

Appendix B – Telford & Wrekin Council Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

Key

- Blue – Implemented
- Green – on target
- Amber – in progress
- Red – Not started

Ref	CPC Recommendation	Current position	Action to be taken to address recommendation	Lead(s)	Due date
Local Priorities and Outcomes					
3.1	Strengthen Strategic Alignment: Strengthen alignment between the Corporate Plan and Vision 2032 by embedding clearer commitments to addressing inequalities, inclusive growth, and long-term outcomes. Make equalities explicit and measurable across all service areas to ensure a consistent approach.	<p>Vision 2032 sets out a shared vision for the borough developed with key strategic partners following a period of public and stakeholder engagement. The Council Plan sets out the Council's medium term priorities which contribute to the delivery of the Vision.</p> <p>Vision 2032 sets out a shared partnership vision for a more inclusive Borough. The Council's current Council Plan also includes priorities and actions aimed at addressing inequalities. For example "every child, young person and adult lives well", "All neighbourhoods are a great place to live".</p> <p>Both the Council Plan and Vision 2032 are overarching strategic plans with a number of more detailed strategies and plans that sit beneath them. These more detailed plans and strategies have a focus on improving long-term outcomes for the Borough through reducing inequalities and these are monitored through the setting of measurable targets. Examples of these plans and strategies include the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the</p>	<p>Plans were already in place to commence a review of the Council Plan during 2026 with the objective of publishing a new three year Council Plan for 2027/28 to 2029/30 alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy in January 2027. This will be built upon a programme of engagement and will align the Council Plan with Vision 2032 which has also been informed through a programme of engagement and consultation. This planned work will provide an opportunity to enhance the link between the Council Plan and Vision 2032 as recommended in the CPC report.</p> <p>The work programme is already in place to bring this matter to a completion with the first phase of work being completed by June 2026.</p>	Senior Management Team (SMT)	June 2026 (phase 1)

Ref	CPC Recommendation	Current position	Action to be taken to address recommendation	Lead(s)	Due date
		Youth Strategy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.			
5.1.1	<p>Strengthen the link between investment and reducing inequality: Ensure future investment plans clearly demonstrate how they will improve outcomes in health, education, employment, and housing.</p>	<p>Our current investment plans are for the delivery of new high-quality housing and the creation of new employment floor space as well as supporting in improvement and capacity in the education estate. This includes the delivery of the new Telford Sixth in an accessible location in Telford Town Centre and the adjacent Quad which is delivering both education floor space and links with business. The multi-functional Quad also provides space for start-up businesses to develop and grow into larger commercial premises in the future. These investments are based on sound financial decisions whilst creating opportunity for residents.</p> <p>We have worked with Homes England (the Government's national regeneration agency) to explore opportunities for physical regeneration. To date, that has led to funding being secured and works undertaken to establish the financial viability gap that would need to be overcome to undercome the required regeneration.</p> <p>The Council was successful in securing £20m Pride in Place funding to invest into key areas of our south Telford new town estates. This has been matched with additional Council funding of £10m to expand the reach of that intervention. This investment is aimed at improvements within the South Telford area to address inequalities and will be based upon a foundation of consultation and engagement with residents in those areas.</p>	<p>As well as continued engagement with Homes England and government in respect of funding to enable physical regeneration of the South Telford new town estates.</p> <p>The Health & Wellbeing Strategy priority programmes are clearly impacting on health outcomes and reducing inequalities, including healthy weight, smoking and drug and alcohol use programmes.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Health development, overseen by the Telford & Wrekin Integrated Place Partnership (TWIPP), has a clear focus on reducing health inequalities. During 2025/26 a new set of prevention initiatives and programmes is being delivered, with clear target inequalities, to narrow the gap in health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. This is also part of the Vision 2032 locality pilot programme. Neighbourhood Health Plans will be agreed in 2026/27 to shape the shifts to prevention and delivery of healthcare in the community, overall reducing the gap in healthy life expectancy is a clear goal.</p>	SMT	Review of Investment Strategy - June 2026

