



Report of:	Meeting	Date
Councillor Michael Vincent, Leader of the Council and Rebecca Huddleston, Chief Executive	Council	12 September 2024

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2024

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report the findings of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge prior to an action plan being developed.

2. Council priorities

- 2.1 A well-run forward-thinking council that puts customers first.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That Council notes the feedback report.

4. Background

- 4.1 Wyre Council invited the Local Government Association to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge of the council as agreed in the Council Plan.

- 4.2 The Peer Challenge team spent three days on site in June 2024 during which time they met with a range of elected members, colleagues, external partners and volunteers. They also had a visit to a number of regeneration projects and were provided with additional documentation.

- 4.3 The review focused on five key themes:

1. Local priorities and outcomes - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?

2. Organisational and place leadership - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?

3. Governance and culture - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?

4. Financial planning and management - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?

5. Capacity for improvement - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

4.4 As part of the five core elements outlined above, every Corporate Peer Challenge includes a strong focus on financial sustainability, performance, governance and assurance. With reference to theme two (organisational and place leadership) it was agreed that there would be a particular focus on economic development. With reference to theme three (capacity for improvement) it was agreed that there would be a particular focus on the council's transformation plans.

4.5 There will be a follow-up progress review which will take place in March/April 2025. The progress review provides space for a council to report to the peer team on the progress made against the corporate peer challenge recommendations, discuss early impact or learning and receive feedback on the implementation of the action plan.

5. Key issues and proposals

5.1 The report including recommendations can be seen in Appendix 1.

5.2 The report has to be published by 12 September and our action plan to respond to the recommendations has to be published by 7 November. This will be produced and presented to Cabinet in October.

5.3 **Headline findings:**

5.3.1 Wyre Council prides itself on its strong financial stewardship and in delivering good value for money services that meet the needs of communities. The latest residents survey (2022) shows 78 per cent of respondents were satisfied with their local area; just a very small dip from previous survey results in 2018 at 80 per cent. LG Inform data shows the council compares favourably to its nearest statistical neighbours across a range of indicators.

5.3.2 Officers, partners and members are positive about the new Chief Executive, her Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the changes she, alongside the political leadership, are bringing to the council. There is a positive working relationship between the council's Leader and Chief Executive. Officers and members who met with us are proud of the council and passionate about making a difference in local communities. The council is also

well respected by partners we met with from across the public, private and public sectors.

5.4 The headline recommendations are:

- 1** Articulate the council's vision and priorities for the borough and bring officers, residents and partners on your journey.
- 2** Increase the frequency and visibility of financial and performance reporting by providing published quarterly budget and performance reports as part of formal meetings of the Cabinet.
- 3** Consider how you could develop your medium-term financial planning approach in light of your strong financial position. Consider the ability this gives you to mitigate risk associated with uncertainty about future funding levels.
- 4** Implement a clear strategy to maximise the potential of your assets.
- 5** Ensure internal decision-making processes enable the council to respond swiftly when seeking to take advantage of new opportunities.
- 6** Prioritise, sequence and resource the transformation programme to support the council in achieving the commitments set out in the Council Plan.
- 7** Develop a clear plan to strengthen how you communicate your achievements to enhance your external reputation.
- 8** Set a timeframe to evaluate the Senior Leadership Team re-structure to ensure it is meeting its aim of ensuring sufficient strategic capacity to lead across all service areas.
- 9** Review opportunities for closer working, service delivery and place shaping with parish and town councils.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** The council requested the Corporate Peer Challenge and part of this process is to publish the findings.

Financial, Legal/MO, and Climate Change implications	
Finance	There are no financial implications
Legal/MO	There are no legal implications

Climate Change	There are no climate change implications
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Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
n/a		

List of appendices

Appendix 1 - LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Wyre Council 18-20 June 2024 – Feedback Report