



Action plan

Corporate peer challenge 2024

March 2025

Introduction

Recommendations from the CPC team

Following the completion of the corporate peer challenge in December 2024 a feedback report has been published by the LGA including a list of recommendations for consideration. The report also included key observations and comments from the peer team based upon their findings from the peer challenge.

We are required to publish an action plan within five months of the completion of the peer challenge. This document outlines associated actions, timelines, and tracks progress towards implementation of the recommendations. Included within this action plan are additional actions which arise from the peer teams observations and commentary.

It is acknowledged that the peer challenge took place prior to the announcements on devolution by the Government, which may impact the resources required to address key priorities, as officers' capacity will be diverted to support reorganisation planning.

A progress review by the LGA will be scheduled to allow feedback and report progress made against each of the recommendations and discuss impact and learning. A progress report will then be published by the LGA.

Recommendations

The following are the 10 recommendations from the corporate peer challenge feedback report.

No	Recommendation	Associated actions	Timescales	Owner	
1	Clarify priorities and timelines for delivery	1.1	Revisit priorities and categorise considering LGR (continue, review and pause)	Jan 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
		1.2	Seek formal approval for revised priority list, following informal consultation with the Leader and Cabinet members	March/April 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
		1.3	Reallocate resources based on revised priorities in the 2025/26 budget.	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
2	Create an overarching corporate narrative and communicate proactively with staff, members and local people	2.1	Develop concise view (graphic/one pager) of priorities to support internal & external comms	April 2025	Kate Ryan
		2.2	Develop narrative to support revised priorities (aligned to LGR report)	May 2025	Kate Ryan/Sara Hamilton
		2.3	Prioritise communications messaging and resource aligned to corporate plan, agreeing gold, silver and bronze focus	June 2025	Kate Ryan/Sara Hamilton
		2.4	Celebrate successes linked to revised priorities to ensure continuity and reinforcement of narrative (link to recommendation #10) Annual Report (July 2025)	Ongoing	Leadership team/Sara Hamilton

			End of year look back (December 2025)		
		2.5	Support staff understanding of their role in delivering priorities through clear links from corporate plan to individual performance through regular development conversations. Review of performance reviews and one to ones being undertaken within People Strategy Roll out	October 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond/ Leadership team
3	Design and deliver a robust member and senior officer development programme	3.1	Member training opportunities, including self-serve, Member briefings and LGA sessions will be themed to support Members' understanding of the different roles of an elected Member and how training can support their development. This will take account of Local Government Reorganisation implications. Training will be prioritised based on the feedback received from a recent Member Development survey, which includes strengthening Overview and Scrutiny (See 4 below).	May 2025	Tanya Coulter / Matt Wisdom
		3.2	Support members in their roles across key programme governance including waste, transformation and LGR	Ongoing	Tanya Coulter / Matt Wisdom
		3.3	Build on the informal EMT/Leader meetings to set up dedicated EMT/Cabinet development sessions	Ongoing	Kate Ryan

		3.4	Continue leadership and management development programmes with further opportunities linked to the behaviours framework and development of leadership skills to support LGR	Ongoing	Alan Bethune/ Rebecca Drummond
4	Consider ways to strengthen your Overview and Scrutiny function	4.1	Strategic Director linked to each O&S panel to provide direct support to panel members	January 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Strategic Director Lead/Matt Wisdom
		4.2	Agenda planning and topic prioritisation meetings take place with the lead SD, Chairman and Vice-Chairman	January 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Strategic Director Lead/Matt Wisdom
		4.3	Specific topic briefings to be held i.e. Housing Regulation, to develop member knowledge and support scrutiny role	Housing – March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Strategic Director Lead / Tanya Coulter/Matt Wisdom
		4.4	Develop an 'essential' training package for all councillors that serve on Overview and Scrutiny Panels, comprising delivered and self serve training, to include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O&S Chairman training • Questioning skills training • Scrutiny essentials • LGA resources 	May 2025	Tanya Coulter / Matt Wisdom
5	Ensure there is collective ownership of the transformation programme by	5.1	Governance structure supports reporting and discussion at directorate level with escalation to Transformation Board	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond

	the Executive Management Team	5.2	Further embed governance arrangements, including reporting of issues and decisions that conflict with agreed strategic direction	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		5.3	Revise business case considering LGR and ensure new focus is well communicated and anchored in governance reporting	June 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		5.4	Consider and implement opportunities to improve EMT visible leadership of change initiatives	September 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
6	Apply internal policies and practices consistently across the Council	6.1	Investment in additional OD and Employee Engagement resources agreed	Feb 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		6.2	Induction framework being revisited to ensure consistency, including 'induction essentials' video for new starters and enhanced guidance for managers	May 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		6.3	Behaviours framework being developed to ensure consistency	July 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond
		6.4	Different ways to communicate key messages and cascade information to operational staff will be implemented including briefing notes and visual updates where appropriate	April 2025	Strategic Directors/Rebecca Drummond
		6.5	Review local arrangements to ensure policies and practices consistently applied and create baseline data to monitor	September 2025	Alan Bethune/Rebecca Drummond