Ref	CPC Recommendation	Current position	Action to be taken to address recommendation	Lead(s)	Due date
		<p>Through interventions such as Safer Stronger Communities, the Neighbourhood Health agenda, including provision of Live Well Hubs and Family Hubs in areas facing greatest social inequality, the Council has already invested to improve outcomes across health and education. Supported through government funding, the additional investment into the Job Box service has led to the development of the Access to Work scheme which is, again, aimed at removing barriers to employment. The Council has also directly invested into local buses to make key employment sites more accessible at lower cost. Continued investment into NuPlace and Telford & Wrekin Homes is ensuring a pipeline of good quality housing both at market and affordable/social rents.</p>			
Organisational and Place Leadership					
3.2	<p>Economic Positioning and Inclusive Growth: Commission an independent economic review to assess Telford's positioning in attracting jobs within emerging growth sectors of the UK economy.</p>	<p>The Council adopted the Invest Telford Strategy for growth 2024 - 2034 as the basis to further promotion of the borough for business investment (adopted 4/1/2024). The Invest Telford Strategy was prepared with support from an independent organisation based upon an economic review carried out at that time. The Strategy benefitted from input derived through engagement with businesses to ensure that it met the needs of the Borough. The Strategy sets out 7 pillars which focus investment decisions: promoting our place, supporting our businesses, talent pipeline, innovation culture, improving</p>	<p>We will continue with our engagement with the Invest Telford Partnership and Telford Business Forum to provide independent oversight of our current actions and engagement with industry to support delivery of the Invest Telford Strategy. We will continue to review the Strategy to ensure that it continues to align with market demand, this will be based upon engagement with businesses through the Invest Telford Partnership, Telford Business Forum and our engagement of a range of businesses through our account management. Through the development of the Invest Telford Strategy, an</p>	SMT	May 2026

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	<p>Alongside this, develop a targeted strategy to attract higher-value businesses to the borough, aligned with population and housing growth to support inclusive economic development.</p>	<p>infrastructure, delivering outstanding quality of life and assuring availability of sites and premises.</p> <p>In 2025, the Council set up the Invest Telford Partnership. This is made up of leaders from business, education and the third sector providing independent input into a range of matters including skills and investment to support growth.</p> <p>Alongside these pillars and, through business engagement, we have identified the key sectors in the borough of automotive, construction and defence and through that engagement where opportunities arise the Council has put forward strong proposition to support inward investment e.g. ongoing engagement with RBSL has led to our proposals to Rheinmetall which has resulted in the securing of their national gun barrel manufacturing facilities with up to 500 highly skilled jobs. Our new local plan which considers population growth and economic growth makes allowances for 20,000+ new homes in accordance with government requirements under the NPPF alongside the allocation of new employment sites.</p>	<p>independent economic review has already been carried out, which recommended focus on growth of our existing broad range of Telford businesses. However, the Council will commission a targeted review focused on the work we are doing to attract further high-value businesses.</p>		
3.7	<p>Telling Your Story:</p> <p>Standardise your presence and messaging across all platforms so that</p>	<p>The current Communications Strategy features key messaging centred around the Council Plan's key aims - on-site feedback from the peer challenge team was that this narrative came across strongly in terms of digital presence and the authority will continue to build on this. The corporate in-house design team reflect this in all originated</p>	<p>An internal review of design/printed materials across all service areas will be undertaken to inform of any required updates and amends to ensure our message and presence is standardised and clear. The Corporate Communications team will work with all services areas to support this activity and to ensure the corporate brand of the Council is</p>	SMT	May 2026

