



Committee

Cabinet 8 July 20226  
Council 16 July 2026

Public

## LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Progress Review

<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Heather Kidd – Leader
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Paul Clarke – Service Director (Strategy & Change)
<b>Service Area:</b>	Strategy and Change
<b>Report Author</b>	Paul Clarke – Service Director (Strategy & Change)
<b>Officer contact details</b>	<a href="mailto:paul.clarke@shropshire.gov.uk">paul.clarke@shropshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Electoral Divisions Affected</b>	All
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Non Key
<b>Cabinet Forward Plan</b>	N/A
<b>Report considered by</b>	N/A

### 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To share the findings of a recent Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review which was undertaken on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026. The Progress Review report is included at **Appendix 1** and provides a summary the Peer Team’s feedback to the Council.

### 2. Recommendations

Cabinet/Full Council is asked to

- 2.1. Note the report of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review undertaken on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2026.
- 2.2. Note that the CPC recommendations, along with subsequent feedback from the Progress Review, will continue to inform the Council's plans for improvement and financial sustainability

### 3. Background

#### The Progress Review – summary of approach

- 3.1. In July 2025 the Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC). CPCs are part of the LGA's sector-led improvement offer to councils and involves a team of 'peers' (experienced officers and elected members from other councils) spending time onsite to review leadership, governance, performance, and capacity to improve. They provide constructive, evidence-based feedback and practical recommendations to help councils strengthen improve.
- 3.2 Part of the CPC approach is a requirement for the recipient council to receive a 'Progress Review' visit approximately ten months after the CPC. The 'Progress Review' is undertaken by members of the original peer team and focusses on reviewing progress against the recommendations made previously. The CPC made 10 recommendations to Shropshire Council, and these were included in the peer team report presented to Full Council on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2025. An action plan summarising the Council's response to those recommendations was agreed by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025 and subsequently subsumed into the Improvement Plan agreed by Cabinet and Council in December 2025.
- 3.3 The report at **Appendix 1** summarises the peer team's feedback against each of the ten CPC recommendations (from July 2025). The peer team was formed of the following officers and elected members:
  - Duncan Sharkey – Chief Executive, Somerset Council
  - Cllr Amanda Hopgood – Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, Durham County Council. Liberal Democrat member peer
  - Cllr Jason Cummings - Cabinet Member for Finance, Croydon Council. Conservative member peer
  - Perry Holmes - Director of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer), Wiltshire Council
  - Kathryn Rees - Executive Director - Corporate and Support Services, Stockport MBC
  - Simon Riley – Chief Operating Officer & S151 Officer, Cheshire West & Chester Council
  - Victoria Lawrence – Director of Adults and Health, North Lincolnshire Council
  - James Millington – Peer Challenge Manager, LGA
- 3.4 To inform the Progress Review, the Council provided the peer team with:
  - a RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rated version of the council's action plan setting out what progress had been made against original CPC recommendations

- a peer briefing that described key actions and activity the council had taken, beyond the response to recommendations, providing further context and examples of progress, improvement and developments
- a range of evidence and information including documents such as the Improvement Plan, People Plan, Financial Plan and Corporate Plan.

3.5 The peer-team carried out a number of pre-visit calls with officers of the council and key partners and others before the on-site visit on 12th May. The peer team met with a wide range of people to inform their work including:

- Members: Cabinet, opposition group leaders, the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, the Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and non-executive members from across all parties
- Officers: The Chief executive, members of the Council’s Leadership Board, and a range of managers and staff from across all areas of the council.
- External partners and stakeholders: including the Council’s external auditor and chair of the Improvement Board

#### 4 Summary of Main Proposals

4.1 Overall, the ‘Progress Review’ found the Council has made significant progress since the July 2025 CPC. The report confirms there has been clear evidence of renewed energy, pace and commitment from both political and officer leadership to address the issues identified in the original CPC. The peer team found that the Council is now demonstrating a much stronger grip on its financial position, with clear progress in financial management and governance arrangements. Peers observed a council that is stabilising and building confidence, and saw encouraging signs of improvements in culture, engagement and leadership visibility, noting that the organisational ‘feel’ was more positive and collaborative than during their previous visit.

4.2 The report also stresses that there is significant work required to translate this early progress into sustained delivery. It acknowledged that the Council remains at a relatively early stage in its improvement journey which will be a sustained and challenging one. There is a need to ensure that transformation programmes are developed and implemented at pace, that financial sustainability is clearly mapped and achieved over time, and that organisational capacity is aligned to deliver lasting change.

#### 5 Key risks and Opportunities

5.1 The main risks associated with the proposals are:

Risk	Mitigation
Not responding to the feedback provided by the LGA peer team	The areas for improvement cited in the report are things the council is already aware of and addressing  Ongoing scrutiny by the externally chaired Improvement Board

## **6 Council Priorities**

- 6.1 This report directly replates to our Corporate Plan Priority Ambition - *A Council that is financially sustainable, with clear priorities and purpose, and a workforce that is supported to excel*. This priority ambition is the aim of the Improvement Plan that was written in response to recommendations arising from the Corporate Peer Challenge that took place in July 2025

## **7 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **8 Legal and HR implications**

- 8.1 No legal or HR implications are anticipated to arise from this report.

## **9 Electoral Division Implications**

- 9.1 This proposals in this report do not impact on specific electoral divisions.

## **10 Health, Social (including “Child Friendly Shropshire”) and Economic Implications**

- 10.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

## **11 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 11.1 There are no equality and diversity implications associated with this report

## **12 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications**

- 12.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

## **13 Background Papers**

- 13.1 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report – July 2025  
13.2 LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan – October 2025  
13.3 Improvement Plan

## **14 Appendices**

Appendix 1 - LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review Report