

Report title:
Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge – Kirklees Council Action Plan Progress Report

Meeting	Cabinet
Date	8 July 2025
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Carole Pattison, Leader of the Council
Key Decision Eligible for Call In	No No
<p>Purpose of Report The Local Government Association (LGA) came to Kirklees Council in November 2024 to carry out a ‘Corporate Peer Challenge’, which is a key part of the LGA’s improvement and assurance framework. The LGA produced a report following this visit, which contained eight key recommendations for action and improvement. This report is available to read on the council’s website here: LGA (Local Government Association) Corporate Peer Challenge Kirklees Council On the 8 April 2025, Cabinet approved an action plan which sets out improvement activity in response to the recommendations provided by the LGA. This report provides Cabinet with a progress update against the actions in that plan.</p>	
<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Cabinet to note the progress update against the LGA’s recommendations and our agreed action plan (see section 2.2). The full list of actions has been included at Appendix A for reference. <p>Reasons for Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As part of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process, councils are required to develop and publish an action plan to deliver improvements based upon the recommendations provided by the LGA following the visit. On the 8 April 2025, Cabinet approved an action plan which sets out improvement activity in response to the recommendations provided by the LGA. This report provides Cabinet with a progress update against the actions in that plan (see section 2.2). 	
<p>Resource Implication: The action plan will mostly be delivered with resources already existing within the council. Where additional/external resources are required to deliver specific actions within the plan, relevant council process and procedure rules will be followed, with value for money clearly demonstrated.</p>	
Date signed off by <u>Executive Director</u> & name	Rachel Spencer-Henshall – Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director for Public Health and Corporate Resources 23 June 2025

<p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance?</p>	<p>Kevin Mulvaney 23 June 2025</p>
<p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal and Commissioning (Monitoring Officer)?</p>	<p>Samantha Lawton 23 June 2025</p>

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: Not applicable

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? No personal data is included in this report.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) came to Kirklees Council between 26 - 29 November 2024, to carry out a 'Corporate Peer Challenge'.
- 1.2 The LGA produced a report, which outlines feedback following the visit, and contains eight key recommendations for improvement. This report is available to read on the Council's website here: [LGA \(Local Government Association\) Corporate Peer Challenge | Kirklees Council](#). On the 8 April 2025, Cabinet approved an action plan which sets out improvement activity in response to the recommendations provided by the LGA.
- 1.3 This report presents to Cabinet, a progress update against the action plan that was approved in April. The action plan aims to deliver a range of corporate, and service led improvements in response to the key recommendations provided by the LGA. This report provides an overview of progress made so far against the LGA's recommendations, and our agreed action plan. The full list of actions has been included at **Appendix A** for reference.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 The LGA requires every member council to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge at least once every five years, and by doing so, this process is recognised by the LGA as a way to assist councils in meeting their Best Value Duty.
- 2.1.2 During the visit, local government peers provide feedback to the council on a range of corporate issues, based on evidence and information that is provided to them, and interviews and focus groups that took place with a range of staff, councillors, partners and other key stakeholders.
- 2.1.3 Following a Corporate Peer Challenge, a report outlining the key findings and recommendations from the peer team is shared with the council. In the spirit of openness and transparency, councils are required to publish this report within three months of the visit. The council is also required to publish an action plan, setting out key actions in response to the recommendations contained within the report, no later than five months following the visit.

- 2.1.4 All Corporate Peer Challenges now include a progress review which takes place approximately ten months after the original visit. 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 received feedback on the implementation of the action plan.
- 2.1.5 Following the progress review, a report outlining the peer team's findings is shared with the council. The council is then required to publish this report, no later than 12 months after the original visit.
- 2.1.6 All Corporate Peer Challenges focus on five core elements, as well as any additional local areas of focus or specific challenges requested by the council. The five core elements are:
- Local priorities and outcomes
 - Organisational and place leadership
 - Governance and culture
 - Financial planning and management
 - Capacity for improvement
- 2.1.7 Considering our story so far, and the challenges we were grappling with at the time, we asked the peer team to focus fully on the five core areas of inquiry, as these were the areas where we felt we would get the most useful insights.
- 2.1.8 Once the LGA report was received by the council following the visit, an action plan was produced. The suggested areas of focus for actions were discussed and shared with members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, and Political Group Leaders to help develop the plan. The plan was also discussed at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the 4 April 2025, seeking feedback and engagement with delivery and reporting against the action plan once it is approved.
- 2.1.9 Cabinet approved the action plan on the 8 April 2025. Following this, the action plan was then presented to Council on 23 April 2025 for noting.
- 2.1.10 In September 2025, the Local Government Association will come back to Kirklees to undertake a progress review. Following the progress review, a report outlining the peer team's findings will be shared with the council. The council will then publish this report, no later than 12 months after the original visit.
- 2.1.11 When the action plan was approved in April, it was agreed that in advance of the LGA progress review, an initial progress update would be provided to Cabinet in July 2025, and then also discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