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	residents understand who is delivering for them in their area. Use case studies to make your message real and relatable	<p>Council work whilst meeting the specific design objectives from a wide range of service areas and service offers.</p> <p>The current communications strategy advocates using a 'second voice' in our communications to ensure community/third parties are represented in our messaging to 'keep it real'.</p> <p>A key focus of our Communications Strategy is to undertake regular analysis of all communications channel to assess reach and impact. Based upon this analysis, the council refines its communications approach for continuous improvement.</p> <p>The latest residents survey (undertaken in 2025) indicated that more than 70% of residents felt well-informed by the Council which is significantly higher than the national average of 47% (LGA benchmark figure).</p>	<p>recognised across service campaigns / promotions. Corporate Communications will share branding guidance and expectations for use by service areas to maintain this consistency.</p> <p>As part of this activity, the use of second voice / case studies will be extended and evaluated for reach, success and impact to allow the Corporate Communications team to ensure it is delivering value from its services and enabling continuous improvement. This approach has been used successfully throughout a number of campaigns including NuPlace, Wellington Market and the Youth Strategy where the 'second voice' from residents/service users is included to make it easily understandable for residents to know who is delivering services and how they can engage. The communications team will work with service areas to help identify appropriate case studies and ensure that this approach is fully embedded.</p>		
5.2.1	Publish a clear and publicly accessible capital investment plan: setting out both commercial objectives and anticipated regeneration benefits. This should include	We have an adopted asset management plan which links directly to the capital strategy in the MTFS. Throughout the budget setting process, the asset management plan has regard to the Council priorities which are focussed on action to protect, care and invest to create a better borough. The council undertakes a number of reviews of projects and reports the outcome of these reviews through cabinet/scrutiny and to partners such as MHCLG and Homes England. This incorporates an understanding of social	See recommendation number 3.1. The strategic alignment between capital strategy and priorities will be strengthened as part of the response to recommendation number 3.1.	SMT	June 2026 (phase 1)

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	measurable social outcomes - such as improvements in housing, employment, and community wellbeing - to demonstrate how physical development supports inclusive growth and enhances quality of life for residents.	outcomes, new housing, employment levels and wider benefits.			
5.2.2	Strengthen external development pathways: Expand access to external leadership and professional development opportunities across the organisation, with a particular focus on areas where recruitment is more challenging and where staff turnover is higher. This	<p>The council is a member of West Midlands Employers' (WME) coaching and mentoring pool and is currently exploring the opportunity to develop a diverse management development programme, 'Galvanise', jointly with Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals. A cohort of colleagues have already completed the High Potential Scheme with the potential for further participation in the next available cohort.</p> <p>The Council has been an advocate and supporter of apprenticeships within the organisation for many years with established providers in place across a wide range of subject areas with a focus on those areas that are, traditionally, more difficult to recruit to. Through WME, there is an established management and leadership programme in place.</p>	<p>Actions agreed will be shaped by the outcomes of the Strategic Workforce Planning process and are likely to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The creation of a future leaders programme, accessing external training via apprenticeship levy, leading to an accredited qualification and supporting succession planning whilst, at the same time, creating resilience within our workforce. -Exploring further opportunities for funded development/qualifications for our employees. Identifying further external development pathways that may be available to colleagues from a local government or public sector background so as to develop a clear offer to our workforce. -The potential to undertake external placements as part of a rotation placement scheme or external secondments with other public sector organisation to provide a whole 	SMT	June 2026 (Phase 1)

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	<p>approach will support talent retention, succession planning, and build resilience in critical service areas, while ensuring opportunities are available for officers at different levels to develop and progress.</p>	<p>There are examples of best practice within the organisation, for example placements with external partners.</p> <p>Through participation in Corporate Peer Challenges and CQC-led assessments as team members, colleagues are able to further develop their skills, knowledge and experience to support them in their work within Telford & Wrekin Council.</p>	<p>system approach to development.</p> <p>-Continuing to share best practice that is already being undertaken in some areas around secondments to external partners.</p> <p>This work will be phased to ensure that we are able to adapt and respond to feedback from colleagues.</p>		
5.2.3	<p>Celebrate and strengthen borough identity through inclusive engagement.: Telford is a place of contrasts, and local towns play an important role in shaping community identity. The council has already taken positive steps, such as initiating Telford Day and adopting a borough flag, to celebrate this</p>	<p>The Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Programme is further addressing the key challenges across 12 communities including the Borough Towns and a number of our more deprived localities with a focus on building community pride and encouraging cohesion within and between communities.</p> <p>The communications strategy 2025-27 features key messaging centred around reinforcing a sense of place and purpose - this included the celebration of Telford Day and the development of a single brand 'building a stronger...' which is used to provide a common message and connection to the Council Plan and Vision 2032.</p> <p>Our communications strategy 2025-27 advocates using a 'second voice' in our communications to ensure community/third</p>	<p>Use of the new communications strategy to strengthen key messaging around place-based investment across the Borough and, in particular the Borough Towns, will help to build on the sense of belonging to Telford and pride of place.</p> <p>The work that will soon be commencing in respect of Pride in Place will also help to drive community identity in relation to some of our South Telford new towns. The Safer Strong Communities programme has already led to a stronger focus on community cohesion, including through engagement with community leaders. This work will continue through the delivery of the Safer Stronger Communities programme, maintaining the focus on building community cohesion through Safer/Stronger Programmes and engagement with community leaders.</p>	SMT	April 2026

