

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge - April 2024

Action Plan

Note: Progress against the Action Plan is due to be considered by Audit Committee on 29 January (updates by 16 January please)

Ref	Recommendation	Action	Lead	Completion Date	Progress Update	Impact	
1	Adopt a council Business Plan agreed on a cross-party basis that outlines a clear set of strategic political priorities	1.1	Seek cross party input through Council Leadership Group	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	The Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the draft Business Plan and further discussions were held with representatives of the other Groups on the Council prior to the Plan being considered by the Cabinet.	Clear focus for the administrative period that aligns to the long-term Corporate Plan enabling the Council to prioritise limited resources to address statistically proven areas of need and/or development opportunities. This moves us towards reaching our goal of being a healthy, happy and prosperous authority area.
		1.2	Approval of the Council Business Plan by Cabinet	Cabinet	COMPLETED	The Council Business Plan was agreed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 11 June 2024.	Clear focus for the administrative period that aligns to the long-term Corporate Plan enabling the Council to prioritise limited resources to address statistically proven areas of need and/or development opportunities. This moves us towards reaching our goal of being a healthy, happy and prosperous authority area.
		1.3	Determine monitoring for Business Plan delivery	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	The refreshed quarterly Corporate Performance Report provides information on the milestones met and whether the actions within the Plan are on track to be delivered. The Report also provides information on the Council's performance against the indicators within the Council Business Plan and the Community and Corporate Plan. The reports are considered by the Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet members and the Overview and Scrutiny Board.	A detailed performance monitoring report, made up of quantitative and qualitative KPIs as well as project progress highlights and RAG scores ensures that teams maintain focus on the aims and objectives agreed in the Business Plan and Corporate Plan. Likewise, it enables the administration and officers to be held to account against the agreed KPIs and milestones.
		1.4a	Review of Service Plans to ensure Council Business Plan actions are reflected	All Directors	COMPLETED	Mapping has been completed to ensure that all the Council Business Plan actions are appropriately reflected within Service Plans.	The aims and objectives in our top level plans are embedded throughout the organisation to strengthen focus and commitment to delivery.

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		1.4b	Review of Council Business Plan to ensure all actions are reflected in Services Plans	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	The actions within the Council Business Plan have been mapped against the actions within the Council's Service Plans.	The aims and objectives in our top level plans are embedded throughout the organisation to strengthen focus and commitment to delivery.
2	The very small number of elected members from across the council chamber whose behaviours are impacting so negatively must ask themselves what they want their legacy to be and find ways of working effectively in a context of No Overall Control	2.1	Group Leaders to reflect on LGA advice within their Groups	Support from Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer	On-going	External support has been sourced in order to facilitate discussions within and between political groups. The external support has reached its conclusion, and Group Leaders are now working proactively together to formalise different working arrangements.	That the Council is able to function effectively without the impact of negative behaviours.
3	Gear up fully to deliver the proposed Combined County Authority arrangements	3.1	Consider the recruitment of the Torbay Council devolution "co-ordinator" for 12 months	Director of Corporate Services and Director of Pride in Place	September 2024	This has been considered and due to timescales has been discounted. Resources are being aligned to ensure Torbay Council are maximising the opportunities available post go-live.	Significant short-term pressure on resource may impact other priorities. This risk is being managed through regular work programme reviews for those staff involved.
		3.2	Agree internal arrangement for staffing and backfill/recruit as required	Director of Corporate Services	September 2024	Resources are being aligned to ensure Torbay Council are maximising the opportunities available post go-live.	Significant short-term pressure on resource may impact other priorities. This risk is being managed through regular work programme reviews for those staff involved.
		3.3	Continue to work with Devon County Council on the establishment and implementation of the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority	Chief Executive	By 31 March 2025	Absolute focus is continuing to ensure that the CCA is established, and opportunities are maximised across Devon and Torbay.	That the Council is able to benefit from the devolution of powers.
		3.4	Establish Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority	Chief Executive	By 31 March 2025	The expectation is that the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority will be established early in 2025. The Statutory Instrument has been laid before Parliament which would see its creation by March 2025	That the Council is able to benefit from the devolution of powers.
		3.5	Review the Local Transport Plan, identifying linkages to a future Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan and associated offers and asks	Director of Pride in Place	December 2024	Torbay Council and Devon County Council's Cabinets have both agreed a draft Local Transport Plan for consultation. Consultation commenced on 1 October 2024. It is hoped that, subject to feedback from the consultation, a new Local Transport Plan will be in place in early 2025.	

