

Case Study

Planning, Preparing and Conducting a Peer Challenge

Goal

- Knowledge and experience of planning, preparing for and conducting a TAES Peer Challenge
- Understanding of how to plan, prepare for and conduct a TAES Peer Challenge more effectively

Brief

Background

1. Your group has agreed to conduct a TAES Peer Challenge of **Deevey-on Sea Council** sport and recreation services on 25th March 2007. This particular Peer Challenge will focus on the following TAES Themes:
 - **Theme 1: Leadership**
 - **Theme 2: Policy and Strategy**
 - **Theme 6: People Management**
 - **Theme 8: Performance Measurement and Learning**
2. Background details relating to **Deevey-on-Sea Council** are shown on the next page.

Stage 1: Planning

3. You have already carried out some initial planning and have achieved the following:
 - a. You have organised an opening meeting with the sport and recreation management team at the time shown on the attached Peer Challenge Plan
 - b. You have arranged for key managers to be available at certain times during the day; this is shown on the attached Peer Challenge Plan (you have 3 options for each 15 minute timeslot)
 - c. You have arranged a 15 minute timeslot for 1 focus group (see the Peer Challenge Plan) and have asked front line staff, managers and elected members (as shown on the organisational structure) to make themselves available during this time.
 - d. You have arranged a closing meeting to take place between 2.15 and 3.15pm.
 - e. You have asked to be sent some relevant high level documentation (this will be passed on to you during the afternoon)

4. To complete your Peer Challenge Plan, your team will need to make the following decisions:
 - a. **Who do you want to see in each timeslot (you have 3 options to choose from)?**
 - b. **Which 3 people do you want in your focus group session (you can choose any 3 roles shown on the organisational chart)?**
 - c. **Which TAES Criteria do you want to cover in each of your sessions?**
5. Record your decisions on the Peer Challenge Plan
6. Prepare to feedback your Peer Challenge Plan to the main group

Stage 2: Detailed Preparation

7. In your group decide what questions you will ask during your planned one-to-one interviews and focus group sessions, ensuring that you obtain sufficient information to challenge the organisation's Self Assessment findings for Themes 1, 2, 6 and 8.
8. Complete your Peer Challenge Checklists
9. Decide how you are going to conduct the interviews (e.g. who will ask the questions, who will record the responses, how will you deal with deviations from your plans etc?)

Stage 3: Conducting the Peer Challenge

10. In your group, conduct the Peer Challenge using your Plan and Checklists.
11. Use your planning and review time to amend your approach if required.
12. Remember to record accurate findings.

Stage 4: Analysing the Findings (see the Report Template)

13. In your group, collate and document your perception of the organisation's strengths and areas of improvement in relation to Themes 1, 2, 6 and 8
14. Allocate ratings for each of these 4 Themes
15. Establish where your findings differ from the organisation's Self Assessment
16. Prepare to present the findings to the Deevey-on-Sea Council sport and recreation management team (at a 12 minute closing meeting).

Stage 5: Feedback and Reporting (see the Report Template)

17. Present and discuss the strengths, areas for improvement and ratings and challenges to the Deevey-on-Sea Council sport and recreation management team
18. Discuss and agree key improvement themes and priorities with the management team

Background to Deevey-on-Sea District Council

Introduction

Deevey-on-Sea is a (little known) district situated on the Essex coast. Deevey-on-Sea District Council manages a range of local services. The Cultural Services Directorate is seen as a very important element of the Council, and comprises the following services:

- Sport and health development
- Sport centres and swimming pools (contracted to HZone Leisure Ltd from Aug 2006)
- Cemetery management
- Landscape maintenance (contracted to Profit Services Ltd)
- Landscape design and development
- Outdoor recreation and events
- Management of the theatre and arts centre
- Arts development
- Museums and heritage attractions
- Archives
- Tourist marketing and information centres
- Management of the beaches including beach lifeguards

Following a recent Council - wide structural review, the Directorate now has its own finance, administration, performance management, technical, marketing and HR support.

The Cultural Services management structure is shown on page 4. The Director of Cultural Services is part of the Council's SMT.

