

Library Services Peer Challenge **Kirklees Council**

5-6 June 2019

Final Report

1. Executive Summary

Kirklees Libraries are delivering a highly valued service which supports the corporate priorities of the council. Through its traditional role of book and e book lending and more modern role of enabling digital access, Early Intervention and Prevention activities and providing space for arts and cultural events, Kirklees Libraries are meeting important local community needs.

The quality of the library service has been recognised nationally. In 2018/9 the service was shortlisted for the second year running for the Libraries Change Lives Award, one member of staff was honoured with a British Empire Medal for her work with adult learners and another named Best Local Authority Arts Champion.

Partners, stakeholders and customers spoke enthusiastically about the creativity, commitment and passion of managers, paid staff and volunteers that operate out of the Borough's 24 library buildings across the towns and rural villages of Kirklees. This commitment to providing support to local communities has been fundamental in the face of library service budget reductions of 43 per cent in recent years and an initial proposition that the library estate should be reduced to eight libraries. We have no doubt that the tremendous resilience shown by the leadership and the library workforce supported by volunteers and Friends of Groups has ensured the sustainability of a vibrant community supported network of libraries across the Borough.

In the last two years, councillors and senior management have become more aware of and proactively appreciated the role which libraries do play in delivering improved community outcomes. Significant community consultation and research has informed service delivery options, with councillors agreeing an operating model of community supported libraries. Libraries have assumed greater political and senior management prominence as they have become recognised as community hubs which deliver on important political agendas such as tackling social isolation, loneliness and lifelong learning. We found passionate support for the continued development of libraries from Kirklees' political portfolio holder.

We consider that many of the building blocks are in place to enable the library service to deliver the next phase of development however we recognised that further work is required to provide the additional glue to stabilise longer-term delivery. Paramount among these are the need for a compelling service narrative and agreed vision supported by fewer, stronger strategies that are supported and informed by a performance management framework.

Furthermore, we recommend that a robust project management framework is required for the hub and satellite pilot to support the roll-out and development at scale. It is also essential that the role of volunteers is reflected in the developing Corporate 'People Strategy' with a recognition of the importance of appropriate on-going investment for training and development. It was also noted that there is an urgent need to tackle the quality of the library estate.

The library service, after years of churn and reductions, does need time to bed down to enable it to thrive. We have every confidence that it now has the platform to achieve this.

2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions, in addition to the conversations onsite, which provided ideas and examples of practice from other organisations. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

Recommendation 1

Develop a compelling service narrative to support a single vision and work to embed this across the workforce, partners and stakeholders.

Recommendation 2

Identify key performance data/performance framework which will enable the service to evidence the difference they are making to communities.

Recommendation 3

Ensure that the 'People Strategy' is informed by the experience of the volunteer workforce and supports future recruitment, retention and reward.

Recommendation 4

Build the outcomes of the hub and satellite pilot into a strategy and programme that is project managed by the corporate transformation team.

Recommendation 5

Ensure effective engagement in plans to improve the existing library estate and effective evaluation of the implementation of the £4m asset management plan to enable stronger business cases for future investment.

Recommendation 6

Ensure the library service is key and an active player in the design and development of the cultural quarter.

Recommendation 7

Create a shared understanding of coproduction and co design across the service which informs practice and delivery.

Recommendation 8

Through training, support and marketing, change the narrative of volunteers and Friends of Groups from 'saving libraries' to supporting delivery.

3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

The peer team

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 Kirklees were:

- Janene Cox, OBE, Commissioner for Culture, Communities and Rural Environment - Staffordshire County Council;
- Cllr Jonathan Simpson, Cabinet Member for Promoting Culture and Communities - London Borough of Camden;
- Nicola Haymes, Adviser – Culture and Sport Improvement; and
- Robert Hathaway Peer Challenge Manager, LGA.

Scope and focus

The peer team looked at the three core questions used in library service peer reviews namely:

- Is the council getting best value from its library assets?
- How effective is the service's contribution to cross cutting agendas of other services?
- What is the role of the service and council in the local community?