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		3.6	Review the Economic Growth Strategy, identifying linkages to a future Devon and Torbay Economic Strategy and associated offers and asks (including around training, skills, employment and business support)	Director of Pride in Place	December 2024	A review of the Economic Growth Strategy Action Plan is currently underway and will be shared with Cabinet members in the coming weeks.	
4a	Dedicate greater time and space for thinking and collaboration across the organisation to inform strategic direction and focus on outcomes	4.1	Develop proposals to determine how this will be facilitated, following engagement with colleagues across the Council	Director of Corporate Services and Director of Adult and Community Services	COMPLETED	DOM and SLT think space sessions are live, with DOM sessions fully embedded and SLT sessions programmed. Time is set aside at both levels of managers' forums to collaborate on key areas of change with agendas being fed through DOM and SLT as well as through heads of service.	More time for wider, strategic, thinking has already had a positive impact after the first two SLT sessions which have enabled a more through understanding and specific actionable outputs for the matters considered. It is expected that continuation of this approach will enable the organisation to mature across the areas of focus.
		4.2	Establish periodic check and challenge to ensure that this is embedded as our approach moving forward	Director of Corporate Services and Director of Adult and Community Services	COMPLETED	Agreed approach at DOM and check and challenge programmed quarterly on DOM from August onwards.	More time for wider, strategic, thinking has already had a positive impact after the first two SLT sessions which have enabled a more thorough understanding and specific actionable outputs for the matters considered. It is expected that continuation of this approach will enable the organisation to mature across the areas of focus.
		4.3	Review the Decision Making Framework and Internal Governance Meeting Structure (and associated processes) in order to empower Directors and their teams	Director of Corporate Services to develop proposal	COMPLETED	Re-configured meeting time allocations to give focused time on operational matters and greater space for strategic thinking with SLT. Reduced requirement for covering reports for cyclical agenda items. Empowered directorates to own report deadlines and quality assurance, increasing accountability. Improved information flow through directors' commitment to increase flow down of broader information sets from SLT and DOM.	Changes have reduced time spent on governance/report writing across the organisation. Ownership has increased. Assessment of information flow through the Council management levels is yet to be undertaken.
		4.4	Ensure that governance arrangements are followed in order to free up time and space for greater collaboration within DOM, SLT and CAD, including effective use of the Member Casework System	All Directors	On-going	A greater remit has been given to Directorate Management Teams in order to manage governance requirements in order to free up time and space for greater collaboration.	The improved way of working is still embedding, but feedback to date is positive.

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4b	Develop a more distributed model of leadership	4.5	Ensure the Member Development Programme provides support for councillors' role as ambassadors for their local areas	Director of Corporate Services	31 July 2024	A proposal is being considered to formalise 'Councillor Conversations,' however this is being held to allow the cross party relations work to be undertaken, and will be tested with Members thereafter in order to finalise and roll-out.	
		4.5	Linking to the Our People Strategy Action Plan, consider the potential to develop a Head of Service support programme	Chief Executive	30 September 2024	The Managers Framework is being launched in January 2025. There was a delay due to significant pressures within HR.	That Managers from across the organisation are well supported to be effective Managers (irrespective of service speciality) through the identification and delivery of tailored support and training.
5	Ensure the People Strategy is collectively owned and led from the top	5.1	Run senior management session to help facilitate knowledge, co-design actions and increase ownership	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	A Managers Forum was held in June 2024 where managers worked together to identify actions to help embed the Our People Strategy.	Actions are now being managed through the Our People Project to ensure council wide ownership.
		5.2	Launch People Strategy with associated Communication and Engagement Plan	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	A Communications and Engagement Plan is in place and is being rolled out. The Staff Awards have been launched with the ceremony held in September 2024.	Impact of Staff Awards was very positive, helping to significantly improve morale. The plan will be followed to ensure council wide ownership.
		5.3	Review the leadership and membership of the Our People Board to drive delivery of the Our People Strategy Action Plan (with the Chief Executive as Senior Responsible Officer)	Chief Executive	COMPLETED	The Chief Executive took over SRO responsibility in July 2024. A review of the membership of the board has taken place and a wider staff engagement is now in place following opportunities for colleagues to partake. The Action Plan has been refined to ensure focussed delivery with clear milestones and expectations.	That the Our People Board are truly representative and impactful for the delivery of the Our People Strategy.
		5.4	Deliver the Our People Strategy Action Plan including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of staff awards Recognising, celebrating and communicating everyday successes and achievements Phase 2 of the Internal Engagement Strategy 	Chief Executive	On-going	The Chief Executive took over SRO responsibility in July 2024 and now chairs meetings of the Project Board. A refinement of the action plan has taken place, with significant work already undertaken. The first staff awards took place on 26 September 2024 and were received really positively by staff across the Council.	The the Action Plan is delivered to ensure that as a Council we never lose the focus on supporting our staff as our key asset
6	Ensure corporate leadership and ownership to develop a	6.1	Deliver the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	Director of Public Health and Director of	On-going	A draft action plan has been prepared and Emerging Issues paper shared with Cabinet. Briefings are taking place on a quarterly	Greater understanding of our obligations and the benefits. Check and challenge against

