

North Herts Council Corporate Peer Challenge – November 2024
Action Plan adopted by Cabinet 18 March 2025

No.	Recommendation	Action	Led By	Timescale	Update (early July 2026)	
1	Develop the golden thread	We will use the Council Delivery Plan to continue to reflect the major projects that will support the delivery of our Council Plan. We will review our corporate KPIs (supported by an Internal Audit) to assess how they can be improved to reflect our priorities and also provide challenging targets that help to drive improvement	Exec Member & Director – Resources	Completed	Report to PLB (July and August 2025) on areas of Council Plan that could link to KPIs. Agreed added measures for 26/27 and set targets (as appropriate).	
		Alongside the Council Delivery Plan, we will continue to use internal Service Plans to reflect the other key tasks in each Directorate. These will have a focus on supporting the Council Plan, but will also incorporate other statutory requirements. Where appropriate, we will use Service KPIs to support Service Managers and Directors to assess performance.	Executive Members and Directors	Ongoing	Service plans have been adopted using these principles	
		Leadership Team will review all the projects on the Council Delivery Plan and Service Plans on a quarterly basis. This will help manage the delivery of projects and also ensure that they continue to align with the Council Plan and priorities. Executive Members will also be kept informed of progress against Service Plans. Cabinet (through quarterly updates on the Council Delivery Plan) will have regular opportunities to determine any projects that should be included at that level, as well as assess delivery of existing projects, KPIs and risks.	Executive Members and Directors	Ongoing	Circulated to Leadership Team when prepared for Risk and Performance Management Group. Service Plans to capture projects that are not on the Council Delivery Plan.	

		We will carry out a budget consultation exercise during summer 2025 to help inform our budget setting process for 2026/27 onwards. We will use this alongside the 3-year settlement for 2026-29 to assess our funding priorities. This will inform the areas where we will make savings to achieve a balanced budget.	Exec Member & Director – Resources	Completed	Budget consultation took place throughout June and July 2025. Feedback was reported as part of the budget papers.	
		The Digital Transformation oversight group will review what software and processes should be a transformation priority to maximise the organisational benefits. These could be direct financial benefits or through reducing effort that frees up Officer time.	Director – Customers	Ongoing	The programme pivoted in light of Local Government Reorganisation and continues to deliver improvements (see rec 9).	
		We have carried out a review of the capital programme to assess the likely timing of delivery and any projects no longer needed. The budget setting process for 2025/26 has also provided an opportunity to assess new and existing proposals. We will add new capital projects (e.g. Churchgate) when we have a defined plan and a reliable estimate of timing and costs.	Exec Member & Director – Resources	Ongoing	Council report July 2025 flags the capital implications of the Churchgate project, although it is still too early to attach figures to the project. This is again acknowledged in the July 2026 Council report.	
		As staff regular performance reviews are carried out, the priorities within them will be linked to the priorities in the Council Plan, Council Delivery Plan and Service Plans.	All managers	Ongoing	Leadership Team monitor completion of RPRs, as part of regular HR update	
2	Prioritise	We will use the Council Delivery Plan to track progress against our key corporate projects. As well as the formal discussion of this at Cabinet, we will also start to discuss it on a regular basis at Political	PLB	Ongoing	The Council Delivery Plan process has been refined. The demands of the LGR delivery programme mean that will be an	

		Liaison Board. We will agree which are the most important priorities for North Hertfordshire. This will allow earlier discussion of how the projects are helping to deliver our priorities and any blockages to delivery. Where blockages are caused by staffing resources we can assess where there may be opportunities to prioritise projects, based on the staff required (as usually requires specialist knowledge and skills) and relative importance of projects.			ongoing need to prioritise our work.	
3	Place Narrative	Subject to securing suitable funding, we will seek additional capacity to identify the opportunities available to promote our North Herts Place Narrative across the district. The most effective opportunities will then be included in a Marketing & Communications plan that the consultancy will be responsible for creating, executing, and measuring, with support from the North Herts Council communications and Economic Development teams.	Exec Members & Director - Customers, Director – Enterprise	Not pursuing	Due to local government reorganisation in Hertfordshire, it has been agreed not to actively pursue this work. We will continue to use the North Herts Place Narrative assets but will not commit resource to actively promoting it.	
4	Partnerships	We will continue to look for opportunities with partners, wherever interests can be aligned. We will continue to work closely with Herts Growth Board, HCCSP and others, taking leading roles where appropriate.	Cabinet and Leadership Team Cabinet and Leadership Team	Ongoing Ongoing	We are discussing with neighbouring councils potential opportunities through LGR eg housing, planning. CEx is on the Delivery Unit oversight group, overseeing whole programme. CEx and Director Customers are strategic leads for two of the workstreams, with all other Directors (and some senior managers) also involved in	

