will provide signposting to examples of the above and other information that will help inform your thinking.

### **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. In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with you and colleagues through the peer challenge to date. We will endeavour to signpost you to other sources of information and examples of practice and thinking.

I thought it helpful to provide contact details for Mark Edgell who, as you know, is our Principal Adviser (East Midlands, North East and Yorkshire and the Humber). Mark can be contacted via email at [mark.edgell@local.gov.uk](mailto:mark.edgell@local.gov.uk) (or tel. 07747 636910). He is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Hopefully this provides you with a convenient route of access to the Local Government Association, its resources and any further support.

All of us connected with the peer challenge would like to wish you every success going forward. Once again, many thanks to you and your colleagues for inviting the peer challenge and to everyone involved for their participation.

Sue Avery  
Peer Challenge Manager  
On behalf of the peer challenge team