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	clearer focus on equalities, diversity and inclusion		Corporate Services		basis with the portfolio holders and champion. Work is progressing with the first staff networks in place. Consultation is due to take place on the Draft Inclusion Strategy in early 2025.	the progress we are making towards greater EDI maturity.	
		6.2	Establish mechanism to report on progress against the Action Plan to Lead Members and DOM on a quarterly basis	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	Quarterly report programmed on DOM and CAD from September 2024 onwards. First CAD agenda item will confirm onwards flow of this and future reports.	Greater understanding of our obligations and the benefits. Check and challenge against the progress we are making towards greater EDI maturity.
		6.3	Update the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan on an annual basis taking account of equality data and feedback from resident and staff engagement	Director of Public Health and Director of Corporate Services	From January 2025	Consultation is due to take place on the Draft Inclusion Strategy in early 2025. Progress against the strategy will be monitored quarterly by senior management. This will be complemented by an annual report, which is published to meet our Public Sector Equality Duty reporting requirements.	
7	Reflect on current approaches around process and system to ensure risk is balanced with outcomes and the necessary assurance is received on what matters most	7.1	Revise and embed the Performance Management Framework	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	A new style performance report was prepared for Q1 with positive feedback from SLT and members. This was refined for Q2 and will be further refined for Q3. The Performance Management Policy and Framework has been approved.	Post approval, the Performance Management Framework now requires embedding in BAU. To date, the use of the new style reporting is enabling better tracking of performance and progress against our top-level plans.
		7.2	Review current approach, testing against guidance and best practice from elsewhere, and determine correct approach for our circumstances	Director of Finance and Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	Having conducted the review, the Performance Management Policy has been redrafted taking account of legislative requirements, LGA guidance and best practice from across the Country. The Policy now forms part of a Framework which assists officers in ensuring that performance management is embedded within the organisation.	Post approval, the Performance Management Framework now requires embedding in BAU. To date, the use of the new style reporting is enabling better tracking of performance and progress against our top-level plans.
		7.3	Make best use of data and insight to drive improved outcomes,	Director of Public Health	30 September 2024	The 2024/25 JSNA main narrative and JSNA Ward profile are updated annually and available at Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and Ward Profiles - Torbay Knowledge and Intelligence (southdevonandtorbay.info) In addition to this there are two-page profiles providing summaries on topical issues as well as Annual Reports as Director of Public Health Public Health - Torbay Council All these resources are disseminated to key teams and partners and regular discussions	

