



COUNCIL

**Monday, 10th November
2025**

Subject: Corporate Peer Challenge

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

This report sets out in full the Council's Action Plan in response to the Corporate Peer Challenge, which took place in January 2025. Members are asked to note the progress made against each of the recommendations

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. Receives the Action Plan in response to the recent Peer Challenge and notes the progress that has been made against each action to date.
2. Agrees that any amendments to the Action Plan be made via delegation to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

There are no legal implications arising from this report. It is a requirement on all Councils under the Best Value Duty to undergo a Corporate Peer Challenge every five years, and to publish the recommendations and action plan. In publishing this report, the Council has fulfilled this requirement.

Financial: FIN/102/26/CL/MT

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

This report contains a number of recommendations, some of which will have financial implications. Where appropriate, proposals to answer specific recommendations will be brought to the appropriate committee for decision, and the associated financial implications will be laid out in full.

Staffing:

There are no staffing implications arising from this report.

The report makes reference to a senior management restructure. Where appropriate, proposals related to staffing will be brought to the appropriate committee for decision, and the associated staffing implications will be laid out in full.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Data Protection Implications:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Health Implications:

Not applicable in the context of this report.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report :

[Peer Challenge Interim Progress Report to Full Council 08th September 2025](#)

Risk Assessment :

Not implementing an action plan that responds to the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge creates a risk that the Council fails to make progress against identified areas for improvement. This risk is mitigated by a) publishing an action plan, which demonstrates the Council's commitment to continuous learning and improvement; b) implementing the action plan and monitoring progress at regular intervals; and c) committing to a follow-up Peer Challenge in order that progress can be evaluated by an external Peer Team.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

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No

x

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

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No

x

Executive Summary

The Local Government Association (LGA) requires all councils to undertake a full Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) once every five years. West Lindsey District Council's latest CPC took place in January 2025. As part of a Corporate Peer Challenge it is necessary publish the recommendations and action plan. The CPC report was presented to the meeting of the Council held on 8th September 2025 and this report now presents the action plan and an update against the actions.

This follows the report to Council on 8th September 2025 at which the Council received a report that highlighted progress against three of the main workstreams which incorporate the majority of the eight recommendations made by the Peer Team. These workstreams are:

1. A refreshed Corporate Plan, based on the priorities of the Council through the lens of LGR.
2. Designing a new organisational structure that is aligned to the core themes of the refreshed Corporate Plan; ensuring the Council has the right capacity in the right places to deliver key priorities and prepare for the implementation of LGR.
3. Implementing a new internal governance and monitoring framework that aligns with the new Corporate Plan and streamlines decision-making.

The purpose of this report is to present the Action Plan in full, demonstrating how the Council is progressing against each of the eight recommendations made by the Peer Team. The action plan will form the basis of a Peer Challenge Progress Review, which is expected to take place in the Spring of 2026.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Between 21st and 24th January 2025, the Council participated in its latest Corporate Peer Challenge, which resulted in eight main recommendations. A copy of the LGA Peer Team's findings and recommendations is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 On 8th September 2025, Council received a report which outlined progress against the main recommendations arising from the CPC packaged into three main workstreams, these being:
 - i) Refresh the Corporate Plan
 - ii) Introduce a new senior management structure
 - iii) Implement new internal governance arrangements to streamline and focus decision-making
- 1.3 Taken together, these workstreams deliver the majority of the recommendations made by the Peer Team, and puts the Council in the strongest possible position to focus over the next three years on being a well-managed, forward-looking authority that delivers good quality services and contributes to improved outcomes for 'Our People' and 'Our Place'.
- 1.4 At the 8th September meeting, Council also resolved to undertake a Peer Challenge Progress Review in the first half of 2026. In preparation, this report presents to Council the full action plan against which progress will be monitored by the Peer Team.
- 1.5 In presenting the action plan, Council is asked to note the current progress made to date against each of the eight recommendations.
- 1.6 Following the resolution at September Full Council, officers are in contact with the Local Government Association (LGA) to make the necessary arrangements for a Progress Review. This will primarily involve a one or two day site visit where members of the original Peer Team will meet with the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and other members and officers as appropriate to assess the Council's progress against the recommendations, making further suggestions for improvement where required.

2. WLDC – Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

Peer Challenge Recommendation	Action / Update	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Status
1. Review your management structure as a priority – your Management Team may only comprise of three officers by June 2025 and may not include two of your three statutory roles. Staff are concerned about the impacts this could have on their capacity and increased workloads. A gap in the officer structure between service managers and directors is also causing a few issues. So, complete your review of, and agree, your management structure with your administration to enable you to recruit accordingly.	Work is underway to review the management structure and is an immediate priority of the Head of Paid Service to progress and conclude. A report will be presented to the Chief Officer Employment Committee during quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) 2025/26 with a view to complete by the end of quarter 4 (March 2026) The review will have regard to the actions being undertaken in connection with recommendation 4 below.	Chief Executive	April 2026	In Progress
2. Prioritise the filling of your new management structure, especially the Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer – following on from recommendation one appoint, on an initial interim basis if necessary, to ensure your statutory appointments start work as soon as possible. Prioritising recommendations on and two will build your management resilience to maintain ‘business as usual’ and progress as a Council.	The previously vacant statutory posts of Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) and Section 151 Officer have now been filled, with the new permanent Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service taking up his post on 29th September 2025.	Chief Executive	Not applicable	Complete
3. Continue discussion with the Peer Team and LGA on the best way to resolve the identified Councillor / Officer relationship challenges – these challenges are hindering progress and working relationships in some areas. Peer Team members supported some of your colleagues affected by this during their visit and will continue to do so. This will align with the work the LGA is	A number of actions are in place to continue building good working relationships between officers and members, which remain largely positive and productive. Where issues arise, these will be addressed between the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and the Monitoring Officer, supported by the appropriate policies and procedures where necessary.	Chief Executive / Leader of the Council / Monitoring Officer	Ongoing	In progress

