Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

3 December 2026

Corporate Peer Challenge progress review

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Lee Carter - Leader of the Council
Lead Director:	Ross Cook - Executive Director: Place
Service Area:	Policy & Governance
Report Author:	Jon Power – Head of Policy, Insight, Partnerships and Elections
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	SMT - 3 November 2026 Business Briefing – 18 November 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1.1 Notes and endorses the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) progress review report at **Appendix A** which highlights that:

Telford & Wrekin continues to be an excellent council. The strengths recognised in the original CPC remain clearly evident: strong political and managerial leadership, an ambitious delivery culture, sound financial management and a committed workforce."

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 Following the completion of the Council's Corporate Peer Challenge in October 2025, there was a requirement to undertake a follow-up review approximately one year later. The follow-up typically takes place over one day and is delivered by a small number of members from the original peer team who assess the progress made since the initial review and report.

2.2 It provides an opportunity to evaluate the extent to which the Council has implemented the agreed action plan and responded to the recommendations. This process ensures continued accountability, supports organisational learning, and helps to maintain momentum in delivering sustainable improvement.

2.3 This report sets out the outcome to the CPC follow up progress review that took place on 11 September 2026.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge was undertaken on site from 14th – 17th October 2025. As is the practice with all robust external reviews, the CPC identified eight recommendations to be considered in taking the organisation forward.

3.2 Following receipt of the Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) report, the Council developed a comprehensive action plan to respond to the findings and recommendations set out by the peer team. The action plan provided a structured framework to ensure that the Council's response was timely, coordinated, and aligned with its broader strategic objectives, enabling effective oversight and accountability. It also ensured that progress could be systematically tracked, allowing the Council to demonstrate how it is embedding improvements and driving forward change as a result of the CPC process.

3.3 As a result of the ongoing oversight, it was reported to the LGA that all actions had been completed. Where subsequent actions are ongoing, they will continue to be monitored, demonstrating sustained momentum in implementing the recommendations arising from the Corporate Peer Challenge.

3.4 The action plan and supporting evidence were submitted to the LGA ahead of their progress review 'visit' in September 2026.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

Peer Challenge Progress Review

4.1 The Council's Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review was undertaken on Friday 11 September 2026 with the review team meeting with Cabinet members, non executive councillors, the Senior Management Team, Senior officers and employees through a series of virtual focus groups.

4.2 The peer team for the follow-up review comprised:

- **Sam Mowbray**, Chief Executive, Swindon Borough Council and lead officer peer
- **Anthony Burns**, former Leader, St Helens Borough Council
- **Amy Oliver**, Director of Finance, Leicester City Council
- **Sarah Sprung**, Corporate Peer Challenge Manager, Local Government Association
- **Rajpreet Khera**, Local Government Association

4.3 Following the CPC review, the LGA produced a short report (see appendix A) of their findings. The peer team were:

"pleased to see how Telford & Wrekin Council has responded to the CPC with energy, openness and clear ownership. Peers saw ***visible changes in practice*** *across all five original CPC themes and* ***a council that remains confident, ambitious and committed to continuous improvement****. They particularly recognised the* ***stronger golden thread, collective ownership of performance****,* ***broader workforce development, practical digital delivery****,* ***greater communications discipline and improved oversight*** *through the Major Projects Board."*

4.4 In addition, the CPC identified a number of areas of strength in the work of the Council, some of which are summarised below:-

People



- The peer team reflected that the strong, visible and collaborative leadership recognised in the original CPC remains a defining strength. Cabinet and the senior management team demonstrate shared ownership of performance and improvement.

- Strategic oversight for artificial intelligence and data transformation includes consideration of ethics, risk and external challenge. The peer team welcomed the focus on better outcomes and more efficient practice rather than viewing digital change solely as a savings programme.

- The council retains strong governance foundations and constructive relationships between statutory officers, senior management and members.