2.2 **Overview of delivery progress against the action plan**

- 2.2.1 In total, there are 42 actions included in the action plan against the LGA's key recommendations.
- 2.2.2 Progress updates for each action were sought from services in June, so the following updates provides a snapshot of progress at that point in time. Within **Appendix A**, ratings which reflect the delivery status have also been provided against each action. This reflects current confidence levels in completing delivery against the timescale agreed in the action plan. Colour codes are as follows:

- Blue (Fully completed)
- Green (on track for delivery)
- Amber (delivery may slip)
- Red (delivery has slipped)

2.2.3 Three actions have now been **fully completed** within the specified timescales in the action plan:

Action number 2.1 – Implement a new approach for resourcing transformation activity, with a focus on better outcomes and further efficiencies, including tracking the benefits and impacts of the initiatives which are delivered.

- The transformation reserve for 25/26 has now been launched, with a total allocation of up to £2.5m to support key transformation priorities aligned with council strategic goals, with nine business cases having been approved for funding. Ongoing monitoring for delivery of these priorities is planned and will be integrated into the quarterly transformation reporting cycle. Services will demonstrate progress against agreed savings, delivery milestones and impact.

Action number 6.1 - Update and Improve awareness of the member-officer protocol across both members and officers and continue to identify issues and required action through reports to standards committee every six months.

- The updated protocol was approved at the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee on the 7 March 2025, and subsequently approved at the Annual General Meeting of Council on the 21 May 2025. Work to improve awareness of the protocol amongst members will continue, and ongoing reporting against the protocol will now commence on a 6 monthly basis via the Standards Committee.

Action number 6.2 – Make further improvements in the clarity of decision-making reports, including improving templates, process, and guidance.

- Decision making report writing guidance for council officers has now been reviewed and refreshed, as well as changes to the templates officers use to write reports. Online training courses have also been developed and are now being used by officers. Governance officers are now attending Senior Leadership Meetings in order to reinforce and promote good governance to officers.

2.2.4 Delivery of all the remaining 39 actions has begun. As of June 2025, we are confident that **38 of these actions are fully on track for delivery** within the specified timescales in the plan.

2.2.5 By the time of the next progress update (September 2025) we are expecting an additional 8 actions to have been fully completed, in advance of the LGA progress review visit.

2.2.6 Delivery of the **Assets Property Transformation programme**, (action number 2.6), has been delayed slightly, however mitigations are in place to bring this back on track within the agreed timescales in the plan. The Assets Property Transformation programme is a large, and complex programme of work. The programme will support the Council in meeting its current and future property needs.

Activity includes the commissioning of an external benchmarking exercise, an assets disposal programme, and supporting asset utilisation activities (for example IT

infrastructure). Successful delivery of the programme is predicated on a number of external factors, for example processes and outcomes relating to the sale of buildings, or the management of external contractors. The overall programme is progressing well, with some external factors contributing to potential delays. A forward plan is due to be completed in July. The Benchmarking exercise is on track to start late June/ early July this will then lead to a period of intensive interviews, consultation and data analysis to support the programme moving forward.

2.2.7 In terms of the 38 **on-track actions**, the below provides an overview of progress with these against each of the key recommendations made by the LGA. The full list of agreed actions has been provided at **Appendix A** to this report for reference.

Recommendation 1: Continue to keep a grip on the council's budget. The financial challenges continue to be significant and require ongoing focus to deliver planned savings and replenish reserves. A longer-term plan needs to be developed to deliver a more sustainable financial situation for the council.

The Council continues to be confident it has a good grip on delivery of the Council's budget. Processes related to ongoing financial monitoring have been reviewed and are currently being implemented – for example, enhanced capital delivery monitoring will commence from Q1 of the current financial year. We have reviewed and completed a forward plan for the cross-party budget working group and have begun the development of plans for budget engagement around next year's annual budget.

