

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Review

22nd October 2025

Report of the Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an update on the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge review

This report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That Members note the CPC Progress report and determine whether a future update on progress against recommendations is required.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In April 2024, Lancaster City Council participated in a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) with the aim of further improving the council's work.
- 1.2 The review is offered to all local authorities by the Local Government Associated (LGA) and included a three-day site visit. The review forms part of the improvement and assurance framework for local government, and all CPC reports are subsequently published on the LGA website.
- 1.3 The review included the gathering of detailed information and views from more than 50 meetings, and the peer team spoke to over 130 colleagues including council staff, councillors and external stakeholders. The overriding view of the review was that over the last two years the council has undergone a period of rapid improvement, is making real improvements for people and place, and is well-placed for the future to deliver on the needs of its communities. The full CPC feedback report was published on 19th July 2024 **and can be found in appendix 1.**
- 1.4 Prior to the publication of the report, an all-Councillor briefing was delivered to summarise the main findings. Following publication, the council issued a press release, and a partner briefing was delivered. The full report is available on both the LGA and the council website.

2.0 Progress review

- 2.1 The CPC feedback report contained recommendations for continued improvement, which formed part of an action plan co-owned and reviewed monthly by the senior leadership team. The first iteration of the action plan was published in September 2025.
- 2.2 As part of the CPC, the council are also required to have a progress review and publish the findings from this within twelve months of the CPC. The purpose of the review is to:

- Receive feedback from peers on the early progress made by the council against the CPC recommendations and the council's RAG rated CPC Action Plan
- Consider peer's reflections on any new opportunities or challenges that may have arisen since the peer team were 'on-site' including any further support needs
- Discuss any early impact or learning from the progress made to date

This progress review took place on 23rd January 2025 when four members of the original review team attended on-site and spoke to staff and partners in a series of meetings and focus groups. In advance of this visit, the council shared a position statement document and the latest version of the action plan (inclusive of RAG ratings), detailing progress since the feedback report was published. This has recently been updated and **can be found in appendix 2.**

- 2.3 Following the progress review in January, the CPC team shared the draft progress review report with the council on 20th March 2025. **This report can be found in appendix 3.** The review feedback is broadly themed under the key principles within the Council Plan 24-27, and praised the excellent progress made against the original recommendations as well as highlighting areas and suggestions that the peer review team deemed relevant. In particular, the team highlighted progress made on partnership working, the council's clear vision that prosperity must benefit the whole community, with an ambition to enable a low carbon future, and the importance of the Fit for the Future programme which is aligned to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council Plan.

3.0 Conclusion

- 3.1 The senior leadership team will continue to deliver on outstanding actions to gain maximum value from the CPC process, which has reflected very positively on the council as a whole as well as providing an external benchmark and suggestions for improvement.
- 3.2 Members of the Committee can either choose to receive a further update on progress against recommendations in the future, or they can delegate this to Chief Executive who would then produce written confirmation of sign-off to the Chair of the Committee (including an updated CPC action plan). Either option is considered acceptable.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing):

There is no impact. Should actions be proposed as a result of this paper, then impact assessments will be carried out in relation to those specific actions.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, such as Human Resources, Information Services, Property, Open Spaces:

None, all recommendations can be addressed within current resources.

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Lancaster CPC feedback report
2. Action Plan
3. Lancaster CPC Progress Review

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