The council also asked the peer team to focus on the following three areas:

- Is this the right model and approach? Is there anything that we haven't looked at that would benefit our approach?

- Are we achieving all the efficiencies that we could be? Are we doing things in the most cost-effective way?
- As the model relies heavily on volunteers, how sustainable is this approach? Are there any future challenges you can envisage?

This report feedback follows our structured on site feedback where we combined the themes of 'best value' and 'cost efficiency' and 'hub and satellite' and 'volunteers' given the synergy between these themes.

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. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. 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 which they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information to ensure that they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. We then spent 2 days onsite at Kirklees, during which we:

- spoke to more than 35 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders;
- gathered information and views from more than 15 meetings and additional research and reading; and
- collectively spent more than 140 hours to determine our findings – the equivalent of one person spending nearly 4 weeks in Kirklees.

This report 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 5 – 6 June 2019. In presenting feedback to you, we 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 (the) peer team appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

4. Feedback

4.1. Is the council getting best value from its library assets?

We found the library service to be highly valued by councillors, senior managers and partners and we noted that it was making a significant contribution to national and local priorities of literacy, early intervention and prevention, digital access and tackling social isolation and loneliness. The council, and therefore the Library Service, has had to manage and deliver significant budget reductions. The library service budget has reduced by 43 per cent during the last five years. This has meant that opening hours have reduced, the

resources budget has also reduced, 150 paid staff have left the service and there has been a lack of investment in the majority of its buildings. That the library service has continued to be a vibrant and valued part of the local community bears eloquent testament to the huge resilience of managers and their supportive workforce which now comprises of both paid and voluntary staff. In meeting this challenge, the library service has delivered against all of the significant financial targets that were agreed as part of the council's 4-year Medium Term Financial Plan.

Challenged with the significant budget reductions and in the face of ongoing national austerity, the library service has examined alternative models of delivery. It has worked extensively with partner experts to determine the best value of models such as Local Authority Trading Company, Public Service Mutual, Joint Venture and outsourcing. In support of this the library service has used extensive consultation with users and partners plus use of 'Mosaic' and 'Audience Agency' data to inform service options.

In using the tools of consultation and comparison, and indeed taking expert advice from the Cabinet Office Mutuals Support Programme the library service can evidence that it has applied some of the principles of best value to an analysis of the most suitable options to fit with the council's political aspirations. Officers had clearly provided the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee with comprehensive options and supporting background analysis to inform this decision making. In 2016, based on a wide range of information and evidence the councillors decided to retain the library service in-house and work towards a volunteer supported model. To date this decision and the implementation of the model has ensured that 24 of Kirklees Libraries have remained open and continue to deliver a valued library offer.

In 2016/17 the council had proposed that the library service budget should be reduced by a further £1.1million from £3.3 million to £2.2million by 2019/20. However, informed by the extensive public consultation and an increasing recognition by the Cabinet and Executive Management Team of the important role that libraries were playing in delivering against the key Corporate objectives of early intervention and prevention and health and wellbeing, Cabinet decided to halt this proposal. Instead a reduction of £300k is required for 2019/20 and the library service has a clear plan in place, which includes saving money by commissioning an alternative provider for its home delivery service, to meet this target. Alongside this saving and as part of service redesign the library service is also piloting a hub and satellite model and we comment on this in much more detail later in the report.

The library service also ensures best value through partnering with other councils/ library services through the Yorkshire and Humber Libraries Connected consortiums. This enables a range of procurement savings to be delivered through regional purchasing power. Examples include the library management system, book purchasing, and radio-frequency identification/self-service equipment.

However, we consider that the library service would benefit significantly from a much stronger and sharper focus upon effective use of performance data and management information to enable it to assess and evidence best value and drive improvement. While the library service had a good focus on delivering community outcomes, we found that significant opportunities exist to ground this in the metrics of the service. For example, the service is not able to assess its relative performance against similar library services due to an absence of bench marking data. So, for example comparable data such as the number of visits, cost per visit, book issues, use of computers and net expenditure and cost of visit

is not available. This lack of comparable performance data makes it much more difficult for the library service to spot trends and where necessary to look at other authorities to learn from good practice. It also means that we have not been able to comment on comparable performance against similar library services both in the region and in the family group as part of our review.