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	<p>diversity. Building on these initiatives, there is an opportunity to further reinforce a shared sense of place and purpose while continuing to respect and promote the distinct identities of individual towns.</p>	<p>parties are represented in our messaging to 'keep it real'.</p> <p>The Council has a Destination Management Plan in place which celebrates and promotes the borough's diverse offer to visitors and residents engendering civic pride and sense of identity. We are now developing a new Cultural Strategy which will further articulate the wide programme of activity aimed at building and celebrating cultural identity both collectively as Telford & Wrekin as a whole and through acknowledging our diverse and distinct communities with their own cultural heritage. Our free events programme and theatre on tour delivers a diverse calendar of indoor and outdoor cultural, arts, music, dance and family fun much celebrating the history and diversity of individual localities.</p> <p>Events including Carnival bring together participants from across all groups and communities to celebrate Telford's rich history and identity reinforcing a shared sense of place and unity.</p> <p>The Council has an investment programme across the Borough towns linked to the priorities for regeneration in those localities shaped by community engagement. This includes Levelling Up and Towns Funding in Oakengates and Wellington, Pride in Our High Street across all 5 Towns and targeted work to address stalled sites, redundant buildings and to make strategic investments including</p>	<p>When adopted, we will communicate and embed the Cultural Strategy throughout the organisation to ensure that the Council identifies, magnifies and celebrates the cultural diversity of Telford and to build cohesion ensuring cultural activity is open to all.</p>		

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		into leisure facilities including the new Captain Matthew Webb Pool in Dawley.			
5.2.4	<p>Amplify national and regional influence: Proactively position the council in regional and national policy forums to showcase achievements, share learning, and shape wider system reform.</p>	<p>The Council already has a strong presence both regionally and nationally in terms of helping to shape and influence system reform. In addition, colleagues from across the organisation have been chosen as peer team members by the LGA to undertake corporate peer reviews. Each member of the Senior Management Team has taken part in corporate peer assessments. Heads of Service also actively participate in similar activity including being team members for peer reviews and CQC assessments.</p> <p>The organisation has been chosen as sector-led improvement partners, for example in Children's Services. In addition, the Council has also been selected to operate a number of pilot schemes to support system reform. This includes the pilot scheme for adopting a new approach to the National Referral Mechanism to support those who are victims of modern slavery.</p> <p>The Council also actively participates in regional and national networks including the Director of Children's Services network (ADCS), Association of Director of Adult Social Services network (ADASS), Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and Transport (ADEPT), the Local Government Association's Regional Audit Forum (which the Council Chair of Audit Committee chairs), the Co-operative Council Innovation Network and the Association of</p>	Continue to seek opportunities to engage at a national and regional level to share learning, highlight good practice and influence policy decisions in relation to proposed system reform, building on the strong foundation already in place.	SMT	June 2026

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		<p>Public Sector Excellence (APSE) .</p> <p>As LGC Council of the Year 2025, the Council has led seminars to support other local authorities in understanding the approach taken by Telford & Wrekin Council to service delivery which led to that award. In a similar vein, the Council has been approached by the Local Government Association to deliver sessions at the Annual Conference in respect of some of the innovative work undertaken by the Council relating to Adult Social Care. The Council also leads the regional Audit forum which provides an opportunity to feed into practice reform and share learning across this sector of local government whilst members of the Senior Management Team lead a number of regional forums in Children's Services .</p> <p>Through the Cooperative Council Innovation Network (CCIN), the Council shares good practice and case studies to be shared with other members of the CCIN which comprises over 140 other local authorities and public sector organisations.</p>			
Governance and Culture					
3.3	Governance and Investment Oversight: Ensure governance and communication processes are robust and	A review of scrutiny, based upon the CPGS assessment tool had already been carried out at the time of the peer team's visit. That review demonstrated that scrutiny was good and that there were some areas where further improvements could be made. Meetings had already been held with Chairs of Scrutiny to ensure support for delivering changes in order	To implement the improvements identified through the review including more pre-decision scrutiny. The current arrangements are such that they support the delivery programme of the Council ensuring that it is able to work at pace to the meet the needs of the Borough and respond to investment opportunities as they arise.	SMT	June 2026

