



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:
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Report of: Chief Executive

Report to: Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Date of Decision: 12th March 2024

Subject: **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge:
 Sheffield City Council Progress Review Report**

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA: N/A		
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place? N/A	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken? N/A	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>		

Purpose of Report:

The LGA Peer Team that undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) of Sheffield City Council in November 2022 returned to review our progress in December 2023.

This paper provides a summary of the LGA’s feedback and recommendations from the Progress Review.

The LGA Team have recognised that there has been strong and positive progress at the council in the last year, with significant progress made against the recommendations made in the original CPC. This has included collaborating with partners to develop Sheffield’s City Goals, producing a focused Council Plan for the organisation, continuing to provide robust and stable financial management and developing mature political culture.

The full Progress Review Report from the LGA is included in Appendix 1 along with an evidenced summary of progress against the original recommendations from the CPC.

Recommendations:

That Strategy and Resources Committee:

1. Welcomes the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report (Appendix 1) which recognises the significant progress that the council has achieved in the last year.
2. Thank the members of the LGA Peer team for their time and insight in supporting the council's continuous improvement.
3. Recognises the collective effort from Members and officers to deliver vital strategic foundations in the last year – including the development of a Council Plan, proposals for a balanced budget, and collaborating with partners to set out our shared City Goals.
4. Agrees that the council should continue on its improvement journey by embedding the Council Plan across the whole organisation, using the feedback and insight in the LGA's Progress Review report to focus our transformation activity.
5. Commits to asking the LGA to undertake another Corporate Peer Challenge within the usual timescale (circa 2028).

Background Papers:

Strategic Framework 2023/24 -

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s59470/Strategic%20Framework%20202324.pdf>

Sheffield LGA Peer Corporate Peer Challenge Report, 2023 -

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s58181/9%20-%20Appendix%202%20Sheffield%20City%20Council%20-%20CPC%20FINAL%20Feedback%20Report.pdf>

Sheffield City Council Response to the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge -

<https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s58180/9%20-%20CPC%20Response%20and%20Action%20Plan%20FINAL%201.pdf>

Lead Officer to complete:-

1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications	Finance: Matthew Arden, Senior Finance Manager
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	indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Legal: David Hollis, General Counsel
		Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton, Senior Equalities and Engagement Officer
		Climate: Victoria Penman, Sustainability Programme Officer
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	Kate Josephs, Chief Executive
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Cllr. Tom Hunt, Chair of Strategy & Resources Committee
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Laurie Brennan	Job Title: Head of Policy and Partnerships
	Date: 1 st March 2024	

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Sheffield City Council Progress Review Report

1. Overview

- 1.1 Sheffield City Council invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) of the authority in November 2022. [Corporate Peer Challenges](#) are an important part of the local government sector-led approach to improvement. It is a process by which a team of Members and officers from other local authorities, supported and facilitated by the LGA, spend time in a council gathering evidence and providing an independent view of the strengths and areas for development.
- 1.2 A key part of the CPC process is for the LGA team to return to the council to undertake a progress review. This creates the space for returning to the council to discuss progress, reflect on new opportunities and challenges that may have arisen and importantly, for the LGA team to provide the council with feedback. The LGA team also contact a small number of partners to seek wider perspectives on the council's progress.
- 1.3 The LGA Peer Team returned to Sheffield City Council on 14th December 2023 to undertake a CPC Progress Review. The feedback report from the LGA Team is included in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 also includes a progress update of our original action plan which was published with the original CPC Report to S&R in March 2023.
- 1.4 The members of the original Peer Team that returned to Sheffield in December 2023 were:
- Deborah Cadman (Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council)
 - Cllr Howard Sykes (Liberal Democrats, Oldham MBC)
 - Kathryn Rees (Director of Strategy, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council)
 - Paul Clarke (Director of Programmes, Performance and Improvement, Birmingham City Council)
 - Satvinder Rana (Senior Regional Adviser, Local Government Association)
 - [*Councillor Eamonn O'Brien (Leader of Bury MBC) also joined virtually for part of the visit*]

2. Positive, evidenced progress building strong foundations for the future

- 2.1 The LGA's Progress Report in Appendix 1 provides a strong and positive statement of the Council's progress over the last 12 months. The Peer Team recognised that we have taken some fundamental steps on our improvement journey, creating strong strategic foundations upon which we can build the

organisation's future and delivering on the recommendations set out in the Corporate Peer Challenge report.

2.2 The report states:

"The peer team was pleased to see the positive way in which the council addressed the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge of November 2022, the actions it has taken so far, the evidence provided to show the progress being made, and the plans it has in place for future improvements." (p7)

2.3 In particular, the Peer Team recognised the scale of activity and progress in the last year, including:

- **City Goals** – worked collaboratively with citizens and partners to set out a shared vision for the city's future;
- **Council Plan** – developed a clear mission, purpose and outcomes for the whole organisation;
- **Ambitious leadership and governance maturity** – collaborative cross-party leadership with a maturing political culture within the Committee System of governance alongside a new, permanent Senior Leadership Team;
- **Robust financial management** – significant improvement in savings delivery and a medium-term financial plan aligned to the Council Plan;
- **Bold plans for growth and prosperity** – a developing strategic framework for growth, uniting our ambitions for a more prosperous city with aligned resources and collaborative strategic relationships;
- **Increasing confidence** – ensured that Sheffield punches its weight and is an open, active, collaborative and ambitious partner in key networks, partnerships and with investors;
- **Future Sheffield** – establishing an ambitious change programme for the council to ensure the council is in shape to deliver the Council Plan.