Similarly, a stronger focus on outputs leading to outcomes can help evidence the vital role of the library service in tackling issues like early intervention and prevention. We heard for example about the work of the library service in supporting dementia and tackling social isolation and loneliness. We consider that a stronger focus on the measurement and articulation of success would assist partners and stakeholders in a heightened understanding of the vital role of the library service plus support funding applications and wider partner engagement. We recognise the danger of making an industry out of counting and collecting performance data. However, we consider that a stronger and sharper focus on key performance indicators and proportionate reporting to Cabinet/Scrutiny will enable the service to build the stronger and compelling narrative to support it that we comment on later in this report.

Many of the buildings that the library service operates from are not modern and not entirely suitable to deliver the 21st century service that the council has ambitions to deliver. Investment in library buildings, as with many other parts of the council's assets, has had to be severely curtailed as a result of public sector austerity and councillors, management, staff, volunteers and partners told us that the resources and assets of the service are poor. We concur with this view and it appeared to us that many comparable towns and cities are delivering their main library services from much more appropriate, sustainable and up to date buildings.

It was really encouraging to hear that £4 million has been earmarked for investment into priority library buildings. Examples of areas that may benefit from these additional resources include Birkby Fartown, Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike and Holmfirth. This has significant potential to improve facilities for these communities and provide more appropriate conditions for the library workforce. It will be vital to fully engage councillors, the communities, the workforce, partners and stakeholders in these plans to improve local libraries. We also recommend that the library service fully evaluates the benefits of any improvements to the library estate to support future investment decisions.

The picture of poor buildings is not however universal across Kirklees. At Almondbury, the library service has worked well with Children's Services and the library has relocated into a former Sure Start Children's Centre which was originally built to house both. This will provide a stronger and more accessible offer to this community. Slaithwaite Library has also moved into a more flexible space within the Town Hall which has enabled wider scope to work with community groups and other key stakeholders within that community.

We noted that the council has developed a set of five principles, which are detailed within the Library Strategy, and are supposed to underpin the library offer within Kirklees. While talking these principles through with the library service we were advised that these were designed to cover building elements only and were not to be seen as overarching principles to guide the full range of work of the service. We recognise that these are sensible and effective principles to underpin the investment plan for the £4 million, however as part of a review of the vision and supporting strategies it is necessary for the service to set clearer objectives that are broader than the buildings themselves.

4.2 How effective is the library service's contribution to cross cutting agendas of other services?

The ambitions of Kirklees Libraries 2017-21 help drive forward the corporate priorities of the council and the library service is working hard on delivering strategic outcomes in line with both local and national priorities. We found a good focus within the library service and also its partners on meeting the corporate objectives of working with people, partners and recognising the importance of local identity and place.

Councillors and Executive Management Team were very clear that the library service was already contributing significantly to the shared outcomes in the Kirklees 2018-20 Corporate Plan such as children having the best start in life, raising aspirations and lifelong learning opportunities of the residents and supporting safe and cohesive communities.

The ambitions for Kirklees Libraries are clearly articulated in the 2017-21 Ambitions for Kirklees libraries that responds to the Libraries Taskforce report: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-21. We found evidence of good links between these ambitions and local and national priorities such as tackling local deprivation, Six Steps which seeks to improve the experience of users with sight loss and other print disabilities and the aspiration through the Children's Promise of an inspiring and accessible library experience.

Good examples of the work that the library service is delivering include;

- **increasing reading and literacy** – through author visits, summer reading challenge, early language development and multisensory storytelling;
- **improving digital access and literacy** – including British Science Week, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) ambassadors and code clubs;
- **supporting everyone to live healthier and happier lives** – including read and feed, bibliotherapy, mental health initiatives and regular walking groups;
- **enabling greater prosperity** – supporting people into work with very high numbers of people using the well-resourced IT suites in the main library, removing barriers such as library fines and of course book lending;
- **building stronger, more resilient communities** – through inter-schools games tournaments, supporting people with visual impairment and access to cultural heritage; and
- **offering access to cultural opportunities** – offering live music events, arts events and membership of Evoke, a local Cultural and Educational Partnership.

