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| Item No                                 | Referred from: | OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE          |
| <b>6C</b>                               | Date:          | 3 FEBRUARY 2026                        |
|                                         | Title of item: | LGA CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE FOLLOW UP |
| To be considered alongside agenda item: |                | Agenda Item 7                          |

The report considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 3 February 2026 can be viewed here: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 3rd February, 2026, 7.30 pm | North Herts Council](#)

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the findings of the CPC follow up report were noted.
- (2) That the progress against the CPC Action Plan was noted.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that the Council responds to the matters identified within the CPC follow up report, ensuring that the benefits of the CPC process are realised.

*Audio recording – 5 minutes 57 seconds*

Councillor Val Bryant, as Leader of the Council, presented the reported entitled ‘Corporate Peer Challenge Follow Up’ and advised that:

- The Council undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge between 4 and 7 November 2024, where they were visited by a peer team supported by the Local Government Association.
- A feedback report from the visit was presented to Cabinet on 14 January 2025, and an Action Plan to respond to the recommendations from this was approved by Cabinet on 23 March 2025.
- An update on progress against the Action Plan was also given to Cabinet on 23 September 2025.
- The peer team made a one-day follow up visit on 15 December 2025 and had issued a report on this, which was attached at Appendix A.
- The report contained a review of the progress made by the Council in the last year, and suggestions from the peer team on future steps.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jon Clayden
- Councillor Paul Ward
- Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason
- Councillor Ralph Muncer

In response to questions, Councillor Val Bryant advised that:

- Officers had expressed a preference to receive questions from Members in advance of meetings, which would help to improve Member-Officer relations.
- Cabinet would determine which actions would be focused on and for how long.

- Except for Royston Learner Pool, nothing new would be added to the Council Delivery Plan before it ended.
- There would be continuity despite a change in the Leader of the Council, which would ensure that Officers and Members worked together to ensure the best delivery of a new unitary authority.

In response to questions, the Chief Executive advised that:

- New protocols which referenced Member-Officer interaction had been adopted at the last Full Council meeting.
- Member-Officer relations were built on communication and the acknowledgement that they were part of the same Council, which served various communities.
- The progress against the Action Plan was similar when compared to other local authorities.
- They were committed to continuous improvement, but progress against the Action Plan would cease before Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) to enable focus on that.
- Decisions on what the Council would deliver before LGR would be made through the Council Delivery Plan and budget setting.
- Members and Directors were in constant dialogue over what was achievable for the Council and what should be prioritised in the face of capacity constraints.
- The Council would focus on making the right decisions between now and May 2027, rather than driving to meet all possible decision points prior to the creation of Shadow Authorities.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ralph Muncer
- Councillor Jon Clayden

The following points were made as part of the debate:

- It was reassuring that progress had been made as stated in the report, and that they had identified areas of improvement to ensure resilience for day-to-day services through LGR.
- The progress made had been excellent considering LGR, and everyone at the Council should be congratulated for this.

The Chair summarised discussions and noted the need to improve Officer-Member relations, as well as the need to carefully prioritise and reflect on findings in the face of LGR.

Councillor Jon Clayden proposed and Councillor Daniel Wright-Mason seconded and, following a vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the findings of the CPC follow up report were noted.
- (2) That the progress against the CPC Action Plan was noted.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that the Council responds to the matters identified within the CPC follow up report, ensuring that the benefits of the CPC process are realised.