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	transparent for capital investment decisions. Strengthen scrutiny's role in strategic decision-making by ensuring earlier and more consistent involvement, particularly in relation to commercial aspirations. Consider introducing non-executive expertise to support scrutiny and provide technical challenge on complex investment cases. Review delegation thresholds for capital programme decisions to align with best practice. Ensure consistent contract	to derive greater value from scrutiny across all areas of the Council's work. There is clear enthusiasm for undertaking more pre-decision scrutiny so that Scrutiny Committees can feed into the development of proposals, strategies and commercial decisions.	As part of the work being undertaken to enhance the existing effective scrutiny arrangements, the council will explore the best method of introducing an independent element into the scrutiny arrangements in respect of appropriate investment matters. This could be delivered in a number of ways including through the use of co-optees, independent persons, members of the Telford Business Board attending relevant meetings or seeking independent review and comment on relevant matters being considered by scrutiny.		

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	management across the council to improve efficiency and accountability.				
5.3.1	<p>Enhance Scrutiny's Role in Risk and Investment Oversight: Introduce earlier and more structured engagement of scrutiny committees in capital investment planning and risk assessment. Develop a protocol for briefing scrutiny councillors on major investment decisions before formal Cabinet consideration.</p>	<p>Scrutiny has oversight of the MTFs and Capital Strategy as part of the budget development process - providing an opportunity to both understand and comment on the Council's draft budget. In addition, scrutiny receives regular reports regarding the work of NuPlace, the Telford Land Deal and Growth Fund providing opportunity to review the activity. This includes discussion around the business case to support the activity under these initiatives and how investment decisions are made.</p>	<p>The existing processes will continue, with regular reviews as appropriate</p>	SMT	Implemented and ongoing.
5.3.2	<p>Strengthen Governance Communication Pathways: Build</p>	<p>There is an existing framework in place which sees the senior management team (including statutory officers) provide briefings to opposition Group Leaders on matters being</p>	<p>As part of the formal briefing meetings that are scheduled to align with the Cabinet timetable, statutory officers will attend these briefings for the purpose of briefing Group Leaders on any</p>	SMT	Implemented and ongoing

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	<p>on existing reporting arrangements by introducing a more structured and proactive communication framework between statutory officers and non-executive councillors. This could include agreed protocols for timely updates on strategic risks and compliance matters outside formal reporting cycles, ensuring clarity and consistency.</p>	<p>considered by Cabinet, enabling an open dialogue and an opportunity to raise questions on key matters.</p> <p>All statutory officers have a strong relationship with councillors, including non-executive councillors and there is an existing open-door approach which enables discussions to take place in relation to matters of key importance.</p>	<p>matters of relevance or for questions to be asked with Group Leaders then briefing their Members as needed.</p>		
Financial Planning and Management					
3.4	<p>Commercial Portfolio Governance:</p> <p>Build on and strengthen the council's</p>	<p>The Council's commercial portfolio is managed by a dedicated estate's team. Officers engage with other professionals and agents in the market to ensure that rents and tenant occupancy reflect market conditions. The portfolio is both diverse in its users, the number of tenants, and the number of</p>	<p>We will look to commission an external independent health check of the Council's property investment portfolio on a three-year rolling basis.</p> <p>Embed the work through the Social Value Portal and start to report on the financial value</p>	SMT	Ongoing

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	<p>commercial portfolio by developing a dedicated business plan and governance structure to manage risk and maximise social value. This governance structure should include non-Executive expert oversight to provide additional assurance and strategic input.</p>	<p>individual units to minimise the impact of a change in market demand or a specific industry. In line with Best Value obligations all rents within the existing and new developments are set at market rent.</p> <p>The property investment portfolio is audited annually as part of the Council's independent external audit process with no concerns having been raised.</p> <p>The Council has a business plan in place for each strand of its commercial portfolio which has been created based upon expert advice from specialists in the commercial arena. The business plans are reviewed regularly to ensure they remain relevant to the core business of the commercial portfolio and that they continue to balance risk within the commercial arena, responding to changes in market conditions as needed.</p> <p>On a more granular level, each commercial project is supported with a risk register setting out key risks associated with that project and mitigations for those risks. The Council also has an overarching risk register which is considered regularly by the Senior Management Team and is also reported to the Audit Committee regularly for member oversight and scrutiny. Through proposed national changes to the way in which Audit Committees operate, the Audit Committee will soon benefit from an Independent Person which will introduce additional independent oversight and input.</p>	<p>of any social value activity under contractual relationships, using this to monitor delivery and identify further opportunities to deliver social value through our corporate contracts.</p>		