Peer Challenge Recommendation	Action / Update	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Status
already instigating to assist this. Continue these discussions and work positively with the Peer Team and LGA to best resolve this and progress positively as a Council.	- The refreshed Corporate Plan will include a new set of shared Values and Behaviours, which all staff and members are expected to adhere to in conjunction with existing policies, procedures and codes of conduct. - The LGA has articulated its packages of support for both officers and members, which the Council continues to take advantage of in order to support staff and member training and development.			
4. Refresh your business planning – most, but not all, of your Administration's top priorities feature clearly in your latest Corporate Plan and Executive Business Plan. Resultingly, your Leader and Deputy Leader cannot be sure their priorities are being sufficiently delivered. They should proactively work with officers in your Policy & Strategy team and other officers to fully articulate and align those top priorities throughout your corporate, service and financial planning processes. This will help ensure everyone understands what will be delivered and how.	- The Council has strong existing foundations already in place to support a review and refinement of the Corporate Plan, which is currently being undertaken alongside development of the supporting strategic planning framework to facilitate and enable effective and efficient delivery. - The refreshed Corporate Plan and associated Delivery Programmes will be presented to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee in February 2026 and Full Council for approval alongside the budget Council Meeting on 2 March 2026	Head of Policy and Strategy and Director of Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services	March 2026	In progress
5. Develop plans to address the gap in your Medium-Term Financial Plan – You have identified budget gaps from 2026-2029, recognise	The impact of the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates reset on the council will be	Director of Finance and Assets	March 2026	In progress

Peer Challenge Recommendation	Action / Update	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Status
the need for a longer-term strategy and plan to address them. Your Together 24 Programme has identified actions that can assist, and your Savings Board is working to identify new income generation and further efficiency savings. Continue all this and any other work possible to balance your future budgets and enhance your financial sustainability.	known in December 2025. At this point, any gap in the Council's MTFS will become clear and appropriate plans will be put in place to address this having regard to planned Local Government Reorganisation in April 2028.			
6. Design and implement a continuous improvement / change programme – Your Together 24 Programme has delivered positive change and savings and intends to deliver more. You intend to use this work to develop a more ongoing continuous improvement programme. So, consider and agree the purpose and / or outcomes of the latter programme at the earliest opportunity, then robustly prioritise and allocate the resources it needs. This will help you develop and deliver and benefit from this approach fully.	- This recommendation was made in acknowledgement of the fact that the Council's flagship transformation programme, Together 24 ended in December 2024. The remaining recommendations from Together 24 are in the process of being implemented. - Since the Peer Challenge, the Government has invited proposals for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) across all two-tier local authority areas including Greater Lincolnshire. Resultingly, the Council's focus has necessarily shifted to LGR and will do so going forward ahead of transition to any new unitary authority. Initial focus is on the submission of proposals for LGR by the deadline of 28th November 2025. Thereafter, an LGR preparation and transition programme will be developed which will also consider the council's future continuous improvement / change programme.	Chief Executive / Head of Policy and Strategy	Ongoing	Pending government decision on LGR

Peer Challenge Recommendation	Action / Update	Responsible Officer	Target Date	Status
7. Review the number and frequency of your meetings – the number of committees, boards, meetings and report requirements are increasing. This is negatively impacting on some officer workloads and raising questions about the value of all this work. So, review the number and frequency of your meetings to ensure they are as effective as possible. You may also wish to review the purpose, objectives and other issues related to this work to make the most of this opportunity.	- In tandem with the refresh of the Corporate Plan (recommendation 4), a review of internal governance arrangements is currently underway. This primarily focuses on a) reviewing the existing Programme Boards and aligning them more closely to Corporate Plan delivery, and b) reviewing the number and purpose of Member Working Groups. The purpose of these reviews is to streamline decision-making and reporting requirements, and ensure that capacity for both staff and members is delivery focused. - The review and recommendations in relation to Member Working Groups will be presented to Council in March 2026 for decision. - The review and recommendations in relation to the Council's Programme Board arrangements will be presented to Council in March 2026 for decision.	Head of Policy and Strategy and Director of Change Management, ICT and Regulatory Services	March 2026	In progress
8. Develop your internal comms to address issues raised in the CPC report.	The approach to internal comms has been reviewed and updated, providing a more flexible, responsive and inclusive approach on key topics including LGR and development of the refreshed Corporate Plan. Our approach will continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains fit for purpose.	Assistant Director of People & Democratic Services	Not applicable	Complete