We're on track for publishing a 'budget book' in July, which will provide a breakdown of all service budgets to support greater transparency and better service planning. We are also on track for developing a 3-year budget as part of September's MTFS (Medium-term Financial Strategy), which will also include an updated strategy for sustainably increasing reserves over time. We are currently developing detailed analysis around the financial implications of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (announced on the 11 June) – and will be inputting to the Government consultation via our links to SIGOMA (a national representative body relating to Local Government finance).

Recommendation 2: Apply successes and learning from transformation across the council more widely. There is a range of good projects and approaches from transformation, but they tend to remain within services. There are successes in children and adults social care and the learning from these approaches could be better understood by wider council services to help drive their improvement.

Work to apply our successes and learning from transformation more widely across the council is progressing well. We have already implemented a new approach to resourcing new transformation activity, which will help activity to focus on better outcomes and the achievement of further efficiencies. We have drafted an action plan for more effective support and engagement with the third sector, and this is on track to be approved by the Executive in July.

The Council's corporate Programme Management Office is leading an initiative to enhance awareness of our existing change and project management resources on the intranet and on internal training systems. This work is underway and continues to be developed. We have also begun work on identifying opportunities for partnership-led transformation through the development of a new partnership framework, and an internal benchmarking exercise. We have also begun work to develop a clearer vision for transformation, as part of work to produce the next iteration of the Council Plan for the forthcoming financial year.

Recommendation 3: The council has some large-scale regeneration plans agreed with delivery underway. Revisit the plans to ensure they are affordable, viable and deliverable in the current financial context. Part of this consideration should include the balance of housing provision.

Our plans to review the Capital programme are underway, and work has commenced to identify projects that can be re-profiled to a more realistic delivery timeframe (or removed altogether). Benchmarking will also be carried out with Yorkshire and Humber Councils. Our Review of phase 5 of the Cultural Heart is underway and on time. The review is a two staged process, and currently the last stage of this review is anticipated to be completed by September 2025. A supporting programme of work – a ‘Cultural Heart Mobilisation Plan’ has now begun. This programme will help to manage associated risks and opportunities related to delivery of the programme in a coordinated way – and the Council’s Executive will be provided with an update on this activity in July. We have also completed a Capital Governance Review of our capital related governance mechanisms, and recommendations from that review are now being implemented to improve structures and reporting arrangements to support more effective decision making.

We have now also drafted an approach to deciding on our priorities for securing additional external investment. This approach is due to be considered for approval by the Executive in July, and work to develop these priorities will start following this and is on track to be completed by the end of the financial year.

Developing a longer-term strategy to increase residential provision in our town centres, and the refresh of our town centre blueprints, are both actions that will be delivered over a longer-term timescale, however these are now both underway. These actions will be delivered through the development of the Housing Strategy, the update to the Local Plan, and the development of a 10-year Regeneration Plan for Dewsbury alongside a new Strategic Regeneration Framework for Dewsbury.

Recommendation 4: Explore planning in a more expansive and strategic way, including the role it can play in delivering the housing aspects of the new local plan, nationally determined local targets and how the council will deliver much-needed new homes.

Work is continuing to understand and analyse the impact of national policy changes related to planning, which will have far-reaching and complex implications for the way in which local authorities undertake planning duties. Work to develop a new Housing Strategy for Kirklees is underway, and the strategy is on track for completion by the end of the year. Our plan to re-fresh the next iteration of the Local Plan (Local Plan 2) – is on track for completion by December 2027, however implementation of this is predicated on multiple layers of stakeholder engagement.

Recommendation 5: Work more closely with businesses and economic partners to define potential growth, skills and investment opportunities in Kirklees.

Work to complete and begin delivery of the Inclusive Economic Strategy is on track, and the final document will be submitted for approval by Council in July. Once approved, work to engage with businesses on the delivery of the strategy will commence and will be supported by the delivery of an Economic Summit at the end of the year. This work will also feed into a wider review of economic partnership arrangements. Feedback from the Economic Summit events will be used to further develop proposals for improved engagement with business and economic partners moving forward.

The council has engaged with work currently underway at a West-Yorkshire level to help identify areas for further strengthening the regional voice of the third sector. Proposals have been developed by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and these will be shared back with local authorities for further engagement over the coming months. Locally, we are underway with delivering a programme of events for local businesses to help them connect to local third sector organisations, to support business aspirations for Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value. Events delivered so far have been successful and well attended, and there are several further events planned over the coming months.

