

<b>Meeting:</b>	Executive Decision Making Session : Executive Leader, Policy, Strategy and Partnerships
<b>Meeting date:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Officer HR and Support Services on behalf of the Chief Operating Officer
<b>Portfolio of:</b>	Executive Leader

## Decision and Project Report : Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report

### Subject of Report

1. This report seeks the approval to publish the final report from the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Team following their second visit in December 2024 and an update on the Corporate Improvement Action plan for noting.

### Recommendation

2. The Leader is requested to;
  - a. Note and formerly approve the LGA peer teams final report following their second visit to York to conclude the Council's Corporate Peer Challenge (**Annex 1**).
  - b. To note the progress made on the Corporate Improvement Action Plan to date (**Annex 2**)

### Background

3. The Council welcomed the LGA Peer Team for their second visit to York on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2024. The visit was for one-day, which was 10 months following their visit to York in February 2024.
4. The purpose of the peer's visit was to review the progress of the Corporate Improvement Action Plan (CIP) that was created in response to the peer's 15 recommendations made in February 2024.
5. For their second visit, the peers received a comprehensive overview and position statement of the progress made to date on the recommendations. Whilst they were only visiting for one day they had the opportunity to meet with the Chief Operating Officer, Leader of the Council, Corporate Management Team, key partners and Heads of Service to hear first-hand the progress made against the 15 recommendations, discuss early impact or learning and receive feedback on the implementation of the Council's improvement plan which was written in response to the recommendations made.
6. The report from the peers second visit was received on 19<sup>th</sup> February and in the spirit of transparency and openness, the Council is required to publish the report no later than 12 months after the original peer challenge (6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> February). A copy of the report is attached at **Annex 1** and on approval will be published on the Council's website, and the LGA will also publish on their website.

## **LGA Peers Report**

7. From the peer's visit in December, it is pleasing to note that they have recognised numerous key actions which have been successfully delivered including:
  - a. The delivery of key aspects of the Council's Plan objectives
  - b. The Corporate Management Team restructure which has added more clarity and stability which was also strengthened from evidence of greater collaborative and cohesive working
  - c. Improved financial grip including a co-produced budget and a clear way of place working
  - d. Approach to joint commissioning and place making in Health and Care which goes live on 1 April 2025
  - e. Internal engagement improvement and more visible leadership from Senior Members and Senior Officers. There was also

evidence of a clearer and more unified, collegiate leadership team.

- f. Positive progress on the improvement of wider health and care outcomes for all of the city's communities
- g. Positive feedback on partnership working and engagement with external partners
- h. Feedback about the Administration's continued positive approach.

8. The peers also provided further recommendations as part of their insight on the progress made to date. It is pleasing to hear feedback that the peers recognised the good work already done and the hard work of the workforce. The new recommendations very much echo the continued journey that the Council is progressing including refining priorities, promoting the work that has been achieved, continuing to engage with partners and work to ensure the combined authority opportunities are realised. In summary the recommendations include:

- a. Continue to better define and tell the story of 'why' you are doing things: This related to one of the big messages from the original CPC about the value of a clear narrative and 'story of York as a place'
- b. Even greater level of prioritisation is needed
- c. There needs to be an even greater level of managing expectations of what can be achieved with the level of resource available, both with the workforce and public;
- d. Continue to develop the political and organisational maturity of the council including;
  - i. the organisation reviewing its processes to support speedier decision making;
  - ii. being selective on priority areas for improvement, with learning from elsewhere informing this process;
  - iii. the Administration should continue to take opportunities to further develop political skills, as well as pursuing 'one team' development through reflection and learning opportunities with the Council Management Team;
- e. There is more work required to genuinely develop stronger, positive and strategic external relationships on a shared vision and objectives for the City, but equally noting the good work to date.
- f. A more structured and strategic approach to engaging with and influencing the Combined Authority and taking the opportunity

to further strengthen the outcomes for the City of York as a result of being the economic driver in the sub-region

