

PEER REVIEW ACTIONS

Customer Service
Drive forward the integrated approach to customer services with pace: develop a combined TDC/EKS strategy addressing the full range of customer facing services, including baseline data, targets for change and savings/ investment levels
Develop a parallel strategy to improve working methods, e.g. digitisation, workflow management
Develop essential analysis of demand, channels and performance
Optimise the website for transactions
Review charging policies in support of customer service strategy
Reputation
Address 'toxic' behaviours – antagonism, hostility, homophobia, discourtesy, barracking, bullying, talking over others – councillors should set an example
Unwillingness to respect the confidentiality of some aspects of council business
Duty of care to officers subject to unfounded allegations
Seek collective agreement of values and behaviours across all political parties, to put the future of Thanet at the heart of political decision-making
Mandatory training for members on equalities
Councillors should engage with councillor training and development- consider further tailored training and development programmes that result in a more effective ruling administration, committee chairs and opposition
Communication
Develop a shared narrative with agreed priorities, communicate and deliver it (communicate top priorities clearly, consistently, repeatedly)
Members and officers to agree corporate messages in conjunction with PR/Publicity and stick to them: refresh member media protocol, enforced by leader and cabinet member
Communicate and celebrate the council's achievements – urgently put in place a proactive grid of positive stories
Build improved working relationships at all levels with the media: work with LGA Communications team to examine specific issues with regional news media and improve working relationships
Introduce a staff engagement/ internal communications strategy: SMT to increase their visibility in leading the organisation across staff and externally with partners
Set a challenging target of improving resident satisfaction
Explore costs associated with direct communications through the local newspaper delivered to every home in the district
Initiate a high level campaigns to demonstrate TDC's commitment to keeping streets clean

Review social media activity, consider devolving some responsibility to different service areas
Review reporting lines of the PR/Publicity team and links to related work e.g. department-based marketing and Visit Thanet website
Member/Officer Relations
Develop and implement your understanding of appropriate member and officer roles in a strong organisation:
SMT and Cabinet need a stronger collaborative approach
confusion about political roles and a lack of clarity about the boundaries between political and managerial responsibilities – members should focus on policy issues, avoid getting drawn into detail, enabling officers to be more agile and empowered
senior team need to be free to ‘speak truth unto power’
Members should be realistic in their demands and SMT firm in delivering messages about what can/can’t be done
Prioritisation
Clarify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ what you want to achieve – what are the top priorities? ○ how you are going to do it
Realign resources (staffing and financial) behind your priorities- eg economic development (if it is your top priority)
Understand and manage the ‘big picture’ (as against an exclusive focus on local wards)
Plan for what type of council you need to be in the medium term. Conduct a skills analysis to identify and address any gaps
Political working/relationships
Develop ways in which political leaders and political groups can work together formally and informally – careful preparation, communication and consultation can often help navigate through difficult decisions
Regular well attended group meetings should be the opportunity for the development of party policies and priorities (inconsistent across the parties)
Further develop Cabinet Advisory Groups as a tool for encouraging cross-party working and developing consensus around some policy areas
Use CAGs to develop scrutiny, steering more to policy development, less post-decision scrutiny
Aim to restore regular dialogue with the two MPs at a senior officer level as a minimum
Partnership working

Ensure strong and consistent senior officer and political engagement across local and sub-regional partnerships
Develop stronger engagement, better communication and greater clarity about the council's position on major (contentious) infrastructure projects with local partners
Harness energy and resource offered by local partners and stakeholders to deliver more than TDC can do alone
Capacity
Complete senior staffing restructure – this work needs to move on at pace. [Limited strategic capacity: review post restructure?]
Fill vacancies with the right calibre of staff- consider alternative and more innovative methods to attract and retain staff. Cautious monitoring of remuneration packages
Consider whether to add to workforce development strategy- recruitment and retention, succession planning, personal development, recognition, communication
Limited project and programme capacity; governance and project management of any future transformation programme to ensure join-up across workstreams
SMT review of levels of delegation and empowerment and action if necessary to ensure appropriate
Address deficiencies in corporate IT and telecommunications, plus high level review to test if fit for future requirements
Ensure better connections between Planning and Economic Development
Efficiency
More work to be done to rationalise asset base to generate capital receipts and additional revenue
Review fees and charges to help with future budget challenges
Further shared service work across organisations need strong political and managerial leadership
Develop further options for efficiency savings – eg income generation, agile working
Resolve at pace all outstanding financial risks and legal challenges (eg Pleasurama, animal exports)