As stated previously we were told, and indeed experienced that 'libraries are no longer viewed in isolation and instead there is a shared vision of libraries as part of a wider approach'. We found this extremely encouraging, and there is no doubt that it provides a stronger platform for the service to thrive and develop.

The library service's management structure, located as it is in the Adult Social Care Directorate under the Head of Local Integrated Partnerships, offers on-going potential for partnership work at the heart of the Early Intervention and Prevention and Social Isolation and Loneliness agendas with adults.

We concur with the library service that its work with Community Plus and Community Co-ordinators provides real potential to explore and deliver further programmes of activity which support the above agenda and management must ensure that the library workforce has sufficient capacity to build on these links. However just as importantly is the library service's recognition that its location within the Adult Social Care Directorate must not deflect it from its work in the Early Intervention and Prevention agenda with Children's Services and here the need for the service to work alongside Community Plus is vital. This is particularly the case given the library service's own self-assessment is that 'there could be stronger relationships with schools and Children's Services'.

We recommend that in order to drive service improvement that the library service produces a compelling narrative to support a single vision that is understood and embraced internally and externally. When we spoke to senior managers in both the library service and at Executive Management Team level, we found a shared understanding and unity of purpose. This for example reflected itself in the articulation of concepts such as co-design and co-production, libraries at the heart of local communities and the role of volunteers in a wider workforce setting.

However, our interviews with the workforce, stakeholders and partners revealed that these groups were unable to communicate the same understanding of this ambition and vision. This weakens a common shared goal. Our sense is that there is a degree of urgency required to establish a service wide vision that is developed and owned by managers, workforce, key partners and stakeholders. Without this there is the potential for unrealistic community expectations, volunteer fatigue and loss of the valuable workforce commitment.

Alongside a compelling narrative is the need to more clearly and simply strategise the vision supported by a performance management framework. This will enable the service to evidence the difference which they are making within communities and more effectively evidence and articulate their contribution to corporate priorities.

4.3 What is the role of the library service and council in the local community?

Councillors, managers, stakeholders and partners told us that so much of the success and diversity of the library service resulted from the total commitment, passion and innovation of the workforce. This came across in all of our interviews and it is clear that residents of Kirklees benefit significantly from such a dedicated and resilient workforce.

Partners found the library service a valuable and trusted partner who supported partners to meet their own objectives. We found it incredibly encouraging to hear partners refer to the library service workforce as 'amazing', 'innovative' and 'proactive'. One such national partner is the British Library who work closely with Kirklees in co-ordinating the Living Knowledge Network which is aimed at connecting people with national collections to make them accessible to local communities. The British Library see Kirklees Library service as delivering to very high standards and always willing to go the extra mile in delivering an excellent local service. Kirklees had recently taken part in Harry Potter - A History of Magic which was a great success in encouraging local engagement and accessibility.

Other examples of good joint work with partners evidenced that the library service has had a good focus on ensuring that they are 'in tune' with the diverse needs of their local community. The CHOL Theatre Group were encouraged with the production of a local children's book focusing on diverse characters while other partners talked to us about the

sensitive awareness of the use of 'food and mood' to the South Asian communities. There are also good relationships with health and well-being colleagues in relation to mental health initiatives and bibliotherapy and dementia friendly activities.

Partners and the library service workforce told us that based on growing trust and confidence, greater use was being made of the library space. This was especially the case where libraries were being used for perhaps non-traditional events such as music. A recent Robyn Hitchcock event combining music and books had been extremely successful and the use of safe public space at the heart of local communities was highly valued. However, we received mixed messages from partners on the issue of access to library space outside of normal working hours for events such as youth activities and arts events. It may be the case that this divergence in opening hours or access reflects a positive trend. However, it will be important for each library, working with its paid and voluntary workforce to work through how it can realistically support the activities of partners to extend its reach and opportunities for even wider use of local facilities.

