

Corporate Improvement Action Plan

Council Plan action: How the council operates (actions: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8)

Background

This action plan lists the detailed actions that responds to the [Corporate Improvement Framework](#), feedback from staff surveys, together with engagement with officers.

Actions are council-wide and will be developed and delivered in close collaboration with the Corporate Management Team and all directorates. The four themes in the Corporate Improvement Framework provide structure for this action plan.

The action plan has been developed in consultation with partners, residents, officers and [Scrutiny](#) – through both a series of workshops and a consultation which took place throughout May and June. It will continue to be added to throughout the next three years as the council listens and responds to residents, officers and partners.

Objectives

1. **Strengthen strategic leadership:** By September 2024, we will have embedded clear expectations for our senior managers to work as one council delivering a shared vision throughout the organisation;
2. **One City, one council:** By September 2024, we will have co-designed both an internal and external approach to what it means to work together in partnership, uniting the council, officers, members and partners together, as one team;
3. **Harness the commitment to the city to deliver ambitions:** Develop and implement a communication strategy, establishing different activities to strengthen partnerships and engage the workforce, with a plan prepared by September 2024;
4. **Build a strong foundation:** By December 2024, we will have embedded council plan priorities and the performance framework throughout the organisation, reviewing how we support personal development plans and service plans, with a refreshed internal governance structure



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WORTH
DOING**



**We work
together**



**We
improve**



**We make a
difference**

Governance

The Corporate Improvement Framework sets the structure for this action plan. The Framework was approved at Executive in May 2024. [Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 9 May 2024, 5.30 pm \(york.gov.uk\)](#) item 129

This action plan is monitored at quarterly Corporate Improvement Board, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer. The Corporate Improvement Board reports issues by exception to the Corporate Management Team.

The Corporate Improvement Board monitors and steers the council's continuous corporate improvement journey, with reports covering this Corporate Improvement Action Plan, the Working as One City programme, budget savings plans and progress against the Council Plan.

The Corporate Improvement Action Plan has been developed in response to the Council Plan priority "how we operate" and the significant financial pressures the council is experiencing. It was informed by the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge which took place in February 2024 together with staff surveys and feedback from partners. As part of that process, LGA will assess progress against this action plan in December 2024. Actions have been described in such a way that allows for progress to be clearly recorded and evidenced.

Progress against this action plan will report publicly at the Leader's Decision Making Session in November 2024 and May 2025.

This Action plan will continually be refreshed as part of our journey of continuous improvement, dates and interdependencies may change as a result.

Action Plan key

Key	Complete	Underway	At risk	Not started
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Action Plan

Objective 1 Strengthen strategic leadership: By September 2024, we will have embedded clear expectations for our senior managers to work as one council delivering a shared vision throughout the organisation;

Action	Detail	Accountable officer	Narrative and Evidence Matrix (where appropriate)	Deadline
1. Refresh the Corporate management team	1. Create a working environment for senior leaders to work together with ease and enable officers and the workforce to have access to senior teams. Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7	Chief Officer HR	New Corporate Management Team area for visibility and ease for individuals and teams to work with and locate senior team.	March 2024
	2. Build on the senior management restructure to reflect the new structure and support officers understand their directorate and how they contribute to the organisation's vision. Recommendations R1, R5, R7, R12, R13, R14	COO	Work has been undertaken to communicate the new structures, all senior posts are now filled, and team are working well together.	November 2024
	3. Ensure opportunity for senior management policy and strategy discussions continue to reinforce the organisation's vision and ambition. Recommendations R1, R5, R7, R12, R13, R14	AD Policy & Strategy	Dedicated Policy and Strategy meetings with senior officers in place and governance structure created.	June 2024



