

## Annex B City of York Council – Corporate Improvement Framework

The Corporate Improvement Framework is based on four themes to provide structure and guide our journey of continuous improvement. It enables the council to embed the four core commitments of Equalities, Affordability, Climate and Health (EACH), and responds to the Council Plan 2023-2027, *One City for all*, strategic theme “how the council operates”. It was informed by the evidence and recommendations in the LGA Peer Challenge February 2024, and will be updated with feedback from additional sources such as staff surveys or co-designing detailed action plans with Executive, officers, and partners. It provides a workplan for an initial 12 months of action and is the foundation of continuous improvement that will evolve as we learn more about how we can become a more effective and efficient organisation, that residents and officers are proud of. It is subject to consultation to inform detailed action planning (R15).

A 12-month update will be provided to Executive in response to the LGA Peer Challenge process.

1. **Strengthen strategic leadership:** Articulate a clear vision to inspire action in everything we do;
2. **One City, one council:** Build a culture that unites the council, officers, members and partners together, as one team;
3. **Harness the commitment to the city to deliver ambitions:** Deliver our shared priorities;
4. **Build a strong foundation:** Strengthen governance, accountability and financial management and a skilled, resilient workforce.

Strengthen strategic leadership	One City, one council	Harness the commitment to the city	Build a strong foundation
Refresh the <b>Corporate Management Team (CMT)</b> restructure, repositioning as the strategic heart of the organisation – with greater collective visibility, establishing early opportunities to present a united team, share ownership of challenges, co-design a unifying vision and accelerating a strategic focus on priorities.	Co-design the <b>Cultural Improvement Plan</b> with Leading Together and Executive, to define shared leadership values based on kindness, respect and professional generosity, learning from partners and directorate successes to define and set agreed ways of working for the Corporate Leadership Group, Leading Together (Grade 12 and above cohort) and Managers to drive cultural change.	Develop and implement a <b>communications strategy</b> and plan, defining and embedding a clear corporate narrative, sharing strategic intent and facilitating opportunities to inspire action, regularly sharing progress against priorities - internally and externally.	Review progress against the Council Plan, confirming <b>priorities</b> with the administration and agreeing a <b>roadmap</b> to hold the organisation to account for action, understanding delivery options for each action (eg, council, or in partnership with city partner, Mayoral, Integrated Care Board, etc).
R1, R2, R4, R5, R13	R3, R4, R13	R1, R7	R2, R5, R14
Co-design a <b>leadership framework</b> , setting out leadership behaviours, delegated areas of responsibility and accountability, and values for all senior officers, putting in place a leadership development programme across the organisation to develop leadership, build shared trust and understanding, working with Executive Members, and delegated leadership throughout the organisation.	Co-design with Leading Together (the Grade 12 or above senior manager cohort) a <b>partnerships plan</b> , defining expectations, strengthening relationships as one council, agreeing ways of working, aligning to key priorities, and learning from good practice across the council, with regular updates discussed with Executive, Corporate Management Team and Corporate Leadership Group.	Establish and facilitate a <b>city leaders’ annual ‘events’ programme</b> comprised of thematic discussions aimed at bringing Executive members and the new Corporate Management Team together with city leaders to resolve strategic issues, including championing York’s interests regionally and nationally.	Review <b>Personal performance development and performance management</b> , ensuring alignment to EACH, establishing SMART objectives for employees that are recognisable, embedded in service plans and day to day delivery of services that align to priorities, strengthening recognition and celebration of success.
R1, R4, R5	R12, R13, R14	R12, R13, R14	R2, R4, R5
Redesign the <b>roles, relationships and responsibilities</b> within senior management internal governance arrangements, reviewing terms of reference and facilitating more opportunities to co-design options to resolve strategic issues, challenging and championing progress against priorities, with a shared approach to organisation design	Build <b>capacity and capability</b> to establish an environment that strengthens leadership and strategic intent through a <b>Corporate Improvement and Resilience Plan</b> which brings together: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MTFS savings</li> <li>• council plan priorities roadmap</li> <li>• all transformation projects</li> <li>• internal governance</li> <li>• delivery of this action plan</li> </ul>	Build on the range of ways that employees can make suggestions for improvement including exploring an <b>e-“ideas” hub</b> for all staff with a refreshed approach to share officer expertise and harness innovative and creative ideas for consideration as part of the transformation programme.	Review <b>internal governance structures</b> to embed clear accountability and responsibility, establishing appropriate governance arrangements to deliver the council plan priorities, savings plans and transformation programme.

for the 2 <sup>nd</sup> phase of the senior manager's review. R4, R5	R10	R10	R2, R10, R11
Develop and embed an engagement plan to build greater understanding about the <b>mid-term financial strategy</b> , regularly sharing information about collective responsibility to overcome financial pressures, with an accountability framework across managers, and local schemes of delegation. R8, R9	Develop and deliver an <b>induction programme</b> for the new mayor of the combined authority, representing York's interests, in a visible show of unity. R13, R14	Strengthen the role of <b>Leading Together</b> , harnessing their expertise and commitment to the city to drive cultural change, change, financial and performance management, member/officer relationships, internal communications and engagement to inspire their teams to deliver the priorities. R2, R3, R7, R8, R9	Review <b>Scrutiny and oversight</b> , growing the <b>member induction programme</b> into a member development programme, to include opportunities to build increased understanding of roles and responsibilities for both officers and members. R10, R11

## LGA Peer Challenge Recommendations, February 2024

Recommendation 1: Clarify a strong and consistent narrative that drives the ability of the organisation to take advantage of the opportunities available to York.

Recommendation 2: Be clear on the need to prioritise the ambition of the new council plan to focus on key delivery.

Recommendation 3: Build on the clear leadership of the new administration to develop a more mature corporate culture that improves appropriate behaviours and relationships within the organisation.

Recommendation 4: Consider how the corporate culture and senior arrangements of the organisation can help shape and deliver key priorities.

Recommendation 5: Consider how the Corporate Management Team can establish a collective responsibility for the delivery of key priorities and provide clear and consistent positive leadership to the many hard working and dedicated staff.

Recommendation 6: Put in place a robust performance management framework that recognises and rewards success and has clear accountability for delivery.

Recommendation 7: Ensure improved staff engagement that clearly communicates the shared aims ambitions and priorities of the organisation and celebrates success.

Recommendation 8: Establish a well evidenced and robust single version of the medium-term financial position that is collectively owned and understood.

Recommendation 9: Improve the financial literacy of the organisation, financial controls and financial grip that focuses on the big picture.

Recommendation 10: Develop a clear plan to deliver savings that includes a properly resourced strategic program for change with sound business cases that flow through a strong and more robust governance framework.

Recommendation 11: Ensure there are appropriate support resources and structures to enable all members to undertake their respective roles including training, early access to papers and expanded access to information.

Recommendation 12: Develop a clear corporate strategy on how City of York Council can better utilise the desire capacity and ability of partners to help the city improve and achieve its ambition.

Recommendation 13: Develop stronger, positive and strategic corporate relationships with all partners. Ensure these are more consistent across all partnership working utilising localised good practice -(for example the work of the ICB, engagement with the voluntary sector etc). Seek to replicate and embed these positive examples across CYC to establish effective collaboration as being the norm.

Recommendation 14: Properly understand the relationship with the Combined Authority and its role in enabling CYC to deliver its key priorities.

Recommendation 15: Implement an action plan to address these recommendations with urgency and pace that moves from single tactical interventions to a more strategic corporate approach.