



Hincley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

Forward timetable of consultation and decision making

Council 13 May 2025

Wards affected: All wards

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**Corporate Peer Challenge**

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Report of Chief Executive

**1. Purpose**

To report on the outcomes of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) that was undertaken in December 2024, along with the draft action plan responding to the recommendations set out in the accompanying report.

**2. Recommendations**

- i) That Members note and endorse the extremely positive outcomes from the external Corporate Peer Challenge, as set out in the attached report and feedback presentation from the LGA (appendix I);
- ii) That Members agree the action plan attached as appendix II which responds to the recommendations of the Peer Team;
- iii) That Members communicate the positive report outcomes to our residents, partners and internally to staff;
- iv) That members, officers and partners be thanked for their positive engagement in the Peer Challenge process.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is a highly valued improvement and assurance tool that is delivered by the local government sector, via the LGA, for the sector. It involves a team of senior local government councillors and officers undertaking a comprehensive review of key financial, performance and governance information, informed by meetings internally with staff and councillors and externally with partners and stakeholders. A CPC assists councils in meeting part of their Best Value Duty with the Government expecting local authorities to now have a CPC at least every five years.

- 3.2 The LGA CPC team lead by Ian Davidson, Chief Executive, Tendring District Council, comprised eight senior representatives, including senior elected member peers and senior officers from councils across the country and supported by a peer challenge manager from the LGA.
- 3.3 HBBC's Peer Challenge was undertaken over 3½ days between the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

#### **4. Scope**

The scope of the review covered the following five themes:

1. Local priorities and outcomes
2. Organisational and place leadership
3. Governance and culture
4. Financial planning and management
5. Capacity for Improvement.

#### **5. Key Findings**

- 5.1 The Council received extremely positive feedback from the peer challenge, encapsulated in the summary points below:
- HBBC is an ambitious and forward-looking council focussed on economic growth
  - It is dedicated to serving its communities and actively leads on, promotes and supports major development projects
  - The community leadership role of the council is considerable, over and above what many councils achieve
  - The Council has an excellent track record of partnership working
  - There is strong and visible leadership
  - There is a positive, inclusive organisational culture which is led from the top
  - There is complimentary leadership between the Leader and Chief Executive and there are good councillor /officer relations
  - The Council and its Chief Executive are highly regarded by partners and businesses and play an important role in strategic partnerships
  - Senior leadership is seen as accessible and plays a key role in facilitating major projects
  - There is strong leadership from Executive members who are clearly visible and demonstrate understanding of their portfolios
  - The organisational culture is very positive, open and supportive
  - There is a strong emphasis by members and officers on supporting communities and responding to diverse needs
  - There is a good understanding of the socio-demographic and diverse needs of the borough - resulting in tailored projects and community support programmes

- The passion and loyalty of staff and members is palpable in day-to-day and community-based work
- There is a strong sense of trust, respect and support amongst the workforce
- Financial management and budget setting is clear and effective
- The Council has many initiatives that it carries out that are not common in many councils, but which have a great public benefit
- The Council punches above its weight!

5.2 A range of improvements were identified which are incorporated within the seven recommendations set out in the attached CPC report. By his own admission, when he fed back the findings of the review to staff and members, the lead Chief Executive for the Review indicated these recommendations were “low hanging fruit” ranging from celebrating the organisational culture and ethos and passion of our staff and councillors and belief in place; addressing some governance matters around timely publication of officer decisions; continuing work on a savings plan; further work on raising awareness on officer delegations; improvements in the work of the Audit Committee; and further enhancing performance reporting linked to strategic key decisions.

5.3 The Council is required to prepare an action plan to address the recommendations within five months of the publication of the CPC report. Officers have already made advanced progress on this, and a draft action plan is attached at Appendix II for consideration and support.

## **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The Council, its staff and members and indeed residents, can feel rightly proud of the incredibly positive outcomes and conclusions of the external Peer Challenge. Views were gathered from over 150 people, including businesses, other stakeholders and from staff at all levels of the organisation. This also extended to capturing feedback from councillors of all political parties to inform the Peer Challenge.

## **7. Exemptions in accordance with the Access to Information procedure rules**

None.

## **8. Financial implications**

None

## **9. Legal implications**

None

## **10. Corporate Plan implications**

The changes proposed in the White Paper could have significant implications on the Council's ability to deliver on the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan, impacting on communities and local businesses.

**11. Consultation**

None.

**12. Risk implications**

12.1 It is the council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

12.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

12.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) risks

Risk description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Impact on the Councils reputation arising from a negative Peer Challenge	Preparation of comprehensive Position Statement and facilitation of wide external partner, staff and member engagement in the process to evidence the positive work of the Council, resulting in a positive Corporate Peer Challenge report.	Chief Executive

**13. Knowing your community - equality and rural implications**

13.1 Extensive evidence was provided as part of the Council's Peer Challenge (CPC) to demonstrate the work that the Council undertakes in supporting its communities

**14. Climate implications**

14.1 Evidence was provided as part of the CPC of the positive work the Council undertakes to address climate change challenges and to reduce the carbon footprint of its activities.

**15. Corporate Implications**

15.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data protection implications
- Voluntary sector

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