2. Co-design a Leadership framework	<p>1. Co-design with senior managers of the council expected leadership behaviours, values and actions. Leadership to be embedded across all levels of the organisation including building relationships with communities.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R7</p>	Chief Officer HR	Let's Talk Leadership engagement ongoing. Roll out of expected behaviours, accountability and responsibility and the York Deal – what officers receive in return for their employment and hardwork.	October 2024 and ongoing
	<p>2. Establish senior manager buddying system and shadowing opportunities for support and challenge to help build confidence, capabilities and share good practice.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R3</p>	Chief Officer HR	Buddying system promoted to all staff not just senior managers, felt this was an important offer, in addition to the existing buddying arrangements in place for new starters. Guidance promoted in October 2024, evaluation will take place in 6 months.	October 2024
3. Redesign the roles, relationships and responsibilities	<p>1. Following approval of the new Corporate Management Team, develop the framework for the review of roles which directly report into the Corporate Management Team, including job naming conventions (known as the CLG review 2).</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R2, R4, R5</p>	Chief Officer HR	Ongoing work, engagement with Leading Together cohort ongoing, further work to continue re defining Senior Manager grades	Completed by May 2025



	<p>2. Develop a Managing Customer Relations Policy to help ensure both residents and officers understand their own roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Recommendations R3, R5, R7</p>	<p>Director of Housing and Communities</p>	<p>Currently with Talk About panel as part of consultation agreed with Scrutiny.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>
	<p>3. Start the journey to become a trauma-informed council, training to ensure all officers understand their own role in supporting residents and each other during different transactions, including sharing videos and interactive learning for key roles.</p> <p>Recommendations R4</p>	<p>Chief Officer HR</p>	<p>Work has progressed with a learning platform for officers, face to face training for other officers, this will roll out wider across the council too. Staff who are also facing trauma (personally) have access to resources from EAP (from March 2024).</p>	<p>April 2025 and ongoing</p>
	<p>4. Introduce an annual process with senior managers to share and support each other's Service Plan development with opportunity to contribute to each other's delivery of ambitions.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	<p>COO Director of Finance AD Policy & Strategy</p>	<p>Revised service plan template and guidance for CMT members to complete. Agreed that service plans will be updated twice per year and aligned to the Council Plan. Interdependencies and links to strategic reviews also highlighted.</p>	<p>November 2024</p>



	<p>1. Share the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with residents, members, partners and officers, being clear on the savings target for the next three years.</p> <p>Recommendations R6, R8, R9, R10</p>	<p>Director of Finance Head of Comms AD Policy & Strategy</p>	<p>Budget Consultation started in November following with Executive on key proposals. Staff also part of the journey and kept informed.</p>	<p>Nov 2024</p>
	<p>2. Provide great opportunity for senior managers to understand and engage in setting their annual budgets, through the budget setting process and ongoing.</p> <p>Recommendations R8, R9</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>Engagement continues with staff via All staff briefings, Leading Together, Key Three documents and weekly briefing</p>	<p>June 2024 ongoing</p>
	<p>3. Design short financial literacy courses for Senior Managers to learn how to manage the financial management system, setting out the key dates for each year.</p> <p>Recommendations R8, R9</p>	<p>Director of Finance</p>	<p>Courses are currently being designed.</p>	<p>Oct 2024 and ongoing</p>



Objective 2 One City, one council: By September 2024, we will have co-designed both an internal and external approach to what it means to work together in partnership uniting the council, officers, members and partners together, as one team

Action	Detail	Accountable officer	Evidence Matrix and narrative	Deadline
1. Co-design a culture Improvement Plan	1. Celebrate success with operational and delivery teams highlighted for personal thanks from the Leader and Chief Operating Officer (COO) following achievements. Recommendations R1, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7	COO	COO and Leader visited teams and is in progress.	In progress
	2. Refresh internal governance arrangements, bringing greater visibility to how decisions are made and providing greater oversight to how the council operates internally. Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6	COO	Created and communicated	June 2024
	3. Following CLG review 2, co-design with senior managers cohort ways of working, confirming what good looks like when considering the six themes presented to Audit and Governance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build stronger relationships by understanding expectations • Define the culture you want to see • Communicate the change 	Chief Officer HR AD Policy & Strategy	Progress ongoing but Phase 2 will be concluded by December	March 2025



