

Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title: Corporate Peer Challenge Actions Update

Meeting/Date: Performance & Growth – 3rd September 2025

Executive Portfolio: Councillor Sarah Conboy, Executive Leader

Report by: Head of Policy, Performance and Emergency Planning

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

This report provides the Quarter 1 update for 2025/26 against the actions identified from the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) completed in May 2024. The CPC report was received by the Council on 17th July 2024.

CPC is a key part of the improvement and assurance framework for local government. The Challenge assists councils to meet part of their Best Value duty, with the UK Government expecting all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years.

The action plan developed from the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) report and recommendations address the eight formal and additional informal recommendations. The action plan contains 27 actions linked to the eight recommendations and 7 actions linked to additional comments.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth) (Environment, Customers & Partnerships) is invited to comment on the contents of the report and make any comments Cabinet.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents progress against the actions identified from the Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in May 2024 (Appendix 1) for scrutiny.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY?

- 2.1 Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is a key part of the improvement and assurance framework for local government. The Challenge assists councils to meet part of their Best Value duty, with the UK Government expecting all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years.
- 2.2 Council on 16th October requested an appropriate mechanism for reporting back to Council Members on progress with the actions identified through the Corporate Peer Challenge.

3. SUMMARY

3.1 Corporate Peer Challenge

- 3.1.1 The Peer Challenge provides an opportunity for external peers from other Local Authorities to assess how effectively we deliver our services and measure our ability to deliver on our plans and vision for the future. This will help inform and shape our improvement journey and share learning.

- 3.1.2 The Corporate Peer Challenge focused on five core components that underpin good performance that all LGA Corporate Peer Challenges cover. They are:

- **Local priorities and outcomes:** Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities?
- **Organisational and place leadership:** Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
- **Governance and culture:** Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge and scrutiny?
- **Financial planning and management:** Does the council have a clear understanding of its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
- **Capacity for improvement:** Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities?

3.2 Update on progress for reporting period

3.2.1 Formal Recommendations

There are 27 actions linked to the eight formal recommendations. The progress position for this reporting period is shown in the table below.

Recommendation	Number of completed actions	Number of action in progress	Total actions	Status
One	1		1	Completed
Two	3	2	5	Outstanding
Three	2		2	Completed
Four	5		5	Completed
Five	6		6	Completed
Six	2	1	3	Outstanding
Seven	2		2	Completed
Eight	1	2	3	Outstanding
Total	22	5	27	

- Of the 27 overall actions linked to formal recommendations; 22 actions are showing as completed, and five actions are showing as in progress.
- This progress position has improved since the previous reporting period Q4 2024/25:
 - Recommendation seven relating to support and development of a member led scrutiny work programme is completed and fully met.
 - An additional three actions have been completed since last reporting period:
 - Recommendation 6 Action: The Development of a full program of Member training,
 - Recommendation 6 Action: Recruitment of a Monitoring and Deputy Monitoring Officer,
 - Recommendation 7 Action: processes and Approach to Briefings (Relating to Scrutiny).
- Of the eight formal recommendations, five recommendations have been completed and fully met. The remaining three recommendations are outstanding with actions still to be completed:
 - **Recommendation two: Strengthen the internal approach to engagement** which ensures the voice of residents/service users are at the heart of decision making. In progress target dates in August and September 2025. 3 out of 5 actions complete.
 - **Recommendation six: Continue to strengthen the council's approach to governance, compliance and risk.** In progress target date February 2026. 2 out of 3 actions complete.

- **Recommendation eight: Define and communicate your approach to transformation/ continuous improvement.** In progress target dates in August and September 2025. 4 out of 6 actions complete.
- The status of the five outstanding actions in progress at the end of June 2025 is showing as four actions being within target and on schedule to be completed as expected, and one action showing as within tolerance of target. This action CPC026 'A new approach to service planning' has been delayed by one month with a new approach and proposals being presented to leadership team in August instead of July 2025.

3.2.2 Additional Suggestions

There are ten actions linked to the additional suggestions from the CPC. Six of these actions have been completed, with four actions in progress and to be completed. The status of the four actions in progress, three are within target and on schedule to be completed as expected, and one action showing as within tolerance of target. This action CPC034 regarding driving efficiencies and value for money across the Council has been delayed with the unit costing proposals to reviewed in September rather than originally scheduled for in July 2025.

- 3.2.2 A summary of the recommendations and actions is shown in Appendix 1, this has been sectioned into actions outstanding and actions completed. The full breakdown of actions and detail is shown in Appendix 2.

4. RISKS

- 4.1 Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is a key part of the improvement and assurance framework for local government. The Challenge assists councils to meet part of their Best Value duty, with the UK Government expecting all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years.
- 4.2 The Peer Challenge provides an opportunity for external peers from other Local Authorities to assess how effectively we deliver our services and measure our ability to deliver on our plans and vision for the future. As such the CPC and actions contribute to the governance of the Council and control of risk.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- 5.2 The Corporate Plan provides a 'golden thread' throughout the organisation, linking activity at strategic levels from Huntingdonshire Futures through to activity in service plans, filtering through to objectives set for teams.

5.3 Priority 3 – Doing our Core Work Well is focused on:



The Corporate Plan has a specific action in 2024/25:

58. Deliver an independent Corporate Peer Challenge of the Council that will assess, challenge and improve what we do

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no additional resource requirements arising from the Corporate Peer challenge or the Action Plan derived from the recommendations.

7. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 7.1 This report presents Council members with an update on the progress with Actions arising from the Corporate Peer Challenge 2024.

8. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Corporate Peer Challenge Actions Update
Appendix 2 – Corporate Peer Challenge Detailed Actions

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council 16th October – [Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge](#)

[Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, item 40.](#) PDF 109 KB

[Appendix 1 - Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan, item 40.](#) PDF 89 KB

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