

# Shropshire Council **Corporate Peer Challenge 2018**

## Action Plan – December 2018



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## Shropshire Council Corporate Peer Challenge 2018

Between the 23 and 26 April 2018 Shropshire Council had an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. Corporate Peer Challenge is not an inspection. The Council invited the LGA to carry out the Peer Challenge, recognising that they are improvement focused and tailored to meet individual Council's needs.

Following the completion of the Peer Challenge the report was received at Council at its meeting on the 26 July 2018. This was followed by a Member workshop to identify and priorities actions, and subsequently the suggestions from Members were included in consideration by Cabinet and Directors. These have been used to develop the action plan.

### Context

In completing the Corporate Peer Challenge the Peer Team met with over 125 people, through more than 50 meetings, and completed additional research and reading and visited some key sites in the area.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge is based around 5 key components which are considered to be critical to a council's performance and improvement.

- Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
- Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
- Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
- Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
- Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

As part of the five core components, the Council asked the peer team to consider/review/provide feedback on the following:

- The Council's plan for taking out costs by transformation, in particular digital transformation which is expected to deliver £10m of savings.
- Growth and whether the Council's proposals for economic growth are robust
- The Council's Commercial Activity Plan

- How well the Council is working with its NHS and other partners for example in delivering the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

## What the Peer Team said

The Peer Team highlighted strengths of the Council as well as areas for improvement which are reflected in the recommendations. Their high-level finds were:

- There is a strong sense of identity and commitment
- The Council's leaders are ambitious for Shropshire
- There is evidence of delivering good services at low cost and some significant projects
- The Council should seize the opportunities of a new administration
- The Council needs to clarify the narrative (vision and what the council stands for) and translate into specific deliverables
- The Council should free up and create capacity
- The Council need to continue to move from operational to strategic focus
- There is still work to do to secure financial sustainability

## Corporate Peer Review Recommendations

The Corporate Peer Challenge report presented 11 recommendations to the Council.

1	Ensure you have a clear and well communicated vision which is underpinned by evidence and owned by the Cabinet and SMT.
2	Given the level of risk within the financial strategy, develop detailed implementation plans to provide assurance that savings will be achieved.
3	Strengthen the investment in the joint Cabinet/SMT Team to help deliver better outcomes and model the desired culture. Adopt a whole Council approach.
4	Be clearer about your specific priorities and outcomes, communicate them and focus resources accordingly.
5	Define and develop the Council's reputation and brand. Plan cohesively all communications and marketing.
6	Prioritise completion of key strategies and communicate them. Clarify accountability for delivery and measure impact.
7	Determine the Council's future role with Health and the STP.
8	Develop a package of training and development opportunities for Cabinet Members.
9	Continue to build relationships with businesses and other partners/stakeholders to add capacity to deliver the ambitions for Shropshire.
10	Strengthen staff engagement and recognition to support the culture required to deliver transformation.
11	Celebrate success!

## Action Plan

Action	Progress	Action taken/To be taken
<b>Area 1: Clear and well communicated Vision</b>		
1.1 Develop a new Vision	Completed	Vision developed and shared with Members during workshops. Cabinet 28.11.2018, and Council 13.12.2018.
1.2 Complete the Vision Communication Plan	Underway	Once confirmed by Council, the Vision will be shared with stakeholders setting out what it means for Shropshire and for them.
<b>Area 4: Clear Priorities</b>		
4.1 Develop priorities	Completed	Priorities developed and shared with Members during workshops. Cabinet 28.11.2018, and Council 13.12.2018.
4.2 Agree priorities	Completed	Agreement at Council 13.12.2018.
<b>Area 2: Detailed implementation plans</b>		
2.1 Develop roll-out plan for digital transformation	Underway	Defining the Council's new operating model will help to prioritise the next phases of digital transformation so that it achieves the greatest benefit for the Council and communities.
2.2 Develop IT skills training for staff	Underway	A 5-level IT literacy programme is being developed and rolled out. Level 1 has been launched and Level 2 is nearly ready to be published.
2.3 Review existing implementation plans	Underway	
2.4 Define and implement the Council's new operating model	Underway	An Opportunity Assessment has been completed to understand the potential benefits of a Council wide operating model. Next steps are being identified.
2.5 Develop an Invest to Save strategy	Underway	Invest to save budget is identified within the Financial Strategy to be drawn on to pump prime initiatives that will deliver a return on investment.