		The new leadership team structure includes a strategic health lead, which seeks to work more closely with the NHS through the work of the ICB.	Director Regulatory	Ongoing	working groups. The Leader is taking an active role at Herts Leaders Group. We continue to try to engage with health to explore opportunities for greater co-operation, however the ICB is currently focussed on their own restructure.	
5	Leadership	A leadership team restructure has been agreed and will be in place from 1 April 2025. There will also be further changes in the leadership team during the course of 2025, with two retirements. We will put in place a learning and development programme to integrate new members to the Leadership Team, build relationships and explore ways to re-energise the organisation, with visible officer leadership and more strategic impact. We will look to create opportunities for more in-person communications, for example an annual staff conference, attending different team meetings and visiting front line service areas.	Chief Executive and Directors Leadership Team	Completed Ongoing	The structure was implemented and all director roles are filled. The Cabinet portfolios have been aligned to the director responsibilities, to streamline and simplify arrangements. Learning and development for LT has been undertaken and will be kept under review in light of upcoming LGR. The first staff conference was delivered, with three sessions taking place during September 2025. The second annual staff conference is diarised for three dates in September 2026.	
6	Organisational Development	We will create a new HR strategy that reflects our priorities and how we develop existing staff and recruit new staff to deliver them. As we know that there will be some changes in the Leadership Team over the summer, we will do the majority of this work over the Autumn to ensure that it can capture the views of the new Directors. We will be clear on the importance of learning and development, even when	Exec Member & Director - Resources	[Completed] Ongoing	The People Strategy has been developed, for approval by the Chief Executive. This is emphasised in the People Strategy and is reflected in the	

		there is a need to reduce our spend. We will use our new Learning Management System to help with accessing training. We will review how we carry out our Regular Performance Reviews (appraisal) to make it simple, effective and aligned to the golden thread. We will use workforce data to inform how we address succession planning, recruitment and retention, with appropriate plans in place.		Ongoing	decision to allocate LGR funds to support training and development of staff. This has been reviewed, although need to strike a balance between simplicity and ensuring it covers all necessary areas. The People Strategy picks up these themes within its priorities.	
7	Ways of Working	We will relaunch our values with Officers and Councillors. This includes listening to and considering the views of each other, and work together and support each other to be the best organisation we can be. Executive members will present committee reports at meetings We will look at light touch staff surveys to check in with staff, which can also be used to reinforce expectations of behaviour. We will review our approach to whistleblowing training, in order to raise awareness across the organisation. We will consider adoption of any new model Code of conduct for Councillors	Member training champions and Leadership Team Cabinet Director - Resources Director - Governance Standards committee/ Director - Governance	Completed Ongoing Ongoing Completed When available	The values have been relaunched, using the phrase ALL In Together as a reminder (Adaptable, Learning, Listening, Inclusive, Together) This is the practice adopted This is the practice adopted Whistleblowing training has been delivered to Directors and representatives from each directorate. New code awaited. In the meantime, Council adopted the Code of Good Practice for Statutory Officers.	

		dedicated Digital Business Analyst (BA) for this purpose, and through this work, we anticipate the transfer and upskilling of BA skills. Ongoing engagement with staff and Councillors is planned, alongside the development of our rolling communications plan. Additionally, a controlled pilot of using AI (Microsoft Copilot) is underway to identify use cases and assess the potential efficiency impact across various areas within the Council.		Ongoing	and upskilling across the district by partnering with North Herts & Stevenage CVS to deliver a range of digital inclusion initiatives This work is being delivered in phases as resource allows.	
10	Project Management	See response to recommendation 2, which covers resourcing of ongoing projects. For larger capital projects we will move towards incorporating project management into the capital cost, to reflect the required capacity and ensuring the total cost is considered as part of the overall project appraisal. We have a process for collecting lessons learnt from projects. By improving the project reporting to Leadership Team (included in the response to recommendation 1) we will have better understanding on when smaller projects have completed, so can work with those project managers to ensure that we collate lessons learnt. Having more lessons learnt, which may also be more relevant to a wider audience, will allow us to produce regular updates to share across the Council.	Exec Member & Director - Resources	Ongoing Ongoing	Churchgate report to July 2025 Council sought budget for the appointment of an experienced project manager, to help support the delivery of the project. This was approved and an individual recruited. July 2026 Council report seeks further specialist support. Reports will come to LT when completed, or on an exception basis as required. Lessons learned exercise imminent for the waste contract procurement and service change roll out.	