Place



- The peer team was impressed by how the Major Projects Board has strengthened oversight, bringing major schemes into a single forum where delivery, finance, risk and community benefit can be considered together.
- Peers also welcomed the additional challenge provided by the external review of the property investment portfolio and benchmarking of delegation arrangements.
- Peers saw a deeply rooted culture of continuous improvement. Leaders do not regard delivery of an initiative as the end of the process and expect services to evaluate what worked, identify learning and improve the next phase.

Organisation



- Peers were impressed by the clear golden thread from Vision 2032 through the emerging Council Plan, service plans, performance conversations and individual objectives. They heard how senior leaders show collective ownership of performance and how directors lead discussion of their outcomes and improvement action. In the peer team's view, this strengthens accountability and supports a more consistent organisation-wide approach.
- The peer team remained impressed by the council's strong record of financial management and the close working relationship between finance and services.
- The peer team also heard strong Cabinet ownership. Members described how the CPC has influenced the questions they ask about policy, investment and delivery, particularly whether activity reflects political priorities and benefits communities experiencing inequality. Peers reflected that the council's response therefore extends beyond completing an action plan and is becoming part of its wider improvement approach.

4.5 The CPC confirmed that the Council is a high performing authority:

"The peer team was pleased to find that Telford & Wrekin continues to be an excellent council. The strengths recognised in the original CPC remain clearly evident: strong political and managerial leadership, an ambitious delivery culture, sound financial management and a committed workforce."

4.6 The Council welcomes the next steps set out in the review report and will continue to address and progress these as part of its commitment to continuous improvement and organisational development.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative option is not to hold the CPC review. This would go against the Council's commitment to the CPC process.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 The purpose of a Corporate Peer Challenge is to take a sector-led approach to identifying any areas of significant risks facing a local authority. The CPC report clearly shows that there are no concerns in this regard but has made recommendations to further strengthen our current arrangements to ensure that we continue to perform well and deliver good quality services for our residents supported by a valued and effective workforce. As can be seen from the attached report at Appendix A, the Council has already committed to implementation.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The recommendations in this report align with all Council priorities: -

- every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- all neighbourhoods are a great place to live
- our natural environment is protected, and the Council is taking a leading role in tackling the climate emergency
- a community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The Council has a strong track record of financial discipline and budget management which is integral to delivering its ambitions. The peer team found evidence of robust financial planning, a clear understanding of the council's financial position across both political and managerial leadership and recognised a the close working relationship between finance teams and services areas they support.

8.2 Recommendations regarding Financial Planning and Management from the CPC Action Plan have been taken on board and implemented as part of the development of the 2027/28 – 2030/31 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

8.3 Any resources required to deliver the action plan will need to be found within the overall resources included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report. The Council has legal duties to ensure it is effectively managed and governed, and by implementing the recommendations of the CPC, the Council will be further demonstrating the seriousness with which it takes this duty. In implementing any recommendations, legal advice and support will be provided as needed required on an on-going basis.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 There are no impacts on specific wards although any work undertaken in response to the Corporate Peer Challenge would be borough wide and in-line with our Vision and Priorities

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 There are no Health, Social and Economic Implications directly arising from this report. Any work undertaken in response to the Corporate Peer Challenge would have a positive impact on Health and wellbeing of residents in the borough

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 There are no Equality & Diversity implications directly arising from this report. Any work undertaken in response to the Corporate Peer Challenge have a positive impact on Equality and Diversity in the borough.

13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 There are no Climate Change and Environmental Implications directly arising from this report. Any work undertaken in response to the Corporate Peer Challenge have a positive impact on Climate Change and the environment.

14.0 Background Papers

1 Corporate Peer Challenge 2025 Cabinet Report, Thursday 12 February 2026

15.0 Appendices

A LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	24/11/2026	24/11/2026	RK
Legal	20/10/2026	29/10/2026	EH
Finance	20/10/2026	26/10/2026	ER