			improvements. Linked to People Strategy delivery		
7	Develop an Assets Strategy and Action Plan	7.1	Initial engagement with Overview and Scrutiny panel to test direction of travel of emerging strategy	March 2025 <i>Delivered</i>	Alan Bethune
		7.2	Adoption of Asset Strategy and Action Plan	July 2025	Alan Bethune
		7.3	Commence discussions with Town and Parish Council and other partners	July 2025	Alan Bethune
8	Demonstrate further commitment to carbon reduction with a clear action plan	8.1	Continue to decarbonise the council's housing stock and housing of all tenures in line with the Greener Housing Strategy	Council housing stock EPC 'C' or higher by 2030	Richard Knott/Sophie Tuffin
		8.2	Ensure low carbon development through alignment with the Planning for Climate Change SPD and wider Local Plan Review	Ongoing	James Carpenter/Tim Guymer
		8.3	Refresh of the Climate Change and Nature Emergency Action Plan to ensure ambitious carbon reduction, climate adaptation and nature recovery outcomes	March 2026	James Carpenter/Roxanne King
9	Continue the good practice in housing and consider applying successful approaches to the wider organisation	9.1	Establish a list of key good practice items and outcomes	October 2025	Richard Knott/Paul Thomas
		9.2	Knowledge transfer opportunities with wider SLT	October 2025	Richard Knott/Paul Thomas
		9.3	Use the topic based 'Monthly Meet' staff engagement forum as a learning opportunity to share examples of Housing best practice and improvement initiatives	September 2025	Richard Knott/Paul Thomas

10	Remember to celebrate your achievements no matter how small or big they are	10.1	Prioritise and develop an approach and multi-level offer for all staff and implement focussed activity for operational services across Place and Housing	August 2025	Kate Ryan/EMT
		10.2	Build a values based, equitable recognition element into the implementation of the Behavioural framework	October 2025	EMT/Leadership Team
		10.3	Leadership team development session on rewards and recognition, to shape and embed this across the organisation.	August 2025	EMT/Leadership Team
		10.4	Build in time to celebrate success into all staff, directorate and team sessions.	Ongoing	EMT/Leadership Team

Additional actions

The following are additional actions and considerations which arose from the peer team's commentary and observations.

No.	Observation	Actions	Timescales	Owner
1	Service planning and delivery to proactively consider opportunities for enhancing inclusivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include equality and inclusivity considerations into service planning template and associated guidance • Consider knowledge gaps and way to create greater understanding and awareness of equality and inclusion across all staff groups in support of improved diversity and inclusion in the services we provide • Link to People Strategy and the creation and development of staff forums 	August 2025	Alan Bethune / Rebecca Drummond
2	Policy development to include consideration of equality, diversity and inclusivity impacts at the outset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team development session to explore the LG Equality Framework as it relates to service delivery • EMT to ensure that where relevant policy development includes an equality impact assessment 	October 2025 Ongoing	Kate Ryan Strategic Directors
3	Development Management – Standardisation of Section 106 planning agreements to facilitate faster conclusion of planning permission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Developer Forum to explore the issues raised with the service leads with an initial meeting by the summer. 	July 2025	James Carpenter
4	SLT – Clarify corporate role of wider leadership team members and ensure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions to be summarised for each agenda item, including for 	May 2025	Kate Ryan

		of Disability awareness programmes.		
8	Continue efforts to recruit more diverse people to consider standing to be a local councillor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political group leaders to consider how their work recruiting, developing and selecting candidates to stand for future elections can improve wider representation of the local community. Review engagement opportunities ahead of future Town & parish and District elections 	April 2026 TBC	Kate Ryan/ Matt Wisdom
9	Establish expectations for consistent IT use across the authority, including how documents are stored, IT training and the use of SharePoint and M365 tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create plan to deliver 'Digital Skills for all' to facilitate learning, technology adoption and best practice usage. Continued training and knowledge sharing with the ICT service desk to then deliver consistent best practice and meaningful messaging to our staff. Creation of 3 new ICT best practice guides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Where to start a digital conversation" "Where to save my files" "Best practice guide to using my SharePoint Team Site" 	August 2025	Alan Bethune/ Rebecca Drummond
10	Housing – Further involve tenants in policy development, scrutiny and training to strengthen their voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver actions in the Tenant Engagement Strategy. 	April 2026	Richard Knott

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a menu of engagement options and learning opportunities for staff • Increase participation across demographics and localities. • Complete the Tenant data survey and analyse results to create targeted approach 		
11	Establish a narrative to better articulate local housing requirements to overcome public and political resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing the Local Plan from current Reg 18 Issues and Options stage through to Reg 19 will allow wider views to be gathered • Undertaking a range of engagement activities both with the community/ Towns & Parishes and with elected members, through the Local Plan Member Working Group and more widely. • Undertake Green Belt review as part of the local plan evidence base to better understand capacity in the district, in line with the NPPF principles of “Grey Belt” • Partnership working across Hampshire, and with the National Park Authority on the special landscape constraints and designations that constrain growth in the district, to arrive at an appropriate housing number. • Specific work with officers planning committee members to 	April 2026	James Carpenter

		understand and act upon the current and future implications of a lack of 5-year housing land supply, and the impacts of not meeting the NPPF Housing Delivery Test (application of a 20% buffer) on planning decision taking.		
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