

No.	Recommendation	Initial Response	Status
1	<p><i>In 2016, the LGA Peer Review team highlighted the need to ensure the council's key growth projects were balanced in terms of them contributing to the tackling of social challenges and benefiting the borough as a whole. The authority has responded well to this, delivering a range of activities linked to the theatre, The Amelia and the potential Calverley Square development.</i></p> <p>The council needs to build a comprehensive picture of such activities and what is being achieved through them and then use this as part of a drive to communicate with a wide range of audiences to help them understand the importance of economic growth to the future of the borough and the way in which the social benefits are being, or will be, felt across Tunbridge Wells.</p>	<p>As the CPC team noted, the Council has made significant efforts to balance the 'growth projects' with a wider range of activity in its strategies and communication. The revised Five Year Plan explicitly set out an objective to improve social and health inequalities and also balanced the corporate projects with the day-to-day activities of the Council (including a narrative section setting out the role of the housing needs team). Alongside the 'growth projects' the Council has delivered and is delivering other projects aimed at addressing social challenges including the purchase of a former sheltered housing scheme which it has converted to provide temporary accommodation for families who would otherwise be in Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The Council has also launched an initiative called 'I Made a Difference' which encourages individual members of staff and teams to set out things they have done to make a difference to residents of the Borough. We will give further consideration as to how this range of activity can be communicated.</p> <p>The Council will also consider opportunities for training offered by the Local Government Association on commercialisation and social impact.</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Initial Response	Status
2	<p><i>The 2016 peer challenge outlined that while the council was delivering a lot, it should focus on how all of this linked with key agendas such as employment and skills, transport infrastructure provision and health challenges.</i></p> <p><i>This was described as ‘the need to establish a clearer understanding of how the council’s ambitions and priorities sat as part of a wider strategic whole, in terms of both geography and partnership working.’</i></p> <p>The council needs to continue its efforts both to clarify this strategic whole and, through influence and partnership, progress the interests of the borough.</p>	<p>The key mechanism for linking growth with employment, skills and infrastructure is the Council’s Local Plan which will be published in draft later this year. The Council is in dialogue with Kent County Council to ensure that housing growth is matched by appropriate growth and improvements to infrastructure such as transport and education.</p> <p>The Council plays (and will continue to play) an active role in partnerships such as Joint Kent Chief Executives, Kent Council Leaders, Kent Planning and Housing Officers’ groups, the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership and the West Kent Partnership.</p>	
3	<p><i>The 2016 peer challenge outlined a need for the council to develop a more strategic approach to transformation.</i></p> <p>The council has responded to this in various ways, but we see a need to create further drive behind the ambitions, including making the necessary investment.</p>	<p>As was noted in the 2016 report, the move to new Council offices provides both an opportunity for and a need for a more strategic approach to transformation. The Council is in the process of launching just such a programme entitled ‘Modern Ways of Working’ (MWOW) and this will be developed into a work programme that will be monitored by the Council’s Programme Management Office and overseen by the Council’s senior ‘Programme Management Board’ with exceptions being taken to Leadership Board for consideration.</p>	

No.	Recommendation	Initial Response	Status
4	<p>Related to recommendation 3, part of the transformation programme includes 'Modern Ways of Working' which is focused on ensuring a modern and flexible workforce and devising new working practices across the council.</p> <p>A set of principles underpinning Modern Ways of Working is in the process of being agreed.</p> <p>Given how important Modern Ways of Working is in terms of the transformation programme, it should come to the fore over the coming months.</p>	<p>Agreed. We will ensure that service plans are used to embed MWOW principles in the future thinking of all council services.</p>	
5	<p>The council is seen to have good governance, at the heart of which are traditionally good officer/member relationships and support for councillors.</p> <p>As the council moves forward, there is a shared responsibility to ensure that it remains a constructive environment that both officers and elected members feel that they want to be part of and where they can make a positive contribution.</p>	<p>As noted by the CPC team and by myriad external assessments, the Council has good governance and member/officer relations are positive and constructive.</p> <p>We will continue to engage with councillors and ensure that they are involved in decision-making in a number of ways including: Cabinet Advisory Boards and Overview and Scrutiny committees, regular (at least monthly) member briefings, a weekly member e-mail bulletin.</p> <p>We will also undertake a councillor survey and a councillor convention in the next 12 months to ensure that councillors amongst all three tiers of local government are informed and engaged.</p>	