

## Audit and Governance Committee

31 January 2024

Report of the Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy  
Portfolio of the Leader, responsible for Policy, Strategy and Partnerships

## Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge

### Summary

1. This report provides an update to the Audit and Governance Committee about the forthcoming Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge.

### Background

2. The LGA Peer Challenge is a robust and effective improvement and assurance tool which is owned and delivered by the sector. It provides the opportunity for the council to learn from experienced local government officers' recommended areas for improvement, which are developed through constructive challenge. [Corporate Peer Challenge | Local Government Association](#)
3. York's LGA Peer Challenge will take place at West Offices and the LNER Community Stadium 6-9 February 2024, with some preparatory interviews taking place in advance.
4. The scope of the Peer Challenge has been agreed in consultation with the LGA, Leader and Chief Operating Officer (**Annex A**).
5. It will cover the five high level themes in the LGA Peer Challenge framework, listed below, together with specific focus on how the council provides positive customer experiences and, how ready the council is structurally to benefit from future opportunities (such as Local Plan, Local Transport Strategy and Mayoral Combined Authority):
  - Local priorities and outcomes
  - Organisational and place leadership

- Governance and culture
  - Financial planning and management
  - Capacity for improvement.
6. A working group comprised of the Head of HR, Head of Business Intelligence and Assistant Director Policy and Strategy, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer, has met regularly to develop the approach, identify interviewees for the LGA to consider (**Annex B**), and collate a report pack for the peers to build an understanding of how the council operates.
  7. We are currently sharing a positioning statement with the LGA which provides a summary of the council's strengths and areas of concern and is a starting point for the peers to discuss with interviewees. The peers will triangulate evidence that is presented to them and seek to verify or discount perspectives through a wide range of interviews.
  8. The peers will hold over 60 different interviews with council officers, partners and stakeholders (**Annex B**). Through one-to-one interviews and focus groups, the peer reviewers will explore issues in detail to get a clear and comprehensive understanding of how the council operates, key strengths to build on and areas of concern which will inform their recommendations to help the council improve and make a difference.
  9. The positioning statement, interview schedule and report pack are provided to the peers in advance to help with preparations, together with a small number of interviews.
  10. The Peer Challenge report and recommendations will be presented to Executive in April. The council will also provide an action plan for Executive consideration that addresses issues and opportunities highlighted in the Peer Challenge.

## **Consultation**

11.
  - a) The Leader, Chief Operating Officer together with Corporate Management Team (CMT) have been consulted throughout.
  - b) On 11 December, a workshop was held with Leading Together (the G12 and above management cohort) to help inform development of the positioning statement.

- c) The LGA have been engaged to help shape the type of evidence required by the peers in the positioning statement, the roles of the interviewees and the reports the peers would require in advance to help them prepare.

## Council Plan

12. The LGA Peer Challenge responds to the Council Plan priority theme - How the Council Operates with a focus on improving customer experience and maximising opportunities from devolution.

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Ian Floyd  
Chief Operating Officer

**Report  
Approved**

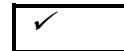


**Date**

16 January  
2024

### Wards Affected:

All



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:** None

### Annexes:

- A: City of York Peer Challenge Scope
- B: LGA Peer Challenge Interviewees

### Abbreviations

CMT - Corporate Management Team  
LGA - Local Government Association