Towards an Excellent Service

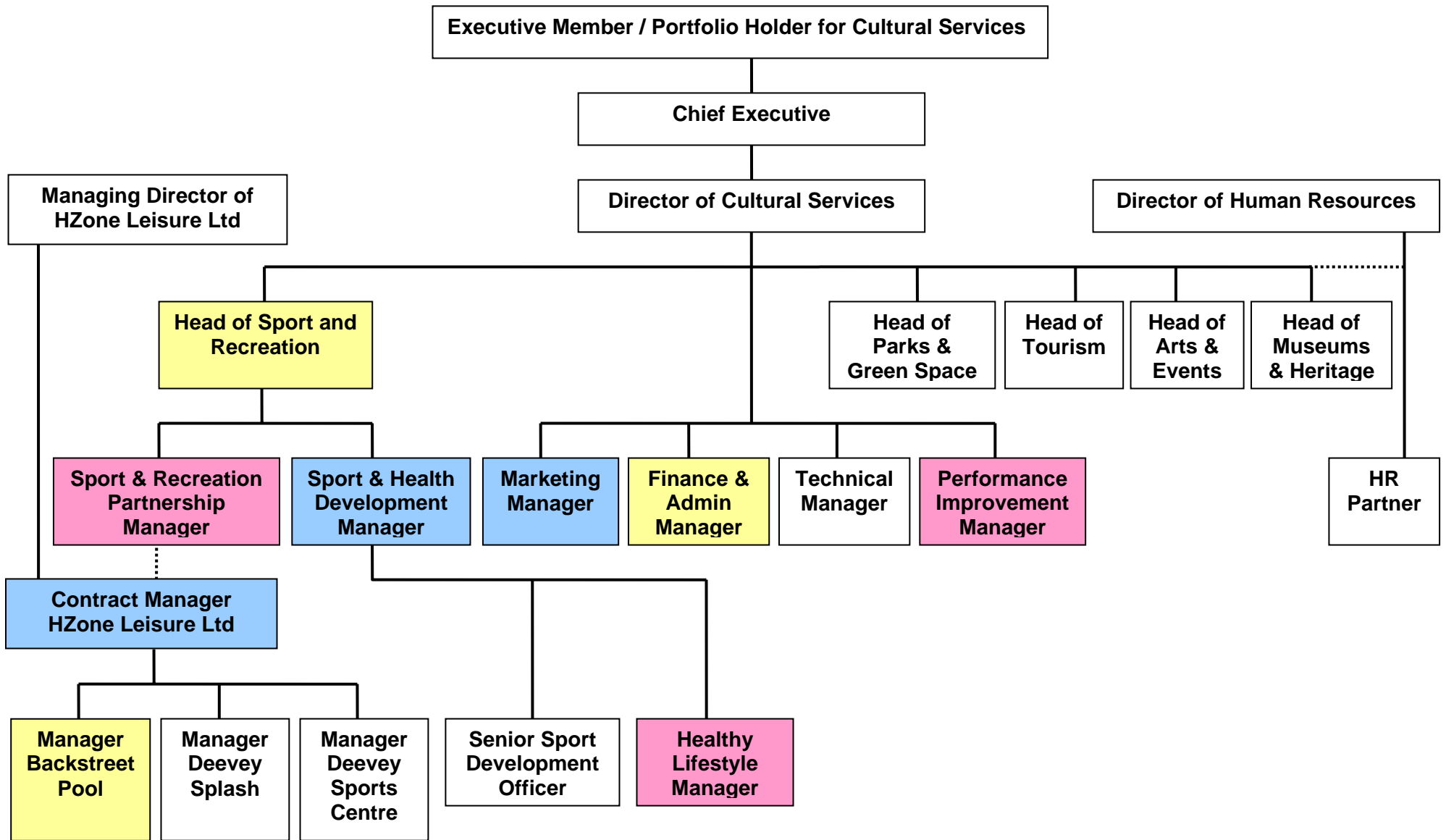
The Council is committed to quality. This is indicated by the following initiatives:

- The Council obtained liP status in 2004 and has maintained this status
- The sport centres and swimming pools have all achieved and maintained Quest Certification