In order to support the identified priorities in its 2017-21 Library Strategy, the service has developed a series of frameworks to focus its work to meet identified council wide priorities. This helps to extend the reach and impact of the library service into the local community. Frameworks include:

- reading engagement;
- supporting digital and science learning;
- arts engagement;
- volunteering;
- mental health and wellbeing
- early language; and
- life skills and learning.

Given socio economic challenges in the area along with concerns over digital accessibility, libraries offer safe supported spaces to provide free access to the internet and support for people to improve their digital skills and literacy. We saw for ourselves the very high usage of the large and well-resourced IT suite at Huddersfield Library and were told that the workforce support where they can with job applications and job search. This approach along with lifelong learning and reading activities definitely contributes to supporting and enabling access into work or voluntary service.

We were advised that the IT infrastructure is up to date with most computers less than two years old and this provision certainly enhances the user experience. The library service, via corporate IT capacity, is investigating opportunities for the use of smaller interactive appliances for public use such as 'Chrome' books in order to make more efficient use of space. This is to be encouraged to meet growing demand for electronic public access and increase the availability of appliances in the same amount of space.

We heard little about the use of 'local plans' to help guide and focus the work of local libraries even though the development of 'local plans' is part of the agreed Library Strategy. We commented earlier in this report that there was evidence of a wide range of local provision shaped by a good understanding of community need. However, the use of a clear consistent framework of engagement, identification of need and translation into action through the use of 'local plans' has benefits in consistency and transparency. As part of

any consultation in developing 'local plans', the library service needs to learn from previous major consultation exercises, especially the challenge of engagement with non-library users.

Given the acknowledged quality of the work of Kirklees Library service which is recognised by key partners, we would encourage the library service to celebrate its success. With staff awarded honours such as a British Empire Medal for work with adult learners, Best Local Authority Arts Champion and the Chief Librarian being chosen as President Elect for Libraries Connected, the council has much to be proud of. The President for Libraries Connected role especially provides a platform to showcase the work of the service on a wider national and international stage and we recommend that Kirklees Council makes full use of this opportunity. It is important that the wider library workforce and local community representatives own, share and celebrate their achievements. This would reflect the growing recognition of the central role that libraries are playing in community life and the greater stability that has been achieved for the service. This is reflected in the appointment of two senior managers within the library service who will support the Chief Librarian going forward particularly in the areas of service development and asset management and improvement.

The council is drawing together bold and ambitious plans for a new cultural quarter within Huddersfield and it will be vital that the library service is engaged at the earliest opportunity given the centrality of the listed Huddersfield Library and the service's role in enhancing the cultural life of the Borough. This offers a significant opportunity for Kirklees' main town and we heard various partners comment that the cultural offer of the area needed the continued support of the library service.

4.4 Is the hub and satellite model the right approach and as this relies heavily on volunteers – how sustainable is this approach?

The council has taken a clear decision that all of their libraries will remain part of their statutory service and will be community supported libraries. The 450 library volunteers alongside Friends of Groups have significantly increased the capacity within the libraries and without this the 24 libraries could not operate at the level and quality that they do. This model does save money and is fundamental to maintaining an affordable quality service going forward.

As part of service design the library service is continuing to review its support to volunteers given the differing needs and capacity of volunteers. As part of this approach, the library service is undertaking a pilot of a hub and satellite approach in the Holme & Colne Valley area involving developing and testing a potential approach to 'volunteer only' opening with staff from the hub supporting them.

The fact that the hub and satellite model has been co-produced with the workforce is very positive and it does generate a more flexible workforce who share knowledge, expertise and skills. The involvement of volunteers and Friends of Groups, grounded in their community, increases opportunities to ensure that provision of events and outreach is tailored to local needs. The central involvement of volunteers and Friends of Groups also brings local character and colour to activities and events and offers potential for events to reflect local diversity needs.

We spoke to volunteers and representatives of Friends of Groups who commented that the library service had provided a well-regarded training offer that has supported them in their roles. Volunteers particularly benefitted from face to face, class-based learning and we heard of some excellent training and support offered to under 18s.