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		<p>Social Value is managed by a central team who work with procurement to ensure that every contract delivers some social value. This activity includes targets relating to employment and community benefit. In 2025, the Council has begun to work with the Social Value Portal to ensure that it can quantify, in monetary terms, the social value commitments derived from each contract. Recent examples include 104 hours of school engagement and career engagement, 44 new jobs created, 65 apprenticeships supported, more than £70,000 in financial support to deliver community projects, spend of almost £150k on suppliers within Borough and a further £1.8m with SMEs. The Social Value Portal also monitors delivery of social value and identifies opportunity to ensure that we maximise social value drawn from our contracts.</p>			
3.8	<p>Financial resilience:</p> <p>Continue and enhance scenario-based financial stress testing to assess the impact of economic shocks, interest rate changes, or funding reductions on the council's</p>	<p>The corporate budget model is regularly updated for changes in interest rates, funding reductions and impacts of legislative changes. Scenario based models have also been used for impact of these. The model is reviewed by Service & Financial Planning on a regular basis and refined as more information becomes available ahead of the MTFS planning cycle. Independent advice is secured on a regular basis to provide external assurance on the Council's financial sustainability.</p>	<p>This is already in place. Will review existing model and update as required which will include scenario-based models for interest, inflation and placement models for Social Care</p>	SMT	Implemented and ongoing

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	financial sustainability				
5.4.1	<p>Introduce scenario-based financial stress testing focused on borrowing: While the council already uses scenarios within its MTFS and updates the budget model regularly, the peer team recommends extending this approach to include detailed stress testing of borrowing. This should assess the potential impact of interest rate changes, economic shocks, or variations in investment returns on the council's long-term financial sustainability. Strengthening this focus will</p>	<p>The corporate budget model is regularly updated for changes in interest rates, funding reductions and impacts of legislative changes. Scenario based models have also been used for impact of these. The model is reviewed by Service & Financial Planning on a regular basis and refined as more information becomes available ahead of the MTFS planning cycle.</p>	<p>The existing actions and processes that are in place already meet the requirements of this recommendation. However, the Council will undertake a review of the existing model and adapt it as required. This review will include ensuring scenario-based models for a wider area including interest, inflation and placement models for Social Care.</p>	SMT	Implemented and ongoing

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	provide additional assurance given the scale of the capital programme and associated risks.				
5.4.2	<p>Strengthen councillors' financial literacy and engagement:</p> <p>The council already provides financial training as part of the member induction programme, alongside annual sessions on the statement of accounts and treasury management for the Audit Committee, and regular briefings for Business & Finance Scrutiny on the MTFs. Building on these strong foundations, there is an opportunity to</p>	<p>Financial training was offered to all councillors following the last elections in 2023. Training is also provided at committees as required, for example to Audit Committee for the statement of accounts and treasury management, to ensure Members have a good understanding in advance of those agenda items being presented. Members are also provided with information regarding training courses from the Local Government Association, Local Government Information Unit, Cooperative Council Innovation Network and other providers highlighting those which may be of interest to specific Committee members. Group Leaders receive updates from the MO on training budget available per Group and training take up.</p>	<p>Continue with current activity. Look at ways of strengthening communications with Group Leaders around training offer for awareness-raising purposes. Finance training is included in the work programme for 2026.</p>	SMT	Implemented and ongoing