Recommendation 6: At the political level there has been some instability over the past 18 months. Given the position of no overall control, Members need to be mindful of their roles, responsibilities and work collaboratively to put communities and residents first. The council needs to keep working at good governance across a range of issues, including clarity of reports, Member development programmes and councillors' behaviours.

Two of the four actions associated with this recommendation have already been completed (see section 2.2.3 in this paper). Work to review and improve officer training and development initiatives for working with members, is now underway, and is on track for completion by the end of the financial year. Initial discussions have now also taken place with Governance, and Cllr Support functions, to develop and launch a new Member Development Framework. The plan for the framework, is to consult further with members, to develop an updated offer, particularly in advance of expected high numbers of new members elected in 2026 due to the all-out elections.

Recommendation 7: Considerable progress has been made in some service areas, with tangible progress, for example in children's services. Maintain this focus so that performance continues to improve.

Work to develop an overview of external inspections and associated improvement plans, and work to develop service planning and guidance has begun, and these will be completed on time by September 2025.

The revised approach to corporate quarterly performance monitoring and reporting, which had only recently been introduced at the time of the peer challenge, was embedded throughout 2024/25. The approach incorporates monitoring of delivery against the priorities within the Council Plan, informing strategic decision making. The council's approach to quarterly check and challenges has recently been reviewed and changes to the process are currently being implemented – which includes a more effective approach to reviewing performance against financial information and key risks at a service level. The approach to corporate quarterly report will be continuously reviewed and refined throughout 2025/26.

The Council continues to ensure effective delivery and performance monitoring associated with Children's social care, and across Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods.

For children's social care, we have recently recruited to a new quality assurance delivery manager role. The additional capacity is supporting more effective audit and quality assurance processes, and moving forward, we can now undertake a greater range of auditing process across key thematic areas. Work to progress the development of a wide range of routes into social work is also progressing well, for example the social work

apprenticeship route which continues to have active cohorts to support improvements in social care performance over the long-term.

Within Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods, we have now got refreshed governance arrangements in place, with regular reporting having commenced to ensure a high level of assurance and challenge is in place for required improvements to service delivery over the long-term.

Recommendation 8: Use this peer challenge as an opportunity to pivot towards a longer horizon for key decisions.

In support of the peer challenge action plan, and the recommendations within it, we have now launched and begun delivery of the 'Our Council' culture refresh initiative. The initiative was launched in April and communications activities have begun, with further work planned to embed and action the key principles as part of the working culture of the council workforce over the summer. As part of the Our Council initiative, a programme of work is also underway to support the delivery of a more customer-focused culture, the development of shared customer expectations, and to make it easier for residents and customers to engage with the council.

Work is also underway, and on track, with developing a new Digital Strategy, with a stakeholder engagement plan having commenced.

Work to review our approach to our high-level strategic framework is now underway, which will culminate in the production of a new Partnership Framework, and a new, longer-term Council Plan aligned to new multi-year financial settlements for Local Government. This work is on track to be completed by March 2026. Work to develop initial thinking, and an approach to wider engagement, is underway and will be considered by the Executive in June / July. Conversations with partners have also commenced, to support the development of a scope, expectations and appetite amongst partners for creating a shared leadership and management development programme and approach.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

The action plan sets out some important next steps for the council and builds on recent work to improve and strengthen our position into the future. It will support the council to deliver on the priorities set out within the refreshed 2025/26 Council Plan, which was agreed by Council on the 5 March 2025. Within the 2025/26 Council Plan, the development and delivery of the LGA Peer Challenge action plan has been included as a 'Area of Focus' within the 'Getting the basics right – a balanced budget and a modern organisation' priority, and delivery of the action plan will be reported via regular progress and delivery reports relating to the 2025/26 Council Plan.

3.2 Financial Implications

One of the five core areas of focus for the Corporate Peer Challenge is around 'Financial Planning and Management'. The first recommendation provided in the LGA report outlines how the council should develop a longer-term plan to deliver a more sustainable financial situation. As such, the action plan provided at **Appendix A**, includes some key actions to deliver upon this recommendation.