However, both volunteers and staff told us that more recent training had shifted towards e-based learning models and we heard concerns that this perhaps did not adequately consider the differing learning styles of volunteers and Friends of Groups. The library service recognises the challenge this poses and it will be important to recognise the different roles of volunteers and Friends of Groups, including their various learning styles as more is asked of them going forward. This in particular will stretch the capacity of the existing paid library staff but as ongoing training and support is vital to maintain service performance and improvement, this is very important. Given the wider role and importance of volunteering throughout Kirklees, there could well be the need for more support from the corporate centre as well. Thus, while the hub and satellite model is saving the library service money, it does not come for free and on-going training resources and investment for volunteers and Friends of Groups does need to be built into service budgets.

Ensuring a good focus on training however extends beyond volunteers and Friends of Groups and it is important for the library service to recognise the new roles which will be required of paid staff in managing, supporting and encouraging others. The library service recognises that the roles of paid staff will have to change and that a more flexible staffing model at the hubs is necessary to enable this significant shift in operating model.

It is important that paid staff are fully supported to continue to affect and support the changing model of delivery. There was also a frequent request, throughout conversations on this model that a role of volunteer co-ordinator is developed, this may be a paid role however it will be necessary to ensure that the model is both efficient, effective and sustainable.

The roll out of the new operating model will also mean that managers and paid staff will have to 'let go' of control in certain areas. Volunteers and Friends of Groups must be allowed the freedom to make mistakes (obviously risk based) in the pursuit of learning what works well.

We do recognise and we experienced the powerful advocacy and support role that the volunteers and Friends of Groups play in the operation of the library service. Going forward, their role in the satellite libraries will be increasingly important. We sensed that given the council's decisions to retain a library estate of 24, that there will be greater opportunities for Friends of Groups to take more of a leadership and development role. It is now timely for Kirklees libraries to begin to change both the narrative and practice of volunteers and Friends Groups from 'defenders' of the service to supporters of development. Any capacity building and leadership training that the council and library service are able to offer to the Friends of Group and network of Friends of Group has the potential to pay dividends in support of the hub and satellite model.

We learnt about the developing Corporate 'People Strategy' which aims to underpin the council's priorities of partnering and place shaping. We recommend that the 'People Strategy' reflects the workforce aspirations and needs that emerge from the evaluation of the hub and satellite pilot work in relation to the future development of volunteers and Friends of Group. Across Kirklees council there are growing numbers of volunteers and it is clear that the library service has extensive experience and understanding of the issues

of managing and co-ordinating a volunteer workforce. It is important that this experience informs the framework so that there is a council wide approach to recruitment, retention and reward for this important part of the workforce.

To effectively take the outcomes from the Holme and Colne Valley area hub and satellite pilot forward, we recommend that these are built into a strategy and a programme that is project managed. This programme should be a managed programme of transformation and it will require Corporate programme management support. This will build in capacity and ensure that risks and issues are properly surfaced and can be managed and mitigated against. It will also enable a proper identification of the resource that is required, provide milestones and inform future investment decisions. This project programme will need to understand and articulate the changes to roles that will be required, the number of volunteers required and also the infrastructure support needed to enable effective delivery at scale. The hub and satellite model should become the operating model for Kirklees Libraries it must not be seen as an add-on and the way of working must be embedded as part of the library vision and narrative going forward.

Given the vital need to deliver the hub and satellite model at scale this is one of our main recommendations to sustain improvement across the library service. While we were on site, we tested this recommendation with members of the Executive Management Team who were supportive of the use of corporate transformation resources to assist with taking the pilot forward into a structured programme. The opportunity of additional programme capacity to support hard pressed library managers and staff is one that we feel should be welcomed by the library service.

5. Next steps

Immediate next steps

The peer team appreciate the political leadership and senior management will wish to reflect upon these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take the recommendations forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this (there would be a charge to this). The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this.

Frances Marshall, Adviser is the main contact between your authority and the LGA. Frances's contact details are:

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In the meantime, the peer team are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the council throughout the peer challenge. The peer team will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of practice and further information and guidance about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform ongoing consideration. In relation to performance management LGA can point the council towards LG inform and benchmarking club <https://www.local.gov.uk/benchmarking-data-lg-inform>