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	offer more tailored and advanced training for scrutiny and non-executive councillors to further enhance confidence and capability in challenging complex investment and budget decisions.				
5.4.3	Establish a cross-departmental investment coordination group: Create a formal mechanism to align capital investment decisions with workforce, asset, and service strategies, ensuring joined-up planning and risk management.	The Strategic planning framework of the organisation sets the golden thread for the organisation, aligning the Council resources (assets, workforce, capital projects etc.) with the strategic priorities of the organisation. SMT acts as a cross departmental co-ordination considering all strategies and investments. In terms of investments, the Council has an established Major Projects Board which is a cross-service board which has a specific focus on overseeing major capital investment projects including budgetary management and risk management.	We will continue to review our approach and adjust where needed	SMT	Ongoing
5.4.4	Review delegation thresholds for	The capital budget is approved by councillors through the Medium Term Financial Strategy with specific budgets in respect of the	Whilst the Council has robust arrangements in place in respect of this recommendation, it will undertake a benchmarking exercise against	SMT	Benchmarking completed May 2026

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	<p>capital programme decisions: Reassess the levels of delegated authority for capital spending to ensure appropriate oversight and alignment with governance best practice. The peer team suggests that significant capital decisions are best taken by councillors rather than officers who also hold roles within council-owned companies. This approach would strengthen transparency, reinforce accountability, and provide assurance that governance arrangements remain robust as the scale of</p>	<p>property investment portfolio, NuPlace, Growth Fund and other capital investments. Each of these are covered by delegation arrangements. These delegation arrangements allow the Council to move at pace when opportunities present themselves. It is recognised that each local authority has varying circumstances which will lead to differing arrangements. The Council's reputation for delivering at pace is such that it has secured funding from regional bodies when others have not been able to meet the funding timelines and the delegation arrangements enable this to happen.</p> <p>The budget setting process is subject to scrutiny and Cabinet and Full Council approval. From the allocation of capital through the budget process, the approval processes for expenditure under each heading sees each investment decision underpinned by a detailed business case setting out return on investment, risks and mitigations, and involvement of Cabinet members. Each Growth Fund investment is approved by two Cabinet members alongside the Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and the Director: Prosperity & Investment.</p> <p>Any NuPlace proposed investment is approved by the Housing Investment Programme Board which comprises two Cabinet members and senior officers. The Housing Investment Programme Board is provided with a clear business case in respect of each decision and receives legal and</p>	<p>other Councils who have a similar approach to capital investment and apply any learning to its existing models.</p>		

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	investment grows.	financial advice at each juncture. The Housing Investment Programme Board does not include any officer that is a director the company to ensure conflicts of interests are avoided.			
Capacity for Improvement					
3.5	<p>Continuous Improvement Culture:</p> <p>Continue embedding continuous improvement as a cultural norm across all services, building on the council's strong track record. Introduce structured mechanisms for progress tracking, reflection, and shared learning to sustain resilience and improvement.</p>	<p>The Council has a strong performance culture in place as recognised by being judged LGC Council of the Year 2025, MJ Council of the Year 2022, Cooperative Council of the Year and APSE Council of the Year in 2021 as well as other awards recognising best practice across a number of service areas. We are also the first local authority to gain Service Mark Accreditation from the Institute of Customer Services which is intended to recognise excellent customer service.</p> <p>Performance indicators are reported at, and considered by, the senior management team on a regular basis ensuring there is collective oversight of the impacts of actions and ensuring actions deliver positive outcomes and improvements where needed. Additionally, this work includes the tracking of any trends so that the Council can respond promptly to any changes through adapting its approach.</p> <p>The Council also engages well with stakeholders at a regional and national level to develop, embed and share learning as well as inputting into potential national policy development. Examples of this regional and</p>	<p>As set out, the Council has a strong existing track record in relation to continuous improvement and this is reflected in the CPC report. As the only Council to have achieved all four major Council of the Year awards in a 4 year period, alongside being judged Outstanding for Children's Services in two consecutive Ofsted Inspections, Good by CQC for our Adults Services provision amongst others, it is evident that the Council identifies opportunities for learning and implements improvements as needed. This work will continue.</p> <p>In addition, the Council will consider an annual "improvement report" to be shared with SMT and Business Briefing to ensure that there is an opportunity to pause and reflect on the work that is taking place in this regard on a day-to-day basis and ensure momentum is maintained.</p>	SMT	Implemented and ongoing

