

**Meeting:** Overview and Scrutiny Board

**Date:** 8 October 2025

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review

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## 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1 This report sets out the feedback from the Local Government Association (LGA) following the Progress Review to consider the progress made against the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge of Torbay Council which was undertaken in April 2024. The Progress Review took place in April 2025. Included within this report is the new action plan to ensure that there remains a focus on continuous improvement.

## 2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

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- 2.1 The proposals in this report help us to deliver our vision of a healthy, happy and prosperous Torbay by ensuring we respond to the LGA's feedback, and the actions proposed enable the Council to continue to improve and strengthen its ability to deliver all of the Community and Corporate Plan themes.
- 2.2 The reasons for the proposal and need for the decision are to make available the LGA's report of the Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review and to ensure that an action plan is in place to embrace the recommendations of the LGA.

## 3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

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1. That the report from the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Review Progress Review and the associated Action Plan be noted.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review – Feedback Report

## **Background Documents**

None

# Supporting Information

## 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) offers all councils a Corporate Peer Challenge once every five years. The Challenge is an effective and well-regarded tool for improvement in local government. At the heart of this is a practitioner perspective who take a 'critical friend' approach to understanding where we are and where we can improve. This isn't an inspection, but it is an in-depth challenge. Importantly it provides an opportunity to reflect on how we are doing and receive the benefit of others experience and perspective.
- 1.2 All Corporate Peer Challenges now include a progress review which takes place approximately ten to twelve months after the original Corporate Peer Challenge. The progress review provides space for a council's senior leadership 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.
- 1.3 Torbay Council's Corporate Peer Review took place in April 2024 with our Progress Review taking place in April 2025. The peer team consisted of most of the original peer team, namely:
  - Rob Walsh – (Then) Chief Executive, North East Lincolnshire Council
  - Cllr Laura Mayes, (Then) Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Education and Skills, and Deputy Leader of the Council, Wiltshire Council
  - Cllr Gareth Roberts, Leader of the Council, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
  - Kate Martin, Executive Director, City Futures Portfolio, Sheffield City Council
  - Paul Clarke, Principal Advisor, South West Region, LGA
  - Chris Bowron – Peer Challenge Manager, LGA
- 1.4 The team provided a feedback report at the end of their progress review. They recognised that the Council had fully embraced the recommendations from the Corporate Peer Challenge in April 2024 and, in response, had driven forward change and improvement in a range of areas. Whilst the report did not include specific recommendations, elements were highlighted for further consideration by the Council and, to this end, an action plan setting out five overarching actions has been prepared (Appendix 2).
- 1.5 It should be noted that, as part of our continuous improvement journey, work has been undertaken since April 2025 on many of these actions and day-to-day delivery forms part of our "business as usual". This action plan runs until the end of the financial year but it is recognised that many actions may continue past this point. The purpose of the action plan is to ensure that significant progress is made by 31 March 2026, with future activity then forming part of the Council's service plans through which performance management will continue.

## 2. Options under consideration

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- 2.1 Not to accept the report of the LGA on their Progress Review or the resulting action plan – this is not recommended as implementation of the action plan will enable the Council to continue to improve. Alternative or additional actions could be proposed.

## 3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

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- 3.1 The action plan will be delivered within existing resources. If additional resources are required the appropriate decision making will be undertaken.

## 4. Legal Implications

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- 4.1 None

## 5. Engagement and Consultation

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- 5.1 All members of the Council were invited to share their views with the Peer Team when they visited Torbay. The Council's Senior Leadership Team and other senior officers also provided views as well as partners.
- 5.2 The Feedback Report will be published on the Council and LGA websites.

## 6. Procurement Implications

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- 6.1 None

## 7. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

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- 7.1 Not applicable

## 8. Associated Risks

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- 8.1 The main risk associated with this report is the failure to respond to the recommendations of the LGA Peer Team. This may result in the Council not responding adequately to the issues and challenges it faces. The resulting action plan helps to ensure that the Council continues to improve.

## 9. Equality Impact Assessment

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- 9.1 The LGA Corporate Health Check Feedback Report and resulting action plan provides indirect benefits for all its residents through the improvements identified.

## 10. Cumulative Council Impact

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- 10.1 Delivery against the Action Plan will be undertaken alongside other programmes of improvement work. All of these programmes aim to deliver the ambition within the Council's Community and Corporate Plan.

## 11. Cumulative Community Impacts

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- 11.1 None