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					at SLT, DOM and CAD where data and intelligence are discussed with implications for services.		
8	Deliver a 'reset' of Overview and Scrutiny organisationally and politically	8.1	Review the draft Local Protocol for Overview and Scrutiny taking account of the Statutory Guidance issued in April 2024	Director of Corporate Services and Director of Adults and Community Services	COMPLETED	Review undertaken and changes approved at Council Meeting in September 2024 to ensure relationship and responsibilities are clearly defined and expectations are set for all parties in accordance with the Statutory Guidance.	Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are now operating under the updated approach. This enables better working relationships and refined outputs.
		8.2	Consider further, potentially external, training requirements for members and officers in relation to overview and scrutiny	Director of Corporate Services and Director of Adults and Community Services	September 2024	The training programme has been reviewed and enhancements are to be rolled out post consultation with stakeholders, which is planned post Member facilitation sessions. We will be working with Devon County Council on Scrutiny training for the new Combined County Authority.	
		8.3	Adopt through Council and embed new changes	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	Adopted at Council in September 2024.	Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board are now operating under the updated approach. This enables better working relationships and refined outputs.
9	Create the space for cross-party consideration of matters relating to Constitutional and elected member governance	9.1	Review ways of working to ensure that the overall structure provides the required opportunities for all issues to be addressed	Chief Executive	31 July 2024	Following the facilitated sessions on cross party working Group Leaders are now working proactively to ensure that the Council has the best governance framework in place to support all future administrations. The outcome of this is due to be presented to Council in February 2025.	That all members of the Council are appropriately engaged and informed on Council business.
		9.2	Council Leadership Group to agree approach	Chief Executive	31 July 2024	Following the facilitated sessions on cross party working Group Leaders are now working proactively to ensure that the Council has the best governance framework in place to support all future administrations. The outcome of this is due to be presented to Council in February 2025.	That all members of the Council are appropriately engaged and informed on Council business.
10	Maintain the focus on the nine areas of significant spend and demand pressure	10.1	Ensure that there continues to be focus on these areas, with report to Cabinet established	Director of Finance	On-going	Financial Sustainability Plans are being closely monitored by the Chief Executive and Directors. These plans have been reviewed and updated as part of the 2025/26 budget setting process.	Providing longer term financial sustainability for the Council. The 2025/26 draft revenue budget has been set without the need for setting savings targets and has limited the amount of growth that the Council has had to commit to key service demand areas such as homelessness and Children's Social Care placements.
11a	Consider the approach to the council's buildings and accommodation	11.1	Review previous initiatives in relation to office accommodation to	Director of Pride in Place and Director of	COMPLETED	DOM have considered the PID and the Capital Asset Management Group will be using the uplifted budget to manage the	A firm position has been arrived at on the Town Hall campus: Maintain as is, carry out backlog maintenance as budget allows while

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		<p>assess the following against the Target Operating Model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cost/benefit • response to staff survey • current contractual arrangements for staff, including the requirement for monthly team anchor days 	Corporate Services		<p>Town Hall campus as is while grant opportunities are explored that will benefit the organisation and communities. It is only with significant grant funding that major works will be viable.</p> <p>Contractual arrangements for staff have been reviewed and are being updated in accordance with the reviewed and accepted policy. This is being done in tranches and will be complete by the end of the 2024/25 financial year.</p>	<p>grant funding is identified that will shape the future use of the buildings for the benefit of staff and our communities.</p> <p>Likewise, we have given ourselves assurance that our policies that effect use of our corporate assets are fit for purpose and are flexible to suit the wide range of business requirements across the Council.</p>
		11.2 Subject to 11.1, agree the Council's approach to its buildings and accommodation	All Directors	COMPLETED	DOM have considered the PID and the Capital Asset Management Group will be using the uplifted budget to manage the Town Hall campus as is while grant opportunities are explored that will benefit the organisation and communities. It is only with significant grant funding that major works will be viable.	A firm position has been arrived at on the Town Hall campus: Maintain as is, carry out backlog maintenance as budget allows while grant funding is identified that will shape the future use of the buildings for the benefit of staff and our communities.
		11.3 Determine the Council's wider approach to our estate, including the need or otherwise for increased customer access points	Director of Pride in Place and Director of Adult and Community Services	December 2024	Appointments are now available with the Housing Options Team within the Children's Services Reception in Electric House, Torquay. The Family Hubs also provide an opportunity for more face-to-face interaction, including the registration of births.	The council offers a more flexible and accessible approach to Housing Options, which is particularly helpful to people who are rough sleeping.
		11.4 In light of 11.1-11.3, review the Council's Asset Management Strategy and Policy	Director of Pride in Place	December 2024	Reviewed with Estates Team, the existing strategy and policy continues to be appropriate. Some minor amendments to update for community plan / business plan to be considered with Governance Support to ensure appropriate decision making.	The holding of, and investment in, assets is being challenged against the Asset Management strategy with an initial proposed list of assets for disposal presented to Cabinet and Directors for consideration in January 2025.
		11.5 Consider how a One Bay Estate approach could be used to place-shape and optimise the use of assets across Torbay	Director of Pride in Place	2025/2026	Preliminary discussion with key Cabinet members, agreement that this is not a priority action for this year given the wider requirements of this Action Plan and the Council Business Plan.	With the approach agreed in 11.1 it is hoped that the Town Hall Campus will offer opportunities in this area once suitable grant funding has been identified.
11b	Take stock of the learning, challenges and opportunities around the 'return to the workplace'	11.6 Review the Flexible Working Policy to collectively consider the learning, challenges and opportunities that exist as return to the workplace continues	Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	Policy is fit for purpose and the balance of business and staff needs can be managed departmentally within the policy. Review of the use of our assets may provide more opportunity for making our offices attractive to greater occupancy.	Staff body have the ability to work flexibly within the constraints of the business units in which they role resides, thus ensuring best possible outcomes for staff and customers.