9. These recommendations will be embedded into existing strategies, ways of working and action plans.

## **Corporate Improvement Plan**

10. Some aspects of the corporate improvement plan are ongoing and will be for some time. A copy of the updated plan is attached at **Annex 2** and where annotated 'ongoing' activity is likely to form business as usual from this point forward. It is proposed that these activities will fall within relevant service plans or form part of other programme / strategy action plans, this will therefore, reduce duplication and progress will be reported accordingly.
11. In terms of the Council's continuous journey of improvement and being responsive to the many local and national challenges, we are continuing to shape our services, including progressing and implementing numerous restructures and defining business cases for various working as one city strategic reviews and transformation programmes. All enhancing the ways that we work in a more efficient manner and improve the overall customer and workforce experience.
12. One aspect that we are currently reviewing is the governance framework and meetings that were established in response to the feedback from the peers. It is an opportune time as meetings have been running for nearly 12 months.
13. The overall experience of the peer's visits has been a good opportunity to reflect and have an alternative insight on our ambitions, the ways that we work with our partners and community and the overall offer and experience of the employee journey. These insights will be cross referenced with other feedback and will be built into our continuous improvement journey.
14. Corporate peer challenges are recognised as assisting councils to meet their best value duty by having one corporate peer challenge at least every five years. The Council will be approached by the LGA for another peer challenge around mid-2029. The Council can also

approach the LGA at any time should there be benefit of specific sector support programmes.

15. The Council also has numerous officers who have been trained to be part of the LGA peer teams to visit and provide sector led challenge and support to other councils. This directly assists with continuous improvement for York, helps with the sharing of good practice and provides learning and development for the officers involved.

## Consultation Analysis

16. The Corporate Improvement Framework was developed in consultation with the Corporate Leadership Group and the Executive. It was also shared with partners, residents and officers. The outcome of the consultation on the framework helped shape the action plan presented. Future consultation for projects will also involve key consultation and engagement as part of co-delivery and partnership working.

## Organisational Impact and Implications

17. **Financial:** costs associated with the implementation of any aspects of the Corporate Improvement Action Plan will be considered on an ongoing basis and be mindful of the current financial challenges.
18. **Human Resources (HR):** Many aspects of the Corporate Improvement Action Plan links with the Workforce Strategy and the HR Service plan. These documents are key to developing and ensuring that the Council has a workforce fit to deliver all its priorities.
19. **Legal:** The Director of Governance and legal team will provide any legal challenges associated with the individual actions associated with the action plan
20. **Procurement:** The head of procurement and team will provide any procurement support associated with any action in the plan.
21. **Health and Wellbeing:** The Director of Public Health and team will be contacted where there are any actions that require public health intervention and consideration.

22. **Environment and Climate action:** There are no known environment and climate implications.
23. **Affordability:** The Director of Finance will be contacted where there are any actions that required intervention and consideration.
24. **Equalities and Human Rights:** any aspects of the action plan that requires equality impact assessments will be considered on individual basis as part of the project planning process.
25. **Data Protection and Privacy,** any aspects of the action plan that requires a DPIA will be considered on an individual basis as part of the project planning process.
26. **Communications:** The Head of Communications and team will be contacted where there are any actions that require communication to the workforce.
27. **Economy:** There are no known economy risks.

## Risks and Mitigations

28. There are no known risk implications associated with the recommendations in this report, work will continue to develop good partner and stakeholder relations and ensure that the workforce remain supported to be able to deliver the required services to our residents. It is important that all services are delivered in an effective and efficient manner and our officers have the ability to grow, be creative, take responsibility, be accountable and be proud to work for the Council.

## Wards Impacted

29. All Wards are impacted.

## Contact details

30. For further information please contact the authors of this report.

## Author

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<b>Report approved:</b>	Yes

<b>Date:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
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## Annexes

Annex 1 – Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Report December 2024

Annex 2 – Corporate Improvement Action Plan

## Background papers

Executive approves Corporate Improvement Framework Agenda for Executive on Thursday, 9 May 2024, 5.30 pm (york.gov.uk) item 129 Corporate Improvement

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s176279/Local%20Government%20Association%20Peer%20Challenge.pdf>

LGA City of York Corporate Peer Challenge Report 2024

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s176280/Annex%20A%20>  
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Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee Agenda for Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee on Monday, 8 July 2024, 5.30 pm (york.gov.uk) item 9

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s177327/CSCM%20Scrutiny%20%20CIP v01.pdf>

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s177328/Annex%20A%20Corporate%20Improvement%20Action%20Plan%20DRAFT.pdf>

Executive Decision-Making Session – 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024 approval of Corporate Improvement Framework

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s177424/Corporate%20Improvement%20Action%20Plan%20Report.pdf>

Executive Leaders Decision Making Session – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 progress report of Corporate Improvement Action Plan

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s179481/Corporate%20Improvement%20Plan%20Report.pdf>

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s179482/Annex%201%20-%20Corporate%20Improvement%20Framework.pdf>

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s179483/Annex%20%20Corporate%20Improvement%20Plan.pdf>