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead by example • Embed training and support • Align systems and processes <p>Monitoring Officer report: Agenda for Audit and Governance Committee on Wednesday, 19 July 2023, 5.30 pm (york.gov.uk) item 9</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6</p>			
<p>2. Co-design a partnerships plan</p>	<p>1. Following partner workshops and recent city leader’s events, develop a partnership plan that takes a one council approach to developing partnerships for approval at an Executive Decision Session (following further discussion with partners).</p> <p>Recommendations R12, R13</p>	<p>AD Policy & Strategy</p>	<p>EDMS Sept 2024 Annual schedule being arranged, proposal to establish a strategic place making board prepared for COO/Leader approval.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
	<p>2. Provide greater visibility of partnership working, with communications during or after events to show city partners coming together to discuss strategic issues, at both local and regional level.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R12, R13</p>	<p>Head of Comms</p>		<p>Ongoing</p>



	<p>3. Co-design with partners the top 5 things to focus on to harness energy and commitment to the city, working with partners on plans to deliver change, including increasing public affairs activities.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R12, R13</p>	COO AD Policy & Strategy		October 2024
3. Build capacity and capability to transform council services	<p>1. Establish the Corporate Improvement Board chaired by the Chief Operating Officer to monitor and steer corporate transformation, including the Working as One City programme, budget savings and delivery of the Council Plan.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10</p>	Director of Finance	Ongoing, board created and active	June 2024
	<p>2. Explore the best way to develop change and project capabilities to lead transformation, working closely with directorates, taking a one council approach to deliver end benefits such as improved customer experience and a more efficient council.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10</p>	Director of Finance	Strategic reviews defined and business cases establishing this is now ongoing	August 2024 and ongoing
	<p>3. Develop a series of Strategic Reviews that will take a council wide approach (for example, improve customer experience, embed safe and effective social care</p>	AD Policy and Strategy	Strategic reviews defined and business	Executive Sept 2024 Ongoing



	<p>practice, and launch integrated neighbourhood teams) that together form the Working as One City Programme, providing Executive oversight in September 2024 as part of the MTFS budget setting process.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10</p>		cases establishing this is now ongoing	
	<p>4. Identify action plans related to corporate improvement to bring to the Corporate Improvement Board for oversight and steer – including equalities action plan, budget savings plans, etc.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10</p>	AD Policy and Strategy	Ongoing, board created and active	June 2024
4. Deliver an Induction programme for the newly elected Mayor to best represent York's interests	<p>1. Introduce the newly elected Mayor to key York leaders, including Executive, Corporate Management Team, city leaders and key officers, facilitating tours of key sites, eg. York Central</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R12, R13</p>	AD Policy and Strategy	City Leaders event in May and ongoing work with the combined authority, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor	May 2024
	<p>2. Present the Mayor with the York pipeline of proposals, for mayoral consideration, following cross-party scrutiny</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R12, R13</p>	AD Policy and Strategy	MCA pipeline approved in July and MCA business cases being	July 2024



			coordinated. Work required to activated cases for Local Growth Plan.	
	<p>3. Centrally coordinate Combined Authority business cases that have regional impact for council plan action to maintain oversight of projects progressing with Mayoral support, working with York's policy network to prepare business cases ready for further discussion.</p> <p>Recommendations R12, R13</p>	AD Policy and Strategy	MCA pipeline approved in July and MCA business cases being coordinated. Work required to activated cases for Local Growth Plan	July 2024 Ongoing
	<p>4. Work with the Combined Authority to establish working groups between officers in York, North Yorkshire and the Combined Authority to explore opportunities in key themes!</p> <p>Recommendations R12, R13</p>	AD Policy and Strategy	MCA pipeline approved in July and MCA business cases being coordinated. Work required to activated cases for Local Growth Plan	June 2024 ongoing



Objective 3 Harness the commitment to the city to deliver ambitions: Develop and implement a communication strategy, establishing different activities to strengthen partnerships and engage the workforce, with a plan prepared by September 2024;

