

Lancaster City Council, Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan – September 2024

Recommendation	Action	By When	Actioned by	Chief Officer
<p>1. Develop a clear narrative for growth and an economic strategy that facilitates the development of quality housing, unlocks skills and jobs, contributes to tackling climate change, enables community wealth building and promotes pride in the place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare a new draft District Economic Strategy • Work with stakeholders to draft Economic Strategy • Undertake consultation on draft Economic Strategy • Adopt new Economic Strategy 	February 2025	Jonathan Noad	Jonathan Noad
<p>2. Incorporate a “call for sites” earlier than the Local Plan process would otherwise allow. This provides a pragmatic mechanism to control development and ensure that the emerging Local Plan is fully utilised as an opportunity to shape and deliver the council’s priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task officers with evaluating the feasibility of a stand-alone Call for Sites process; • Then compare to the current Call for Sites procedures to determine the most appropriate way forward. 	End November 2024	Mark Cassidy	Mark Cassidy
<p>3. Use the council’s strong reputation as a collaborative and proactive place leader to further develop partnerships. This should include additional energy and capacity being invested to work with partners where traditionally the relationship has not been as productive.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lancaster District Strategic Partnership (LDSP) was formally established on 19th August 2024 following the signing of an MOU. • Work is underway to strengthen the existing MOU with Lancaster University with a focus on utilising data, academia and research capacity and linking to policy design via a Policy Hub. • A tangible and strategic approach to working with partners is underway to strengthen collaborative work with 	Annual review March 2025	Dan Clarke	Mark Davies Alex Kinch

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	<p>stakeholders initially focusing on Health and disadvantaged communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc events to be held, e.g. Morecambe Summit in October, shared LT meetings with Westmorland and Furness Council. • Strategic Policy – Management and Oversight group established which in-part will ensure partnership working is integral to strategy development and delivery. 			
<p>4. Continue to invest in the learning and development of the new chief officer team. This should involve senior officers operating in the strategic partnership space, taking accountability for, and owning organisational improvements. Further senior officer capacity in this space will maximise the reach and convening influence of the council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuation of leadership development programme with training provider, next sessions are in January 2025. • Individual Chief Officer objectives set and development needs identified at annual conversations in April to be implemented in 24/25 • Weekly leadership team format to be amended to include quarterly extended in-person meeting to discuss strategic issues. 	April 2025	Alex Kinch	Alex Kinch
<p>5. Take steps to strengthen and further develop the Fit for the Future savings and transformation programme by:</p> <p>Aligning the budget planning and Fit for the Future process to the Council Plan and service planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 15 projects within the first phase of the Fit for the Future Programme aim to feed as much information as is available into the budget setting process from the end of October 2024. • Service Plans drafted for all directorates, linked to council plan and part of performance management framework. 	October 24 – March 25	Claire Dubelbeis and Dawn Bradley	Alex Kinch and Paul Thompson

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change management toolkit and masterclass sessions in development 			
Implementing a prioritisation framework to inform the delivery of the Capital Programme, ensuring resources are targeted where they will have the most impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All prospective capital bids to be linked to Council Plan and scrutinised by LT / Capital Assurance Group • 10 year Capital Programme to be produced • Council to approve programme as part of the budget process 	September 24 – March 25	Andrew Kipling / Shona Lee / Rebecca Lord	Paul Thompson
Accelerating the completion of the asset review and delivery of the asset management programme to reduce costs, maximise income and reduce the need for future borrowing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externally commissioned Condition Survey programme to be completed. • Review of Condition Survey data to be undertaken, analysed and presented for consideration within OBR Assets Group / Cabinet. • 10 year Capital / Revenue programme to be produced. • Property Strategy to be developed and adopted providing holistic approach to asset / estate / FM management. 	September 24 September - December 24 November 24 – February 25 April – September 25	Dan Wood Dan Wood Dan Wood Dan Wood / Stephen Morris / Russ Daley	Jo Wilkinson
Focus on the creation and implementation of a Digital and ICT strategy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear action plan is in place to review the council’s ICT infrastructure and application of digital for service delivery. This will enable a concise strategy to be developed that prioritises objectives based on capacity and resource. The strategy objectives will enable a delivery plan to be 	January 2025	Dan Clarke and Stephen Hargreaves	Alex Kinch and Paul Thompson

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	developed that aligns with the Fit For Future and transformation programme.			
6. Implement a whole council strategic approach to the use of data, performance management and financial monitoring. This will help to better inform the decision-making process, support the effective management of council business and ensure a focus on the delivery of priorities is maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refresh the council’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and implement a Power Apps (or similar solution) in which to store and query performance data to support decision making. 	March 2026	Claire Dubelbeis	Alex Kinch and Paul Thompson
7. Build on recent improvements in the approach to project and programme management ensuring greater consistency, oversight and accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a project management system, with real time reporting to provide greater consistency. Ensure each of the council’s strategic projects has a suitable governance structure in place, including forming programme and project boards with suitably trained membership where necessary. 	March 25	Claire Dubelbeis	Alex Kinch
8. Invest further in member development to support councillors (particularly new members) in their council and community leadership roles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council has recognised that to succeed in delivering high quality, cost-effective services to residents, it needs well-motivated and skilled councillors, with the expertise to drive forward the council’s agenda. 	Ongoing	Debbie Chambers and Liz Bateson	Luke Gorst

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members need to be properly trained to feel confident in their role and contribute fully. • The Member Satisfaction survey undertaken in early 2024 identified the following areas for additional training: Community Leadership, Questioning, Negotiating and Chairing skills as well as IT • We will endeavour to ensure that these topics are addressed. • Councillors will be offered opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and expertise they need to perform their roles effectively, utilising the skills of current councillors where possible. • Councillors will be encouraged to take responsibility for, and actively seek opportunities for, their own learning and development. • Training and development applies to all councillors, even those who have been councillors for some time and may feel that there is nothing new to learn. 			
<p>9. Engage with councillors and officers in work to enhance and embed a culture of effective overview and scrutiny across the council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a pre-scrutiny protocol to assist both Cabinet and Scrutiny to work together more effectively for the good of the district. 	<p>October 24</p>	<p>Debbie Chambers and Stephen Metcalf</p>	<p>Luke Gorst</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable scrutiny training for members by CfGS 			
<p>10. Accelerate the production of a refreshed equality policy that incorporates clearly defined objectives – this will help to ensure that inclusive approaches are developed internally and externally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress to-date to be reviewed and action plan to progress to be developed. 	March 25	Dawn Bradley and Dan Clarke	Alex Kinch