<b>Area 3: Regular Cabinet/Senior Team meetings</b>		
3.1 Weekly meetings arranged	Completed	Cabinet and Directors meetings regularly take place, usually on the Monday of each week.
3.2 Regular away-days arranged	Completed	Away-days have been held during the summer and autumn 2018, and more are scheduled.
<b>Area 5: Define and develop Brand and Communications Strategy</b>		
5.1 Develop a revised communications strategy targeted at stakeholders	Underway	A revised Communication Strategy has been drafted. The updated strategy explains how the new tools delivered through Transformation will be used to further improve our communications offer with a focus on Customer Experience.
5.2 Use councillor enquiries and customer feedback	Underway	Customer feedback (complaints, compliments and comments) is analysed and reported on an exception basis. Ongoing development of the new Customer Feedback system includes councillor enquiries in its next phase of work in the spring 2018.
5.3 Brand all projects and celebrate success	Underway	Shropshire Council has a single brand that should be consistently applied to all service areas, assets, and communication. A comprehensive forward plan of key council projects and developments will help with implementing this.
<b>Area 6: Complete key strategies</b>		
6.1 Develop an overarching strategy for market towns/ places	Underway	The new Director of Place has been and is continuing to meet with local councils. Market Town Profiles have been developed and are published.
6.2 Develop Adult Social Care Strategy	Completed	The Adult Social Care Strategy has been published
6.3 Develop an Investment Strategy	Underway	The Capital [and Investment] Strategy is being written.
6.4 Develop a Housing Strategy	Underway	The Housing Strategy is being drafted.

<b>Area 7: Determine the Council's role with Health and the STP</b>		
7.1 Determine the Council's role in the STP	Underway	Shropshire Council will take a high-level role that seeks to influence the STP rather than lead it, working with the newly appointed independent chair.
7.2 Define the Council's aspirations for the STP and Health landscape	Underway	Shropshire Council is a leading voice in the STP's Digital Enabling Group (DEG) and One Public Estate (OPE) work. The DEG has embarked on a journey to ensure technology meets the needs of a 21st Century County. The work is in three distinct areas, Upskilling staff & Residents, improving the shared Infrastructure & Security and working collaboratively to better benefit from our Data and Business Intelligence tools. OPE is identifying opportunities to use public sector assets to deliver services and support in different ways, for example the Pauls Moss development in Whitchurch which will revitalise the local area, delivering high quality retirement living accommodation and state-of-the-art health facilities.
<b>Area 8: Develop training for Cabinet members</b>		
8.1 Consult Cabinet and add to the Member Development Programme	Underway	

<b>Area 9: Continue to build relationships with businesses and other partners</b>		
9.1 Develop relationship with businesses and be open to their support	Underway	This is being undertaken on a programme by programme/ project by project basis.
9.2 Develop relationship with public sector partners and be open to their support	Underway	This is being undertaken on a programme by programme/ project by project basis.
9.3 Identify mechanisms to work with town and parish councils and support the development and implementation of the overarching strategy for market towns/places	Underway	Communities Overview Committee is developing a programme of work which includes Place Planning and the relationship with Town and Parish Councils.
9.4 Further develop relationships with the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE)	Underway	Good relationships are in place and are enabled through the VCS Assembly. A forward plan of Council changes and developments which affect or concern the VCSE will support proactive communication and collaborative working.
<b>Area 10: Strengthen staff engagement</b>		
10.1 Produce a Staff Engagement Strategy and action plan	Underway	This is being scoped and will be informed by the Staff Survey results
10.2 Produce and carry out a Staff Survey	Underway	The Staff Survey was launched mid-November 2018 and will close at the end of December 2018. Analysis will be completed in the New Year
<b>Area 11: Celebrate Success!</b>		
	Underway	