Action	Detail	Accountable officer	Narrative and Evidence Matrix (where appropriate)	Deadline
1. Develop and implement the Communications Strategy	1. Define a clear corporate narrative through the Working as One City Programme Recommendations R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R10	Head of Comms Director of Finance	Work started, business cases commenced, working groups convened and communication with staff commenced	November 2024
	2. Develop a new Communications Strategy that aligns to the Council Plan and Working as One City programme, setting out a clear corporate narrative and refreshing channels. Recommendations R4, R5, R6, R7, R8, R10	Head of Comms	Work started, business cases commenced, working groups convened and communication with staff commenced	Dec 2024
	3. Develop an internal engagement plan that shows how different internal meetings and communications are integrated, with key strategic issues discussed and providing opportunity for	Head of Comms	Internal comms completed and now ongoing	June 2024



	<p>staff to get involved and meet the Corporate Management Team (CMT).</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>			
	<p>4. Launch senior management weekly blogs to introduce senior management to officers and share their ambition for the organisation, celebrating success and sharing resident's experiences.</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	Head of Comms	CMT blog schedule confirmed and rota established	Sept 2024
	<p>5. Share the clear narrative throughout all internal communications with three key messages from CMT every month.</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	Head of comms	Agreed and established	July 2024
	<p>6. Refresh how we share information to better equip officers with the information they need and consider all workforce including those without access to council-provided ICT.</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	AD Policy & Strategy Head of Comms	Ongoing, implemented new email platform, key three and ongoing all staff meetings	April 2025
2. Establish and facilitate the City leaders annual	<p>1. Establish a partner plan to provide greater opportunity to build relationships.</p> <p>Recommendations R1, R11, R12</p>	AD Policy & Strategy		September 2024



events programme	2. Share with partners the annual partner event plan in advance, with invitations. Recommendations R1, R11, R12	AD Policy & Strategy	Programme of events has been produced.	October 2024
	3. Establish a City Developments Group that oversees and steers regeneration projects informed by partner task and finish / working groups and with opportunity for Scrutiny review. Recommendations R1, R10, R11	Director of City Development	City Development Board established, forward look agreed, meeting schedule underway.	October 2024
	4. Through the City Developments Group, reignite the York Narrative to embed the city values in built infrastructure and design. Recommendations R1, R10, R11	Director of City Development	Ongoing, embedded into York Central developer's proposition, Acomb Front Street Masterplan underway, Castle Gateway Master Plan due at Executive, Inward Investment Plan being developed.	January 2025
3. Explore and launch an e-ideas hub	1. Launch the staff ideas hub to encourage staff to take part in corporate consultations, including the	Head of Comms	In place and attracting responses,	June 2024



	<p>budget consultation and workforce improvements.</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>		<p>responses shared via a 'you said we did' basis</p>	
	<p>2. Every month, share 'you said, we did' information based on staff ideas.</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	<p>Head of Comms</p>	<p>Responses provided in periodic weekly COO emails</p>	<p>July 2024</p>
<p>4. Strengthen the role of Leading Together role</p>	<p>1. Develop an induction and training guide for Senior Managers, including scheme of delegation, financial management, performance and managing high performing teams</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	<p>Chief Officer HR</p>	<p>Induction document produced and in circulation</p>	<p>Dec 2024</p>
	<p>2. Share the forward look and decisions made through internal governance arrangements every month with Senior Managers to keep them informed about how the council operates, and their role in delivering ambitions.</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	<p>COO</p>	<p>Completed and sent on a monthly basis</p>	<p>Sept 2024</p>
	<p>3. Explore options for a management development programme for all Senior Managers to help embed expected ways of working and sharing learning.</p>	<p>Chief Officer HR</p>	<p>Programme to launch in new year, promoted to</p>	<p>Dec 2024 Started October</p>



	<p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>		managers in October	
	<p>4. As part of the Working as One City programme, develop small task and finish group for Heads of Service to work together on cross-council issues, eg. how to make it easier for Head of Service to manage their service through greater oversight of HR and Finance data.</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	AD Policy & Strategy Head of BI	These have started and lead by CMT members	Ongoing
	<p>5. Reset the regular senior officer meetings to provide space to explore organisational strategic issues together, publishing the schedule well in advance</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7</p>	Chief Officer HR	Established and ongoing	June 2024



Objective 4 Build a strong foundation: By December 2024, we will have embedded council plan priorities and the performance framework throughout the organisation, reviewing how we support personal development plans and service plans, with a refreshed internal governance structure