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12	Enhance the corporate approach to transformation	12.1	Consider extension of current temporary resource to safeguard future delivery timescales and consider extra project leads and business analysts to increase rate of change	Director of Finance	COMPLETED	Resource in Business Improvement and Change Team has been extended in line with project end forecasts. Extra resource was considered, however, due to the pace of change that the organisation can tolerate without detrimental impact on statutory service delivery, this was discounted.	
		12.2	Consider Internal Audit recommendation of Portfolio Manager (or Programme Manager) role and associated support requirements to enable a PMO approach based on cost/benefit	Director of Finance	COMPLETED	This was considered, but the cost benefit was not advantageous for an organisation of our scale. To mitigate, as well as rolling out a standardised project management methodology, we are using digital solutions to track and manage projects and programmes at a portfolio level within the transformation portfolio. Capital projects will continue to be managed through established governance.	Stronger governance has been implemented with regards to approving and spending for capital projects. Senior Officer and members oversight is maintained through the Capital Growth Board.
		12.3	Complete the Service Review of Corporate Services (to include consideration of silos of project management being brought together under one Programme Management Office)	Director of Corporate Services	April 2025	Service Review is underway and on schedule for completion in April 2025, to note, any HR change process arising from the review will start at this point, not finish.	
		12.4	Adopt standardised project methodology across the Council	Director of Corporate Services and Director of Pride in Place	COMPLETED	All products rolled out. Promotion in staff channels prior to deadline completed.	Roll out enables greater consistency of robust project management practices across the organisation.
13	Evolve the role and ways of working of corporate services	13.1	Complete the Service Review of Corporate Services to appraise Corporate Services against our Design Principles and our progress towards the Target Operating Model (see also 12.3)	Director of Corporate Services	April 2025	The review has commenced in IT Services and Health & Safety. Other services will follow to meet the completion date.	
		13.3	Support all directorates to have "Brilliant Basics" in place	Director of Corporate Services	December 2024	Exercise agreed with SLT and guidance shared in July, for roll out across all teams. This is now completed in some directorates.	Outputs from the exercises have enabled numerous small improvements, some are still be concluded.
14	Undertake the necessary functional realignments in relation to the TDA	14.1	Review the organisational structure of the Council to	Director of Pride in Place	November 2024	Work is well progressed and is now being taken forward by the Chief Executive after a	

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		appropriately reflect the functions previously undertaken by TDA, including ensuring that there is strengthened delivery around economic regeneration and growth	(Chief Executive)		short delay due to the temporary absence of the Director of Pride in Place.	
		14.2 Ensure that the working practices and processes that apply to assets, projects and other services previously delivered through TDA are consistent with other Council areas	Director of Pride in Place (Chief Executive)	November 2024	The structure referenced in 14.1 will assist with this action. In the temporary absence of the Director of Pride in Place, the Chief Executive is working hard to strengthen the governance arrangements around capital projects.	
15	Dedicate the necessary resource to develop the housing strategy and ensure the delivery of it is corporately owned	15.1 Complete preparation of Housing Strategy Delivery Plans	Director of Pride in Place (Divisional Director – Planning, Housing and Climate Change)	September 2024	Cabinet and group leaders have been engaged with feedback used to revise the Delivery Plan where appropriate.	
		15.2 Assess resource requirements against Delivery Plans and recruit as indicated	Director of Pride in Place and Director of Finance	September 2024	Aligned to the above, approval given to recruit to the two roles already on establishment and two further roles set out in delivery plan.	
		15.3 Develop closer working relationship with Homes England, identifying linkages to a future Devon and Torbay housing approach/capital programme and associated offers and asks	Director of Pride in Place	Ongoing	Meetings with Homes England have been held between with the Cabinet Member, the Director of Pride in Place and the Chief Executive. Further meetings are planned.	
		15.4 Deliver the actions within the Council Business Plan in relation to homelessness	Director of Adult and Community Services	December 2024	The Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Action Plan is being drafted and will incorporate these actions. The draft Action Plan is due to be considered by CAD. The formal planning process will commence when the strategy consultation period ends.	

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		15.5 Delivery against targets and mitigations against risk to be considered through Performance Reports and Risk Reports	Director of Pride in Place, Director of Adult and Community Services and Director of Corporate Services	COMPLETED	Framework for this has been completed. On-going monitoring now required as business as usual.	Now embedded in BAU to ensure appropriate oversight.