2.4 The above demonstrates the scale of leadership and collective effort that has undertaken by Members and officers from across the organisation, working as one team to drive improvement. It encapsulates our new mission – *together we get things done* – and provides a platform from which we can continue our success as an organisation.

3. Locking-in our progress and continuing our improvement

3.1 The LGA's Progress Report captures the scale of activity and improvement that we have undertaken in the last year. Whilst recognising the significant

progress made, we need to continue to build on this, embedding the strategic foundations we have established. This includes:

- **City Goals** – alongside communities, strategic partners in the city have made ambitious commitments to the city’s future and we need to deliver collaboratively and demonstrate impact;
- **Council Plan** – embedding our mission, policy drivers and outcomes in our organisation through an outcome-based budget that focuses our resources on priorities; setting out the detail on how we will deliver through in key strategies and directorate plans; a establishing a robust outcomes and performance framework to drive delivery and demonstrate progress to citizens;
- **Relentless focus on the customer and service quality** – improving the quality and consistency of customer experience across our services to underpin our bold visions for the city.

3.2 The LGA Peer Team have also identified a number of areas in which we have made progress against their original recommendations but we need to continue our development. These include:

- **Citizen involvement** – we have examples of good practice, including our work with partners on the development of the City Goals but there is further progress to make on establishing a clear vision of community involvement and greater consistency and quality of engagement across the organisation. This includes further developing and embedding Local Area Committees (LACs) as a key connection for local decision making and engagement with communities across the city.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion** – we have made real strides in our approach to EDI, including the new Equalities Framework, our response to the Race Equality Commission (REC) report and the recently established Race Equality Partnership for Sheffield (REPS) and the recertification of our status as a Disability Confident Employer (level 2) from December 2023. Within the council, we have also worked with staff to establish staff networks for each protected characteristic and prioritised a new approach to EDI training for all staff. However, the LGA Team recognised that we need to continue this progress and turn our Equalities Framework into delivery and impact.
- **Workforce** – we need to develop our approach to strategic workforce planning, aligned to our Council Plan and four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The recent appointment of a new Director of People and Culture represents an important step in bringing new leadership to this area.
- **Governance** – we need to continue to develop our committee system, building on the Six-Month Review of Governance and ensuring that the

good practice and approaches we have in place are resilient to political change through election cycles.

- 3.3 The above are important opportunities to continue our development as a Council. They are areas in which we are already taking action and have activity in place to deliver the necessary change, including: our EDI Framework and objectives; Governance Committee's developing work on citizen involvement; a Member-led review of committee remits; a review of LACs; and through the delivery of the Future Sheffield programme.
- 3.4 As such, the recommendations from the follow-up report will be embedded as actions in existing programmes.

4 How does this decision contribute?

- 4.1 The decision recognises the progress that we have made over the last year and urges Members and officers to build on this progress, through a strong focus on embedding and delivering our Council Plan and ambitious change programmes.

5. Has there been any consultation?

- 5.1 There has been no formal consultation on the LGA CPC Progress Review. However, as part of the Progress Review, the Peer Team spoke to a cross-party group of Members, staff from different Directorates and had conversations with several of our strategic partners to get an external perspective on the Council's progress. They also reviewed key documents which have had citizen involvement (eg. Council Plan).

6. Risk analysis and implications of the decision

6.1 Equality Implications

- 6.1.1 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. The LGA Peer Team recognised the progress that the council has made on EDI but, as the report suggests, we have build on the new Equalities Framework to deliver "palpable impacts on the ground" (p14).

- 6.1.2 As highlighted above, these are to be embedded as actions in existing programmes.

6.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 6.2.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report. Activity arising from the action plan will be contained within existing budgets. Should there be a need for additional unbudgeted spend in relation to any of the actions, this will be brought forward for decision in the normal way.

6.3 Legal Implications

- 6.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The legal implications of any of the specific actions set out in the action plan will be considered in the normal way as part of the individual decision-making process for these.

6.4 Climate Implications

- 6.4.1 There are no direct climate implications arising from this report.

7. Alternative options considered

- 7.1 As a condition of undertaking the Corporate Peer Challenge and the Progress Review, the council agreed that the Progress Review report should be considered in a public meeting.
- 7.2 The only alternative option would be to reject some or all of the feedback and recommendations in the Progress Review. However, given the positive nature of the feedback and the recognised progress made by the council against the original CPC recommendations, this option is not advised.

8 Reasons for recommendations

- 8.1 The recommendations recognise the significant progress made by the council in the last 12 months and encourage the whole organisation to continue that journey and deliver the Council Plan.