3.3 Legal Implications

The LGA requires every member council to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge at least once every five years, and by doing so, this process is recognised by the LGA as a way to assist councils in meeting their Best Value Duty. The Best Value Duty is a statutory requirement contained within Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999.

3.4 Other (e.g., Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment or Human Resources)

The action plan presented at **Appendix A**, relates to a wide range of different areas of activity that the council delivers.

Integrated Impact Assessments for individual changes and projects referred to within the actions will be developed as required.

The council maintains a corporate risk register, and risks for individual areas of activity within the action plan will be managed accordingly and as part of the established corporate process.

Some of the actions within the action plan, relate to making improvements to ways of working for council employees. Most notably, the 'Our Council' culture reset initiative (included as an action against recommendation 8) will support positive changes in the way that all council employees work, for example by supporting an improved focus on the needs of our customers, encouraging better budget management, and further work to embed our corporate values of kindness, inclusion and pride.

4 Consultation

Corporate Peer Challenges involve extensive consultation, which is carried out by the Peer Team during the week of the visit. This is so the team can gather evidence and formulate their feedback. The LGA Peer Team spent four days onsite at Kirklees Council during which they:

- Gathered evidence, information, and views from more than 35 meetings, in addition to further research and reading. Most of these meetings were face to face, and some were conducted via MS Teams.
- Spoke to more than 140 people including a range of council staff together with Members and external stakeholders.
- Attended meetings at Dewsbury Town Hall.

5 Engagement

- 5.1 Relevant council officers (including Service Directors and the Executive Leadership Team) and the Cabinet, have been engaged in the development of the action plan.
- 5.2 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee were also engaged in the development of actions for the action plan, at a meeting on the 20 March 2025. Group Leaders were also engaged and were asked for feedback on development of the actions. Feedback from Scrutiny and Group Leaders was received and considered by the Executive.
- 5.3 This update report will also be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on the 11 July for feedback and comment.

6 Options

6.1 Options considered

Our recommendation to Cabinet is to note the progress update contained within this paper, specifically within section 2.2 of this report.

6.2 Reasons for recommended option

As part of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process, councils are required to develop and publish an action plan to deliver improvements based upon the recommendations provided by the LGA following the visit.

On the 8 April 2025, Cabinet approved an action plan which sets out improvement activity in response to the recommendations provided by the LGA. This report provides Cabinet with a progress update against the actions in that plan (see section 2.2).

7. Next steps and timelines

The LGA will visit the Council in September 2025, to carry out a progress review. This progress review will enable the council to report to peers on the progress made against the recommendations, discuss early impact or learning, and receive feedback on the implementation of the action plan.

The Council and the LGA will then publish a progress review report by the end of November 2025, which must be within 12 months of the initial Corporate Peer Challenge visit.

8. Contact officers

Stephen Bonnell, Head of Policy, Partnerships, and Corporate Planning
Stephen.Bonnell@kirklees.gov.uk

Michelle Hope, Corporate Planning and Coordination Manager, Policy, Partnerships and Corporate Planning
Michelle.Hope@kirklees.gov.uk

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

The LGA's feedback report, has been published on the Council's website here:

[LGA \(Local Government Association\) Corporate Peer Challenge | Kirklees Council](#)

Cabinet paper which contains the approved action plan:

[Peer Challenge Action Plan - Cabinet Paper - 8 April 2025 v2.pdf](#)

10. Appendices

Appendix A: LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Kirklees Council Action Plan

11. Service Director responsible

Andy Simcox, Service Director Strategy and Innovation

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Kirklees Council Action Plan

Recommendation 1

Continue to keep a grip on the council's budget. The financial challenges continue to be significant and require ongoing focus to deliver planned savings and replenish reserves. A longer-term plan needs to be developed to deliver a more sustainable financial situation for the council.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery status
1.1	Ensure monthly and quarterly financial monitoring to officers and Members continues to be clear, accurate and enables responsive and timely decision-making to support effective service delivery and planned savings.	April 2025 – March 2026	Service Director, Finance	Green
1.2	Continue to strengthen and develop our cross-party working group and budget consultation to support ongoing financial monitoring and the development of the next budget.	April 2025 - March 2026	Service Director, Finance	Green
1.3	Publish a 'budget book' – which provides a breakdown of all service budgets to support greater transparency and challenge and ensure a shared understanding of service budgets across the council.	August 2025	Service Director, Finance	Green
1.4	Within the next MTFS (Medium-Term Financial Strategy) update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a detailed 3-year budget for each service, to support longer term financial planning and stability for services across the council. Continue to sustainably increase reserves over the coming years, including unallocated reserves. 	September 2025	Service Director, Finance	Green
1.5	Implement an annual benchmarking exercise to help with the identification of further opportunities for transformation and efficiencies.	September 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green