The sport and recreation division carried out a TAES Self Assessment earlier this month, with a view to building clear improvement projects in the 2007/08 Service Plans (the Self Assessment scope and plans will be passed to you). This Peer Challenge is a reciprocal arrangement arranged through the Essex Improvement Network. The intention is for the Peer Challenge to:

- Ensure that the areas for improvement identified are accurate and incisive
- Help to establish key improvement themes and priorities
- Develop a best practice sharing relationship

Deevey-on-Sea District Council - Cultural Services Management Structure



Personnel Available for the Peer Challenge

The following members of the sport and recreation management team will attend the Opening Meeting:

Head of Sport and Recreation – Kevin Hess

Sport and Health Development Manager – Chrissy Goforth

Sport and Recreation Partnership Manager – Stephen Good

The following personnel are available for one-to-one interviews:

Head of Sport and Recreation – Kevin Hess

Sport and Health Development Manager – Chrissy Goforth

Sport and Recreation Partnership Manager – Stephen Good

Contract Manager – HZone Leisure Ltd – Jane Smith

Marketing Manager – Kylie Jameson

Finance and Admin Manager – Fred Graysoot

Performance Improvement Manager – Marti Nallison

Manager Backstreet Pool – George Parry

Healthy Lifestyle Manager – Jamie Good

All the roles identified in the management structure and all sport and all sport and recreation front line staff are available for a focus group.

Deevey-on-Sea District Council - Peer Challenge Plan

Time	Group a	Group b	Group c	Group d	Group e
08:45	Opening meeting	Preparation	Preparation	Preparation	Preparation
09:00	Preparation	Opening meeting	Preparation	Preparation	Preparation
09:15	Preparation	Preparation	Opening meeting	Preparation	Preparation
09:30	Preparation	Preparation	Preparation	Opening meeting	Preparation
09:45	Preparation	Preparation	Preparation	Preparation	Opening meeting
10:00				Preparation	Preparation
10:15	Preparation				Preparation
10:30	Preparation	Preparation			
10:45		Preparation	Preparation		
11:00			Preparation	Preparation	
11:15				Preparation	Preparation
11:30	Preparation and review	Preparation and review	Preparation and review		
11:45	Focus Group	Preparation and review	Preparation and review	Preparation and review	Preparation and review
12:00	Review	Focus Group	Preparation and review	Preparation and review	Preparation and review
12:15	Review	Review	Focus Group	Preparation and review	Preparation and review
12:30	<i>Lunch!</i>	<i>Lunch!</i>	<i>Lunch!</i>	Focus Group	Preparation and review
12:45	<i>Lunch!</i>	<i>Lunch!</i>	<i>Lunch!</i>	<i>Lunch!</i>	Focus Group

TAES Peer Challenge Checklist

Type of session	Date	Time	People attending	TAES Criteria to be covered
Questions	Responses			Information for which TAES Criteria

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Towards an Excellent Service

Peer Challenge Report

Section 1: Introduction

Date of Peer Challenge	
Organisation	
Peer Challenger	
People interviewed	
Focus groups	
Team members at closing meeting	

Section 2: Peer Challenge Findings

Theme		Leadership	
Strengths identified through Peer Challenge			
Areas for improvement identified through Peer Challenge			
Evidence to support the above			
1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4

Theme	Policy and Strategy	
Strengths identified through Peer Challenge		
Areas for improvement identified through Peer Challenge		
Evidence to support the above		
2.1	2.2	

Theme	People Management				
Strengths identified through Peer Challenge					
Areas for improvement identified through Peer Challenge					
Evidence to support the above					
6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6

Theme	Performance Measurement and Learning		
Strengths identified through Peer Challenge			
Areas for improvement identified through Peer Challenge			
Evidence to support the above			
8.1	8.2	8.3	8.4

Section 3: Challenges

TAES Theme	Where does the Peer Challenge differ from the Self Assessment?
Leadership	
Policy and Strategy	
Community Engagement	
Partnership Working	
Use of Resources	
People Management	
Standards of Service	
Performance Measurement and Learning	

Section 4: Agreed Themes and Priorities

Key Strengths

Key Areas for Improvement