Action	Detail	Accountable officer	Narrative and Evidence Matrix (where appropriate)	Deadline
1. Confirm the Council plan priorities	1. Publish a six-month snapshot of progress on the website and to city partners, with a report to Executive and internal comms Recommendations R1, R2, R4, R5, R11, R12	AD Policy and Strategy		In place ongoing
	2. Confirm priority council plan actions with Executive, recommending different delivery models when the council is not funded to support Recommendations R1, R2, R3, R4, R5,	COO/CMT		January 2025
	3. Work closely with CMT, senior managers and Executive, develop a roadmap of council plan action, showing which service is accountable for delivering which action (informed by Service Plans) Recommendations R4, R5, R6, R7	AD Policy and Strategy		January 2025
	1. Establish a Core Service Performance Board, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer, to provide	COO		July 2024

2. Review performance management	oversight and monitor performance, scrutinising poor performing services and exploring how to support improvements Recommendations R6			
	2. Scrutinise Service Plans bi-annually in the Core Service Performance Board, taking a 'one council' approach to consider how ambitions are effectively and efficiently delivered and customer experience improved. Recommendations R6	COO		October 2024
	3. Identify the 4-5 key performance indicators for each Senior Manager to be responsible for delivering through their teams Recommendations R6	CMT	Part of service planning	December 2024
	4. Reinforcing the link of service plans and performance management to ensure <u>all</u> officers are aware of how they contribute to ambition, setting SMART objectives based on Service Plans and EACH (Equalities, Affordability, Climate and Health) and holding regular performance discussions with staff, which may be followed up in a further review for the 2025/26 reporting year. Reinforcing the importance of regular 121 discussions for all staff to ensure the	Chief Officer HR	Initial review of PDR process completed. Further review planned in February 2025 Higher completion rate in 2024, than 2023 already	January / February 2025



	<p>understanding of expectation, performance and opportunity to celebrate.</p> <p>Recommendation R6</p>			
3. Review Internal governance structures	<p>1. Establish how internal governance arrangements create clear lines of accountability for CMT, introducing new arrangements for any gaps in corporate oversight and leadership.</p> <p>Recommendations R4, R5, R6</p>	AD Policy & Strategy	Complete, launched and ongoing	April 2024
	<p>2. Establish a Corporate Governance Board, chaired by the Director of Governance and Director of Finance, to review decision reports and governance arrangements, escalating issues to Corporate Management Team and prior to publication.</p> <p>Recommendation R7,</p>	COO	Complete, launched and ongoing.	June 2024
	<p>3. Establish new internal governance arrangements to provide structures to support strategic and priorities and organisational management discussions.</p> <p>Recommendation R4, R5, R7</p>	COO	Complete, launched and ongoing	June 2024
	<p>4. Launch new internal governance arrangements making it easier for Senior Managers to know</p>	COO	Complete and ongoing	June 2024



	<p>who to engage with and when, publishing terms of reference and forward plans for each meeting</p> <p>Recommendations R2, R3, R4</p>			
4. Review Scrutiny oversight and member induction programme	<p>1. Continue the development of the ongoing member induction programme informed by member feedback.</p> <p>Recommendation R11</p>	Head of Democratic Services		Ongoing
	<p>2. Update the Member's Portal to signpost access to information and member support.</p> <p>Recommendation R11</p>	Head of Democratic Services		December 2024
	<p>3. Work with Chairs of Scrutiny to agree a process for reviewing scrutiny practices and identifying annual workplans</p> <p>Recommendation R11</p>	Head of Democratic Services		December 2024
	<p>4. Review scrutiny officer's role considering how they can support a continuous review of Scrutiny</p> <p>Recommendation R11</p>	Head of Democratic Services		April 2025
	<p>5. Continue to work with a cross-party representative group to review the Constitution.</p> <p>Recommendation R11</p>	Director of Governance		Ongoing
	<p>6. Review the role and responsibilities of independent members and how they can best support constructive scrutiny</p> <p>Recommendation R11</p>	Director of Governance		December 2024