Recommendation 2

Apply successes and learning from transformation across the council more widely. There is a range of good projects and approaches from transformation, but they tend to remain within services. There are successes in children and adults social care and the learning from these approaches could be better understood by wider council services to help drive their improvement.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery status
2.1	Implement a new approach for resourcing transformation activity, with a focus on better outcomes and further efficiencies, including tracking the benefits and impacts of the initiatives which are delivered.	April 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Blue
2.2	Develop and begin delivery of a new plan for more effective support and engagement with the third sector working closely with our local infrastructure and voice organisation (Third Sector Leaders) to identify ways to enable communities to do more for themselves.	July 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
2.3	Further develop our council-wide approach to resourcing, connecting, and communicating about transformation initiatives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening connections and coordination between transformation initiatives. • Sharing more widely the learning, methodologies, and approaches. • Communicating our transformation successes to Members and officers, to help build a culture of ongoing transformation and support shared learning. 	September 2025 (develop) December 2025 (implement)	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
2.4	Identify opportunities for partnership-led transformation in Kirklees and ensure these are being effectively managed.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
2.5	Develop and describe a council-wide transformation vision for long-term transformation across the whole council connected to the next, longer-term Council Plan.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
2.6	Deliver the Assets Property Transformation Programme, using external advice to support implementation.	March 2026	Service Director, Development	Amber

Recommendation 3

The council has some large-scale regeneration plans agreed with delivery underway. Revisit the plans to ensure they are affordable, viable and deliverable in the current financial context. Part of this consideration should include the balance of housing provision.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery status
3.1	Review the capital programme, to make sure we have affordable plans, including considering an externally led capital plan review.	September 2025	Service Director, Finance	Green
3.2	Complete the review of phase 5 of Our Cultural Heart to ensure we maximise value for money whilst maintaining our ambition of long-term benefits for people, businesses and the local economy.	September 2025	Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green
3.3	Analyse the direct and indirect costs and implications for our major regeneration projects across all council services and directorates and continue to deliver a 'Cultural Heart mobilisation' plan to manage associated risks and opportunities in a cross-directorate coordinated way.	March 2026	Service Director, Finance/ Service Director, Strategy and Innovation/ Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green
3.4	Conduct a governance review to ensure the right governance mechanisms are in place to support ongoing, effective delivery monitoring of our capital plans and programmes. Implement refreshed governance arrangements.	March 2026	Service Director, Finance	Green
3.5	Decide priorities for securing further external investment funding - including considering the balance of housing provisions alongside other types of development and investment – and proactively monitor external funding opportunities to support these priorities.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation / Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green
3.6	Develop a longer-term strategy and plan to support the development of residential provision in our town centres, linked to the update of the Local Plan.	March 2027	Service Director, Development	Green
3.7	Refresh all our town centre blueprints and smaller centre regeneration plans to reflect the current financial context and consider future plans beyond the current timescales, ensuring they are fit for the future and ready for changes in transport, technology, and the economy.	March 2027	Service Director, Development	Green

Recommendation 4

Explore planning in a more expansive and strategic way, including the role it can play in delivering the housing aspects of the new local plan, nationally determined local targets and how the council will deliver much-needed new homes.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery status
4.1	Monitor and analyse the impact of national policy changes related to planning (including more powers for Combined Authorities), and ensure we are prepared to benefit, including through further workforce development to ensure we have sufficient capacity and skills.	December 2025	Service Director, Skills and Regeneration/ Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
4.2	Develop a new Housing Strategy for Kirklees, setting out a long-term approach for the types of housing Kirklees will need in the future, including the balance across market, affordable, and social housing.	December 2026	Service Director, Development	Green
4.3	Continue to progress work associated with the implementation of the next refresh of our Local Plan ('Local Plan 2'), including local engagement and cross-party working.	December 2027	Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green