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		<p>national improvement work includes being appointed by the Department for Education as a sector-led Improvement Partner and Partner Place for Children's Services, being selected by national government as a pilot authority trialling the new National Referral Mechanism process, presenting at sector annual conferences and working with national government on key priorities.</p> <p>Processes are also already established within the authority to ensure continuous improvement in so far as it relates to finance and economy. These are driven by the Council's Efficiency Strategy and Budget Strategy with a quarterly monitoring process in place within SMT to ensure delivery remains on track. Additionally, directorates have responsibility for improvement plans with key service areas (Children's Services and Adults' Services) reporting into improvement boards which includes Members. Progress against the delivery of these action plans is monitored through the relevant improvement boards and also reported to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>The Council also regularly seeks customer and resident feedback through schemes such as our Mystery Shopper Scheme, Resident's Survey and Young People's Survey. This provides an opportunity for the Council to reflect on the way in which it delivers its services ensuring that they are meeting need and delivering best value.</p>			

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3.6	<p>Innovation and Digital Transformation:</p> <p>Build on existing innovation successes, such as Magic Notes, to accelerate digital transformation and identify priority areas for AI and digital improvements</p>	<p>An AI Strategic Governance Board is already in place which includes the Council Leader as Chair and the Chief Executive. This meets on a monthly basis to review current AI Projects such as Magic Notes, Co-pilot, Ask Tom, Internal Council Assistant and Robotics in Revenie. The Board also approves any new AI projects after considering risks, compliance and ethical use of AI. Additionally, the Board monitors existing usage statistics and compliance with policies and procedures introduced at implementation stage. The Council has approved a Digital Strategy 2024 - 2027 which, as well as articulating the Council's aims in respect of AI, also sets out the Council's wider digital by default approach. This Strategy sets out the future actions that the Council take in terms of moving towards a more digital by default position, including greater utilisation of AI.</p>	<p>The AI Strategic Governance Board has already been set up with its focus being on delivering the outcomes identified in this recommendation. In addition, through the Digital Strategy 2024 - 27, the Council has set out a number of actions to take through to 2027 to deliver greater introduction of AI and a move towards a more digital organisation and Borough. The Strategic Governance Board will also be seeking information from the public and private sector on AI measures that have proven successful with a view to furthering this agenda.</p>	SMT	Ongoing
5.5.1	<p>Strengthen workforce resilience and organisational learning by building on existing continuous improvement culture. This includes succession planning for leadership continuity,</p>	<p>As part of the strategic workforce planning process steps are in place to undertake a succession planning exercise with the senior management team.</p> <p>Through the strategic workforce planning process, business critical roles have been identified through liaison with Heads of Services. The outcome of this work is due to be reported to the senior management team so that appropriate actions can be identified to address any areas of improvement and progress against those actions monitored.</p>	<p>Hold succession planning session with SMT at a cross-directorate level.</p> <p>Creation of leadership competencies, to be clear around the requirements for progression, and a clear pathway to aim for.</p> <p>Succession planning to be part of Strategic Workforce Planning discussions, actions and ongoing review</p> <p>Continue to develop the grow your own approach, working with agency partners, Education and Skills and education establishments (via outreach work)</p>	SMT	Report to SMT – July 2026 and then ongoing.

Ref	CPC Recommendation	Current position	Action to be taken to address recommendation	Lead(s)	Due date
	<p>promoting cross-council knowledge sharing, and embedding structured reflection mechanisms—such as ‘pause and reflect’ sessions—to consolidate learning and support staff wellbeing.</p>	<p>Building on the foundations of good work undertaken in some areas of the business, work is ongoing around the principle of “grow your own” through the multi-skilling and upskilling of teams to avoid single points of failure and through learning and development.</p> <p>Through the workforce planning process and risk management process, managers identify any areas of concern in relation to resilience as well as succession planning needs and then address these through the APPD and 1 to 1 processes by agreeing learning and development targets. These proc. This could be through a range of methods including utilising the coaching and mentoring scheme, sharing best practice across teams, leadership forums or Team Leader programme or more formalised learning through apprenticeships or professional development.</p>	<p>Explore options and best practice externally via benchmarking and regional networks. Create guidance on wellbeing SharePoint page, and shared via leadership forum and the management and leadership programme.</p> <p>To ensure staff wellbeing, reflection after a big case/project is encouraged either through formal professional supervision or through 1 to 1s. Additionally, many areas will undertake learning reviews following a significant piece of work to provide an opportunity for learning and reflection.</p> <p>Explore options for cross-council collaboration through benchmarking and regional networks. Re-introduce action learning sets as part of future leadership development schemes</p>		