Recommendation 5

Work more closely with businesses and economic partners to define potential growth, skills and investment opportunities in Kirklees.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery status
5.1	Building on partner engagement, begin delivery of the Inclusive Economy Strategy.	August 2025	Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green
5.2	Deliver a Kirklees economic summit, bringing together key businesses and economic partners to develop tangible actions for delivering the Inclusive Economy Strategy and responding to economic opportunities across Kirklees.	By December 2025	Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green
5.3	Review the economic partnership arrangements, including engagement mechanisms, identifying any areas for improving collaboration and communication, and decide actions to progress these.	December 2025	Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green
5.4	In the context of increasing powers and flexibility at a West Yorkshire level, support better connections between the Combined Authority and local third sector organisations with a role supporting economic growth, skills, and investment. This includes organisations indirectly supporting the economy through improving health and wellbeing.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
5.5	Deliver a programme of events for local businesses helping them connect to local third sector organisations to support their aspirations for Corporate Social Responsibility and Social Value, including volunteering and mentoring.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation/ Service Director, Skills and Regeneration	Green

Recommendation 6

At the political level there has been some instability over the past 18 months. Given the position of no overall control, Members need to be mindful of their roles, responsibilities and work collaboratively to put communities and residents first. The council needs to keep working at good governance across a range of issues, including clarity of reports, Member development programmes and councillors' behaviours.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery Status
6.1	Update and improve awareness of the Member-officer protocol across both Members and officers and continue to identify issues and required action through reports to standards committee every six months.	May 2025	Service Director, Governance and Commissioning	Blue
6.2	Make further improvements in the clarity of decision-making reports, including improving templates, processes, and guidance.	July 2025	Service Director, Governance and Commissioning	Blue
6.3	Review and improve existing officer training and development initiatives for working with and alongside Members, to help develop a shared understanding of what working together looks like.	January 2026	Service Director, Governance and Commissioning	Green
6.4	Develop and launch a new Member Development Framework, and associated action plan, which aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bring together existing support • identify opportunities for further support • This will support new and existing Members. 	January 2026	Service Director, Governance and Commissioning	Green

Recommendation 7

Considerable progress has been made in some service areas, with tangible progress, for example in children's services. Maintain this focus so that performance continues to improve.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery Status
7.1	Develop an overview of external inspections, and any associated improvement plans to ensure there is sufficient planning and coordinated follow up. This includes inspections related to CQC, SEND, and the Regulator for Social Housing. Develop a set of principles for engaging with inspection regimes.	September 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
7.2	Ensure an effective, ongoing approach to monitoring and reporting performance across the council, that effectively informs decision making around improving performance.	September 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
7.3	Support and guidance provided to services around service planning, supporting service delivery against the priorities set out within the Council Plan and associated annual budget.	September 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
7.4	Ensure effective delivery and performance monitoring across children's social care, to ensure recent progress and improvements are maintained over the long-term.	Review by December 2025	Service Director, Child Protection and Family Support	Green
7.5	Ensure effective delivery and performance monitoring across Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods, to ensure required improvements are delivered over the long-term.	Review by December 2025	Service Director, Homes and Neighbourhoods	Green

Recommendation 8

Use this peer challenge as an opportunity to pivot towards a longer horizon for key decisions.

Actions agreed by Cabinet on 8 April 2025

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Responsible Service Director	Delivery status
8.1	Launch and begin delivery of the 'Our Council' culture refresh in support of the peer challenge action plan and other improvements.	April 2025 – September 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
8.2	Review current strategic partnership commitments as set out within the current Council Plan, with a view to developing a refreshed Partnership Framework for a longer-term period. This will include engagement across key partnerships, and potentially the development of a supporting action plan.	By November 2025	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
8.3	Ensure we continue to monitor national policy changes and implications across all council directorates (e.g. devolution, local government finance, and planning) to maximise the benefits for Kirklees residents.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
8.4	Deliver the customer expectations programme, which aims to deliver a customer-focused culture, shared customer expectations, and make it easier for residents and customers to engage with the council.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
8.5	Develop a new longer-term Council Plan, supported by the implementation of multi-year local funding settlements and more flexible West Yorkshire funding, to maximise the benefits for Kirklees residents.	By March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
8.6	Develop a new Digital Strategy, setting out how we will maximise the opportunities for technology and data to support our outcomes over the longer-term, including through considering the skills and capabilities we need in the organisation and the role of artificial intelligence.	March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green
8.7	Work with partners on shared leadership and management development programmes for more efficient leadership development and support connections across our organisations.	September 25 - March 2026	Service Director, Strategy and Innovation	Green